

# Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 10, 2022

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

## Oklahoma Sooners Coach Porter Moser Ethan Chargois Jacob Groves

Postgame Press Conference



Oklahoma 72, Baylor 67

THE MODERATOR: We are all set to begin our news conference with the Oklahoma Sooners, Coach Porter Moser, and his student-athletes tonight are Ethan Chargois and Jacob Groves.

We will begin our questioning with the players first, but we want to call on Coach for an opening statement. Coach?

PORTER MOSER: Happy with the guys to stick with this and be resilient. When we lost Elijah Harkless we found out the day before and it took us by surprise.

Now we have regrouped. We have won four in a row. We're confident, we're hot, and that was a huge win for us. People counted us out and we started one at a time, beating Oklahoma State then West Virginia. They had to go to Kansas State on their senior night and they won that.

But it's a testament to close this group on how close they're becoming and how resilient they are becoming of blocking out the outside noise and focusing on what we need to do to win games.

**Q. Ethan, you guys did a lot of good things well tonight. Looked like maybe the best thing you did was pass the ball. You had 5 or 6 assists. What was going on that made your offense click so when you didn't turn it over your passing game was really good?**

ETHAN CHARGOIS: We knew that Baylor, they try to get up in the passing lanes, try to pressure you, and that obviously leaves cuts open. My teammates made really good cuts at timely times, and I just found 'em.

**Q. Jacob, this is for you. Hot, hot into the season**

**here, save probably your best game for the last. Just what gave you that confidence to have that stretch there, especially in the second half?**

JACOB GROVES: I think it's kind of an accumulation of a lot of things. Building up to the end of season. I mean, like Coach said, a guy like E.J. goes out and someone has to step up and fill that role.

I was the one that the coaches chose first to step into that starting spot. I've just done my best to accept it, you know, do whatever the team needs me to do to win games.

Tonight I came out and was hot, shot the ball well, which is good to see; my confidence is definitely pretty high.

It's great. We're playing great basketball at the right time of the year. We're really excited. Got two more to win.

**Q. Ethan, you guys had 11 turnovers in the first half; only 5 in the second, even when Baylor was pressing you guys trying to get turnovers. What was the message at halftime and what did it take to take better care of the basketball in the second half?**

ETHAN CHARGOIS: We knew that was probably our biggest downfall in the first half, was the turnovers. So coming out of halftime we wanted to focus on cutting those down and just being smart and take care of the ball, and I feel like we did that a lot better in the second half, like you said.

**Q. Jacob, it looked like they were going to make a late run those last couple minutes of the game, but you were able to hold 'em off. What were you able to do to keep them from making a run to win the game?**

JACOB GROVES: I think the first thing is it all starts on defense. I mean, regardless of how we're doing on offense, if we're getting stops we're going to maintain that lead. That was huge for us, just defending and then finishing the play with a rebound, which is big.

Then obviously we had huge guys step up, like Umoja Gibson with that and 1; Ethan had a couple of unbelievable

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passes towards the end to Jalen down low.

So we're just making plays, winning plays when winning plays need to be made was really what it was down the stretch.

**Q. Ethan, Baylor went on a big run before halftime there and seemed like they had all the momentum. What was the message at halftime, and how did you guys quickly regroup coming out of half?**

ETHAN CHARGOIS: Yeah, like I said, the message was we need to cut down on turnovers obviously, and be strong with the ball. That was probably the biggest message.

We knew we could win. We came in with a confident respect for these guys and we know -- we really believed we were a force together and we came out and got it done the second half.

**Q. Porter, congratulations. Down the stretch those last four minutes you called the timeout after Jordan was cramping and had he hit back-to-back baskets after press. Just talk about what you told the team and they way they executed the last four minutes.**

PORTER MOSER: First of all, it's good to see you the Oklahoma media. I don't think I've seen you guys in my press conference. We have been doing Zoom for so long, so it's good to see you guys.

With Jordan out, like we had Marvin in some press spots late game that we haven't had, and we did some things and -- just taking care of the ball, meeting every pass.

Like the one -- Mo was way better the next two times. He caught it and just kind of watched the trap. Their trap is big. You got 6'9", 6'9", trapping.

So we did a much better job of getting it in and out of that corner better right away, but our message was stay the course and not give them baskets. We gave them back-to-back baskets and the turnover, and from that point on we took care of the ball.

I didn't want to use that timeout, I was hoping they would stop it, but I get it. I get what the official said to me. She goes, you guys were getting trapped. I can't take it out of a trap.

And I'm like, why not? Sounds good to me to get out of a trap. But it was probably the right call, so I had to use that timeout. I thought our guys regrouped after that and did some nice things getting it out.

