

Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Friday, March 11, 2022

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

TCU Horned Frogs

Coach Jamie Dixon

Chuck O'Bannon, Jr.

Mike Miles, Jr.

Postgame Press Conference



TCU 62 , Kansas 75

THE MODERATOR: Okay. We are now joined by the TCU Horned Frogs. Coach Jamie Dixon, student-athletes are Mike Miles, Jr. and Chuck O'Bannon, Jr.

Coach?

JAMIE DIXON: Yeah, obviously congratulations to Kansas. Certainly I anticipated us playing better than we did, but they took it to us. Far more physical team than us tonight. Constantly getting in the lane with penetration, but especially got the ball inside on the post.

I liked that we battled and stayed with it. We cut the lead down and our guys kept fighting, but it just wasn't our night. Free throw percentage suffered. Obviously the turnovers. So give them credit.

Obviously we had two incredible games the last week against them, but tonight we just didn't have it and they did. Congratulations to Kansas and the fans.

Q. Mike and Chuck, for both of you. Coach Self was saying he thought KU might have caught a break because you guys expended so much energy in the Texas comeback. Do you feel like that played a part and gave them the ability to build the cushion in the first half?

MIKE MILES, JR: I don't know. That may be the case, but I don't think so. We got to play better in the first half. We did the same thing in the first half last game but we came back. But it didn't happen this game. They have great team. They have great players.

Ochai Agbaji is great. Give credit to them. I don't think

that was the case. They played better than us.

Q. Chuck, it felt like anytime you guys put something together they gave an answer. How deflating is that?

CHUCK O'BANNON, JR: Very deflating because we were focused on cutting the lead that they had and we couldn't get it. It was frustrating. There were times that I felt we ran out of gas; but at the same time, we know what we're capable of and we hope to fix that.

Q. Chuck, 15 points. I guess that's a silver lining. Do you feel like your offensive game is back to where it was earlier this year?

CHUCK O'BANNON, JR: Yes. I have been struggling the past few games making shots, so tonight it felt good for it to drop a few times.

But at this point in the season it's all about defense, so that's what we need to focus on at this point.

Q. For Chuck and Mike, I was wondering if you guys have had the opportunity to reflect on what it's like coming back to a venue and a tournament at full capacity without restrictions and what that experience has been like for you guys?

MIKE MILES, JR: It was a great feeling, having everybody in the crowd this year. Obviously last year there wasn't no one there, so it was a good feeling.

I love having fans in the crowd, everyone being there. It's a great crowd to play in front of. I wish we would have won, but to your question, it was a great crowd, great energy. I love playing in front of crowds like that.

CHUCK O'BANNON, JR: That's college basketball. Everybody wants to play in front of a few thousand people with that type of noise and that type of energy. That's what we love doing. That's what we grew up wanting to do.

Q. Your next game is in the NCAA Tournament against somebody. What's the feeling of doing more than just getting into the tournament?



CHUCK O'BANNON, JR: Throughout the season, you know, we're in the best conference in the country and we have been playing some of the best teams in the country, so we feel when we get to this tournament it's going to be the same thing.

So we have to come out and be prepared to play the best teams on the biggest stage. Hopefully come out the way we believe we can.

Q. Chuck, I know you guys obviously hate to lose, but you've been through a lot in your career, and just to be able to move on from this tournament and know there is still basketball to be played in March, what is that feeling like for you personally, especially after your journey you've been through?

CHUCK O'BANNON, JR: It feels amazing. I've been in college for a little while now. Never been to March Madness. Never been to the tournament.

So it's exciting. I love being with my teammates. It's about to be very exciting. Coach Dixon has been there multiple times, so he knows what to expect. We don't, so we're feeding off him.

Q. Jamie, what would you say the key was as to why they were able to extend the lead the way they were?

JAMIE DIXON: It's just defense. You got to look at the numbers; 63% from the field; I think it was 65 at one point when we came in a timeout and kind of read the numbers to them.

So, I mean, they made free throws; we didn't. They made layups; we didn't. And they made three's; we made a couple.

It's the defense. I mentioned earlier there was no way we were going to win if we didn't guard, and we didn't guard. Give them credit. They made the shots. You've got to make them. We have a tendency to think it can be done another way, and today we tried that and it didn't work.

Again, they were aggressive. They were getting to the basket. They were very physical in post-ups. They just -- they fought for position better than we did. They were able to catch it deep, and they continually got in the lane on drives.

We adjusted our ball screen coverage, but it wasn't the ball screens so much. It was really just straight-up one-on-one driving us, and that's disappointing.

Transition we weren't good enough. We were back and didn't get it done. Again, they had something to do with that, but we know we have to be better. We have been better, but tonight we weren't. It wasn't our night.

Proud of our team, and the group we had there in the end fought and we just -- I'm proud of what they've done. We have guys that really nobody has been to the tournament, and that was our goal.

We look on 11 new players and we put together a very great group, and a group I'm really proud of on and off the floor. We're young, and we probably needed to get this disappointment, this loss. We got handled pretty good.

But I'm proud of them, and you learn and you get better because of something like this.

Q. Mike, Ochai Agbaji, Big XII Player of the Year said he respected your game. What do you think about the way he played tonight and what kind of respect does that mean to you from a guy like that?

MIKE MILES, JR: It means a lot that he respects me. He's far and away the better player in the conference this year, obviously he won the award, first-round draft pick, so that means a lot. I respect him. 22 points, he can shoot the ball, he can do everything. You gotta respect a guy like that, but it means a lot that he respects my game. I like that.

Q. Coach, what do you think of KU's bench "big" Mitch Lightfoot tonight?

JAMIE DIXON: He's played well against us over his career. Now, of course, it's six years now and counting, but he has always played good against us, and I give him all the respect. I remember his first year we were up the whole game and he came in and played well. That's why they're good. Their bench killed us. Him and Martin come off the bench, that was -- we kind of -- we hoped our bench would outplay there's and that wasn't the case. Getting old is a good thing and they took advantage of it.

Kansas has three super seniors, and they have a history of keeping guys there. That's a great, great indicator, a great example of that. I can't wait to see -- coach a guy for six years and see what he becomes, too. He's huge for them, because I think he doesn't play a lot of minutes, but when he does he produces. He's produced against us over time. I think he loves playing against us.

THE MODERATOR: Okay, guys. Thank you for coming. Good luck next week.

