

Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Friday, March 11, 2022

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

Kansas Jayhawks

Coach Bill Self

Remy Martin

Ochai Agbaji

Postgame Press Conference



TCU 62 , Kansas 75

THE MODERATOR: We are ready to begin our news conference with the Kansas Jayhawks. We have Coach Bill Self and the student-athletes are Ochai Agbaji and Remy Martin. Coach?

BILL SELF: I thought we played pretty well, consistently, the whole night. Traded baskets to start, and played well from the 12 minute mark to the 4 minute mark and we got a cushion.

I thought our defense was the best it's been in a while and I don't know how many shot clock violations we forced, but -- how many was it? About 5? That's about accurate.

So it's good we did that. And we didn't rebound the ball terrific, but we got by with it tonight.

Q. Ochai, lobs are nothing new for you, but that one was big-time. Talk about what you saw there, the pass, the play, the finish, the moment at half-court when you're looking at the bench, all that stuff.

OCHAI AGBAJI: It kinda happened so fast it didn't really like set in until I was just sitting there at half-court and everyone was just like going crazy, that it was that crazy of a dunk.

But I just watched the replay of it and it was crazy, so that was a really good pass by Juan.

Q. That's the play. You knew that was go get it. Did you see the pass? Did you know you had to get up that high?

OCHAI AGBAJI: I just knew he was going to throw it

because I knew there was an opening right when I came off the screen. I just knew he was going to throw it out so I was going to have to go get it.

It was just one of those things.

Q. Ochai, you guys called that play yesterday, too, and it looked like you were pretty open, right?

OCHAI AGBAJI: Was I? Yeah. Yeah.

Q. I know we're doing this soon after, but Bill, can you comment on the fact that yesterday it was open and it was open again today?

BILL SELF: We've run it a few times, and yesterday it was open and Juan didn't throw it, and I got on to him for not throwing it.

He was more open yesterday than today, but Juan gave a perfect pass and then of course Och made it. Pretty good finish.

Q. Ochai, I wanted to ask you about Mitch Lightfoot's three-pointer. You were beside him on the wing, kind of calling for the ball, and Jalen was also in the paint calling for the ball. Did you think Mitch was going to take that shot, and what do you think about it going in?

OCHAI AGBAJI: Not at all. It's one of those things where you see him shoot it, he kind of just shot it without thinking about it, and I think that was better for him to do it that way.

But just one of those things. You see it go up and go in, and you're just like -- give him a pat on the butt. It was a great play. He played really well tonight.

Q. Remy, 10 points, 10 shots tonight, 19 minutes. How did you feel?

REMY MARTIN: I felt great just being out there, doing anything I can to contribute to the win. Every time I try to go out there I try to give my best. I'm here to, you know, win. I'm here to win a national championship. I'm here to win a tournament.



So anything I do to help the team I'm fully invested in, so I felt good to be out there and have fun. To see Ochai's dunk and Mitch's three's, it was fun. I had a great time.

Q. Your Coach said it's time to play major minutes now in the tournament and going forward. How do you feel? Do you feel ready, and is that something you are comfortable with the knee going forward?

REMY MARTIN: 100%. 100%. My knee is 100%. I love this month. This month is for champions, and I enjoy being out there on the bigger stage and playing with the Kansas uniform, so I'm ultimately ready to go out there and play.

I feel great. Whatever I need to do, I'm willing to do.

Q. Remy, you spent some time out there as the only lead guard. There were times with Joe, and other times DaJuan. Do you feel more comfortable with another weak guard with you? Do you have a preference?

REMY MARTIN: No. Whoever is on the court, all the guys are amazing. No matter if it's DaJuan or Joe, whoever is point guard, I trust my guys no matter what.

I know they're going to get the job done. And we practice it in practice, different rotations, so that wasn't a problem. Everybody is pretty good.

Q. Ochai, it's been a few years since Kansas won a tournament, Big XII tournament. What would that mean for you if you guys win tomorrow?

OCHAI AGBAJI: Mean a lot for not only me, but the program and Coach Self and our staff and team. We're focused and locked in on getting one tomorrow.

Q. Coach, third time in ten days you have played TCU; easily the biggest win. What was different today?

BILL SELF: I think that -- I really feel like we caught a break because they had to expend so much energy yesterday to have a great win against Texas, and we didn't have to extend quite as much energy.