I thought Jordan and Mo made two good plays late. Baskets, we tried to have long possessions, space it. When they were up so hard on you, Mo and Jordan were both able to drive it and both had nice baskets that were really good plays for us.

**Q. Seems like Mo has done a better job of putting the ball on the deck. Is it almost fitting that he was able to deliver that dagger with the layup instead of a three-point shot? What have you seen out of him in terms of his growth this season?**

PORTER MOSER: I thought of that so much because we've has some close games where we settled for that three instead of going downhill, and I know he wanted it. He was setting up that step-back, and for him to kind of lean in and go downhill was a great growth spot for him.

And also, it makes him more dangerous. It makes him more dangerous to be able to go downhill and to be able to finish in there.

**Q. Porter, when you see somebody like Ethan play the game he did tonight, and Jacob, these two guys that haven't always been in the spotlight, what does that do for you as a coach, knowing how far the team has come, especially without Elijah.**

PORTER MOSER: For them to continue to stay with it, they've had some games where they got more minutes than others. For them to stay with it. Ethan's passing ability is unbelievable for us on our team. It gives us a different look.

I think he hit Marvin for a cut. He had Jake on a back cut. For him to play through that, especially when a team is out pressuring you, we were talking about so much having to cut, and then Jacob, to stay with it, to have the game he had.

You have to be deep. I have talked about this for so long. We have to develop deeper. And, man, we're getting more contributions. The guys up here are guys that came off the bench and were crucial to us winning this game today.

That's the thing that, God, I can here Coach Magera say right now, in his Wisconsin accent. Starting is for high school. Get your mind right, come in, get your mind in the game before your body.

These guys came in -- he was starting, but both these guys pretty much all year, just really happy for them, and it's great for our team, the way they're playing.

**Q. Porter, 10 minutes left in the game, can you talk**



**about Jacob and Jalen, what they gave you defensively as they came back on that run? And tomorrow, Tech and Iowa State, those are the two games you said before coming out here that those were the only two you felt like you were really in, or not in in the second half. So what do you have to do to turn that around whoever the opponent is?**

PORTER MOSER: The first part of the question, Jacob's defense has come so far. He had so in good level-offs, and he's getting his technique, he is getting his head back, he's getting his length in there, he's trusting it. I think he only got iced one time, right, to the right?

JACOB GROVES: Yeah.

PORTER MOSER: It's really helped us. His man-to-man defense has really improved and it's helped our team. As far as the other game, we will see who we play.

I just dove all into -- I have assistants that are on the advance scout for those. I will dig in later. I was just totally consumed about Baylor. We'll see who wins this game, and we're ready to go, ready to keep chasing.

**Q. How do you think your guy, Gibson, feels knocking off his hometown team?**

PORTER MOSER: Oh, I'm sure -- I mean, you know, to me that would be -- I'm sure secondary. That's a secondary beautiful thought for him. He's been so locked in. Like let's just win one more at a time. You know, let's keep staying in the conversation, because we want to play in this postseason.

To see what this team has done with probably the hardest schedule in the country, to beat again another -- I mean, this very well could have been a top seed in the Tournament, they're a one line.

We have beaten a couple, three or four top four lines to prove that we can beat the best teams in the country. I think that's what Mo is thinking about. Tonight when he gets back and he showers and he sits back, he's going to love that he did that.

But I know Mo. He's thinking about let's win another one, let's keep going. We're playing more after this tournament.

**Q. Porter, you had seven different guys hit a three. You hit eleven three's in total. How great was this performance?**

PORTER MOSER: It was great and a lot of them came assisted. And inside out. You're having skips. Marvin

skipped one. I think Ethan skipped one. Mark Jordan did.

I think we had 18 assists. We had 18 assists. I think we went downhill and got it out. We just gotta clean up the turnovers. I walked in the locker room and said, What you do you guys got? In unison they go, got to take care of the ball. They know.

Everybody wants to do well so bad we sometimes get rushed. We have to settle down. We can pass and we can cut, and if we're knocking down shots like that, we're very dangerous.

**Q. Porter, most speculation said you needed to win twice up here to be sure of the NCAA. You worry about that? You think, hey, we got halfway there?**

PORTER MOSER: Our first and foremost thoughts are we came here to win this. But to win this twice? Look at our strength of schedule. Look at every rating on that.

How many teams have three or four wins in the top four line? We just knocked off one of the top teams on the one line, so could have very well been in there.

So I know our case for our team. We're in the hardest conference in the country. We have the hardest schedule in the country. We schedule up. Our ratings, our everything is elite.

I will be ready to talk on that. We're focused on winning this tournament. We're focused on that, and that's what our mind and our focus is on.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, Ethan, and Jacob, thank you for coming. Congratulations. We will see you tomorrow.

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