

# Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 10, 2022

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

Iowa State Cyclones

Coach TJ Otzelberger

Tyrese Hunter

Alijaz Kunc

Postgame Press Conference



Texas Tech 72, Iowa State 41

THE MODERATOR: Ready to begin our news conference with the Cyclones of Iowa State, coach T.J. Otzelberger. His student-athletes tonight are Aljaz Kunc and Tyrese Hunter.

Coach we will ask for an opening statement.

T.J. OTZELBERGER: First of all, credit to Texas Tech. They played great. Very well prepared for that game.

On our end of things, it was an unacceptable effort, turning the ball over, letting them go in transition. Not limiting them to one shot, which is what we needed to do.

They got some second-chance opportunities that helped them. Not our proudest moment. Unacceptable effort. We've just got to be better.

**Q. Jaz, what do you have to do to turn this around heading into whenever you play next week?**

ALIJAZ KUNC: First of all, we have to leave the game behind us, focus on postseason and the next game. We have to come more with more physicality, you know, and it looked like they wanted it more today.

Just come out of the gate, out of the -- from the jump ball, you know, be the more physical team and crash the offensive rebound, take care of the ball. Just go back to fundamentals.

You know, and we have to -- we just have to leave this game behind us and focus on what's ahead of us.

**Q. Tyrese?**

TYRESE HUNTER: What he said. Quick turnaround. We have to put this game behind us and look forward to the next game.

**Q. Tyrese, what were they doing to generate so many turnovers from you guys?**

TYRESE HUNTER: Playing Texas Tech defense, I'm pretty sure they're known for their defense. That's how they came out and played.

We got to find our way throughout that. We've seen them a couple of times. Giving them their credit, but we've got to find a way through that.

**Q. Both of you guys, what is the mindset of the players in the locker room?**

TYRESE HUNTER: As a point guard, leader of the team, I think it starts with me. Make sure everybody is positive and head is going, because we're not done playing basketball.

So, you know, we've just got to be in the right mindset. We could turn this around. Like I said, it's a quick turnaround. Just get this behind us and I'll make sure everybody is positive and make sure everybody head's up.

ALIJAZ KUNC: He pretty much said it all.

**Q. T.J., you mentioned that you thought Texas Tech wanted it more tonight. How do you explain that? The last couple of games you have made variations of that same statement.**

T.J. OTZELBERGER: Their depth and their size certainly is a factor. I mean, on the interior they have a lot of big bodies, they have depth, they keep throwing bodies at you. We've got to play with an unbelievable competitive spirit to offset some of the things we don't have in terms of that size and physical play. They scored 42 point in the paint. That's not acceptable.

There's not a simple solution to it. We've just got to play



really hard, we've got to pressure the basketball and we've got to be the aggressor. Felt like we came out tonight on our heels. That's not going to be a recipe for success for us.

**Q. Jaz, getting out of big play into the NCAA Tournament what kind of reset does that allow for you guys to have?**

ALIJAZ KUNC: It's like repeating the whole thing right now, it's a quick turnaround. We have to focus on whoever. Doesn't matter who we play the next game, we have to prepare for them better than we did this game and come out like Coach said as an aggressor, don't allow them to get going, get back in transition and protect the paint.

We have to go back Ames and the practice facility and get ready to play.

**Q. T.J. Texas Tech wants to do the same thing as you guys do, getting out of league play where you can have a mismatch of styles is that going to be a benefit for you guys?**

T.J. OTZELBERGER: I think it will. In this league there are none better than Tech. The numbers say they're the best defensive team in the country, so that makes it tougher. They have so many bodies and so many big guys and they're so physical with everything that they do.

I don't know who we will play and how that will all go but I do know that we're playing in the best league in the country. We play the teams that are the most physical. We play in the league that's the most physical, so my guess would be whoever we play outside the league, it may not be that same level of defensive intensity that we see night in and night out. At the same time we've got to control what we can control, value the basketball and play as the aggressor.

**Q. T.J., what is your level of concern about this team right now?**

T.J. OTZELBERGER: Well, I'm actually really proud of the team right now. Last year this same time our team had two wins. This year we have 20. I think if memory serves me correctly that's probably the biggest turn around in college basketball, so our guys have a lot to be proud of. They have had a very good season based on our strengths. There is no concern.

There is all sense of pride in what we're building, what we have done, how these guys have embraced habits. So anybody that would look at it as a concern would have a

warped view on what these guys have accomplished this year. I think everything that they have done is restore pride to Iowa State. They have showed work ethic, they have showed habits, character, and based on where we were one year ago, these guys deserve a lot of credit.

**Q. Tyrese, why do you think you maybe weren't able to match the intensity coming out of the gate that Texas Tech had?**

TYRESE HUNTER: I feel like they came out, they wanted it more than us. I feel like that's just that, they wanted it more than us. We gotta come out and be more physical. They're a physical team and we knew what they were going to come with, and they just wanted it more.

THE MODERATOR: Coach and guys, we will let you go back to the locker room. Thank you. Good luck the rest of the way.

T.J. OTZELBERGER: Appreciate it. Thanks.

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