I thought that was the difference early. I thought our defensive intensity was better than the other two games as well, especially the first half.

And we were pretty efficient.

You take care of the ball and you guard on the other end you got a chance, and we were pretty good at that the first

half.

Q. For all of you, what do you think of Mitch Lightfoot's jump hooks?

BILL SELF: Over one shoulder he's pretty good.

OCHAI AGBAJI: Over one shoulder he's automatic.

BILL SELF: We would like to see if he can do it over the other shoulder. No, Mitch has become an offensive weapon for us. His right hand jump hook is about as good as I've seen since I've been coaching.

Q. Coach, you guys seen TCU three times in the last ten days. How tough of an out do you think they will be in the NCAA Tournament?

BILL SELF: I think TCU can beat just about anybody if they play well. I love that team. I do. They've got great depth. Those players at 2, 3, and 4 are athletic. They can all do different things.

And defensively they're interchangeable, and then of course I'm a big fan of their two bigs. They've both given us problems, especially Lampkin, all three times we've played him. He has great hands, good feet. I think they're a team that could really be a very tough out.

Q. Bill, Illinois and Auburn, couple number one's lost today. What have you learned over the year? Some people say they get to go home and rest a little bit. How do you feel about that as opposed to trying to win a championship?

BILL SELF: I think in our league we have an advantage, because our championship ends on Saturday. In the Big Ten it ends on Sunday. You play on Sunday, turn around and leave on Tuesday, and Monday has to be an off day because your guys are exhausted.

So there is an advantage of ending on Saturday in my opinion. To me it doesn't come into play. But if we played on Sunday and played on Thursday, it would almost be like, well, if it didn't go great on Saturday, you know, that would be okay.

But I think the way our tournament is set up, I think it's set up perfectly for the four teams in the semifinals not to worry about that at all.

Q. Och, obviously you played TCU a lot throughout your career. What do you think of the season Mike Miles has had? 8th in the Big XII. What do you think?

OCHAI AGBAJI: He's been really good for them this year. Their guards 1 through 4 are really athletic, but him being the pack leader for them, he is a really good scorer, can score on all three levels, really strong.

He's a really good guard and I respect his game.

Q. Ochai, you have seen this defense throughout your career really clicking. I wonder what you think the ceiling is for this team's defense, and what you think about the last two days? And Coach, I wonder where you feel your defense is right now heading into tomorrow and next week.

OCHAI AGBAJI: Obviously starting off the game these past two games we've been turned up, and that covers a lot of mistakes that we made.

I think there are places we can get better at. I can be a better defender. Remy can be a better defender. So we all have improvements to make, so continuing to get better and staying in sync on defense is what is important.

BILL SELF: I actually think we have improved a lot individually defensively. I think we guard the ball better than we did earlier. Our biggest problem is our ball screen defense, and that's how TCU exposed us tonight.

That's something we have to tighten up. I think when our bigs are aggressive and doing a good job and not letting them get in the scoring area off their ball screens then we will be better.

I do think individually we've gotten better, but we've got to tighten that up.

Q. Bill, I'm not sure you saw the news before the game, but Mizzou let go of Cuonzo Martin.

BILL SELF: I did not know that.

Q. Yeah, I knew you guys worked together to bring that rivalry back. Your reaction to that news?

BILL SELF: Well, first of all, I'm disappointed when any colleagues are let go. I hate that. I know schools and businesses have to make decisions that are sometimes hard to make.

Many times they are unpopular or maybe they do because it is popular. That's two coaches in the last two days that's basically been our biggest rivals. I personally don't like that.

I feel bad for Cuonzo. I did not know that. I think he's a

really good coach. I think he's a better guy. I'm sure he will land on his feet.

Q. Coach, I'm sure over the last two days people are sick of me asking, but similar question to what I asked Remy, what's your feeling on the advantages, disadvantages of having two lead guards on the floor at the same time versus one?

BILL SELF: I think if I had my way, I would play three point guards every day. I have said all along, I would rather play four guards. I've changed my thinking as long as one of them is big enough to defend the floor, and if one of them can be a lead guard.

And the more lead guards you have is positive, as long as one of them can shoot. One of them has to be able to shoot. When you play two little guys that can be a negative, because teams like TCU whose 2-man is 6-6 that could be a potential negative.

But that doesn't bother me much, the size differential, and that's the only thing that would bother me about playing two little guards.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, congratulations.

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