

Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Friday, March 11, 2022

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

Oklahoma Sooners

Coach Porter Moser

Umoja Gibson

Jalen Hill

Postgame Press Conference



working well for you?

JALEN HILL: I've got to thank my teammates and my coaches. They believed in me. I haven't shot that well this season. They kept believing in me, and I just take the shots when they're open. That's it, really.

Q. Porter, you talked about being an NCAA Tournament team. A lot of times you control the controllables. Now your fate is in a Selection Committee's hands. What would be the biggest thing you would tell them about this basketball team? I know we talked about it often, but the way this team has finished, like you said, fought through adversity, how strong is the case for Oklahoma basketball to make the Tournament?

PORTER MOSER: The positives are strength of schedule. We didn't shy away from our schedule. Our strength of schedule. I think it was 4 this morning, and now we just played another line, so it could move up. It was 4.

The ones that were ahead of us were Kansas State and West Virginia because we were in the mix with them. I think we have 10 or 11 Quad 1 or 2 wins. We have wins against the top line. We played another top-line team, Kansas, twice, to a two-point game, three-point game at Allen Fieldhouse.

This league is like none other. There is no bottom. It's every night and you're playing against top, top level teams. And we have competed every night. We've won those games. I've been in the NCAA Tournament. I've advanced in the NCAA Tournament. I know what an NCAA Tournament team looks like.

This team, how we have competed against top-line teams to beat Baylor -- I listen to a lot of the experts. They talk about, Oh, this team has to win to get in. Well, they don't have to play Baylor and some of this.

I just want to -- this group has the DNA of an NCAA Tournament team. They're resilient. They've stayed together and we've won these games late. We fell short today against an elite team by 1.

Oklahoma 55, Texas Tech 56

THE MODERATOR: We are ready to begin our news conference with the Oklahoma Sooners and Coach Porter Moser, and student-athletes are Jalen Hill and Umoja Gibson.

Coach?

PORTER MOSER: I can't say enough about this group staying together through adversity, through a tough injury, through some losses.

I can't say enough about how they stuck together, fought to get better, fought to practice, fought to stay positive, blocked out outside noise, and controlled what they could control.

Playing a high-level team every night, you know, Oklahoma State, West Virginia at Kansas State, Baylor, Texas Tech, these last two. You're talking about top two-line teams, and I can't say enough about this group and how resilient they were.

At halftime everybody is watching these games and everybody has to win games, and not everybody has to play a Texas Tech defense or a Baylor defense. These guys were down 11, and we talked about getting back and guarding ourselves.

The way we played defense in the second half and what we did against their defense trying to move the ball, I can't say enough about this group's resiliency and how good of a group this is and how much of an NCAA tournament team this is.

Q. Jalen, you came out hot in the first half. What was

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Q. Porter, I just wanted to ask you about the fight on your team. Jordan Goldwire leaves it all out on the floor. What did you see from your team?

PORTER MOSER: All season long we felt we needed to give him breaks, but we had to stay old in this tournament. He played his tail off. He played so hard.

He's asked to do so much as the primary ball handler. He's asked to do so much defensively. He literally gave everything he had. For him to cramp up and not be able to get in there, it killed him.

Think about it. He went from extreme exhaustion two nights ago, but we're asking him to do a lot on both ends, on both ends. I can't say enough about his heart and how hard he played.

Q. Umoja, what did you see on the last play? You get the back tap in the back quarter and you're just trying to get downhill, but what are you thinking and seeing on that play there?

UMOJA GIBSON: Just trying to get downhill and attack the defense. Obviously my (indiscernible) failed, but ultimate goal was get down the hill and try to get a clean basket.

Q. Mo, what was the message from Porter and Jordan everyone else in that huddle during that almost seven-and-a-half-minute scoreless drought?

UMOJA GIBSON: Keep chipping off, keep chipping off possession by possession. That's what Coach Moser preaches to us all the time. You know, in the huddle we were trying to be more together and more as a unit. We failed, but we're going to keep pushing.

Q. Porter, you struggled to get things going offensively much of the night, but it looked like midway through the second half you really started penetrating them by attacking the basket even without necessarily a strategy of plays. Goldwire putting his head down and going or Jalen going. How much was just be aggressive and go to the hoop sort of your game plan there with 11, 12 minutes left?

PORTER MOSER: I thought we came out and we had really good possessions to start the half. We came up a little empty handed, but we had great shots, great movement. Our movement and cutting was so much better in the second half.

It wasn't just put your head down and go. That was not

what we were doing. We had Jalen on pull plays. We set some flat flips. Jordan got downhill. I thought we spaced it and moved it and got second, third side. I thought the first half we tried to get it on the first side.

Texas Tech, they're all big. They switch everything. They force you into stagnancy. They force you into it. I thought we were stagnant in the first half; I thought the second half we got to the second and third side.

If you look at the first five or six possessions I was almost clapping. We came out a little empty handed because we didn't make some shots, but we were getting great movement, and I think that dictated the rest of the half, that we had confidence with that.

We had a back cut Marvin, got fouled. We got to the bonus early, we were back cutting and drawing some fouls, and those are body blows getting to that foul line early. We had some chances at the foul line tonight.

Q. For both of you. Porter has been asked about NCAA Tournament chances. You guys have played against these guys in the Big XII and in the non-conference. Your opinion on why you should be in the Tournament and your chances if you get there.

UMOJA GIBSON: I believe our chances is real high, you know. Throughout the year we played a tough schedule and we beat some top teams throughout that run, throughout their journey. So I feel like -- I feel as if our case is strong as anybody else in the country that's on the bubble right now.

Like Coach Moser said, we faced Texas Tech, Baylor, West Virginia; they tough. We played a lot of tough teams on the defensive end.

We proved that we could play with these guys, and, you know, I feel like our case is strong.

JALEN HILL: Same thing as Mo said. Really we have four or five top-15 wins. Our strength of schedule, every game we're going in playing a top-50 or top-30 team. The way we fight.

At the end of the day we're hoping we can get in, and we believe that we can get in and make a run.

PORTER MOSER: I will add this, too, in terms of looking at it, what it is, you know. The teams that are eligible for the NCAA Tournament, so exclude Oklahoma State. Our losses are all except two from tournament teams. All the losses we have are tournament teams, except two.

One was an overtime loss and one third day of our MT to a veteran older team, top-60 team.

Some might say a number of losses, but Kansas twice, Texas Tech twice, you're competing against that, but we still have top line wins. Arkansas is competing for the top in the SEC, we beat them double figures. We just beat Texas Tech double figures. We just beat Baylor. We have some other really good wins. I know how we can compete against these top teams. When you look at the average net loss of our losses, it's 31, that's outrageous, some of these are very high.

For us, I just want to talk about the positives of our team. I look at this, this has the DNA of an NCAA Tournament team. I've been there. The thing that these guys should hang their hat on is the resiliency this time of year. How they came together. This team literally -- the practice, the preparation, what they're doing, you know. We had our backs, went into Kansas State -- Oklahoma hasn't won at Kansas State in nine years. Then we said, we gotta win one in the tournament. We played Baylor, top 3 team in the country, we beat 'em. These guys can hang their head high, proud, and I hope others recognize that on Sunday.

THE MODERATOR: Porter, one more about making your case to the Committee. The metrics are the metrics, but they're humans that decide this. A lot of times losing a guy like Elijah Harkless, that's a negative on the board, one of your top players is out, but you guys real off four straight without him and lose by one tonight. What does that show the Committee that is not a negative, you guys bounced back.

PORTER MOSER: Personally, I don't think it will be in the Committee's mind. I think if anything it's a positive. Playing great. Tonight was a 1-point loss against a top two-line team. Yes, I'm disappointed. I know I will look at that tape and be like, oh, like I always do so many parts. I don't think that will be on the Committee's mind at all. I think what it is is, man, guys are playing great.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you so much, wish you the best next week.

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