

# Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 8, 2023

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

Texas Tech Red Raiders

Corey Williams

Kevin Obanor

Pop Isaacs

Postgame Press Conference



Texas Tech 62 - West Virginia 78

MODERATOR: Coach, when you're comfortable, if you could get us started with some general comments about the game.

COREY WILLIAMS: Really hurtful, Kevin Obanor being a senior. Really wanted to get a win for him. I told those guys from the beginning that this was not about me. This was about them having an opportunity to continue their careers, and I was very blessed and fortunate to be able to have this opportunity in their lives.

West Virginia, Coach Huggins, Hall of Fame coach, they played harder and tougher than our guys did today. They out rebound us on the glass offensively. We turned the ball over a little too much, and they capitalized on that. It was just that simple, but I'm proud of these guys. Being an interim head coach for the short period of time that I've been has been remarkable, and Kevin Obanor has been the leader of this basketball program. And I can't thank him enough. It's tough for him. This is painful for him, but like I said, tough times don't last, but tough people do, and he's a tough guy.

**Q. Coach really said it right there, one of the leaders of the team. Your past two years at Texas Tech. What does it mean to you to be a Red Raider depending on whether you guys go to the NIT to continue the postseason?**

KEVIN OBANOR: It means a lot to be a Red Raider. I take pride in putting on the jersey, and we fell short. A lot of adversity, and it's a tough time right now for me, and just gotta fall back on your faith and let God just narrate your path and your life, and that's just that.

**Q. And going off that, too, with the two years you've had here, how has this program made you into the person and player you are today?**

KEVIN OBANOR: It helped me a lot. Being in the High Division I program and being around the good people of west Texas, I bleed black and red. And I just wanted to make them proud, and we came up short, and I gotta do a lot of soul searching and things of that nature. But like coach said, tough times don't last, tough people do.

**Q. Pop, you guys jumped out to an early start, but then it seemed like just they were out hustling you guys. What was the difference, especially in the second half?**

POP ISAACS: I felt like they probably just wanted it more. I mean, I don't really know how to explain that right now. I just felt like they were playing harder than us. I don't know what reason why. I feel like that's really what it was. They just wanted it more, and they were playing harder than us. They played with more passion in the second half, and we never really made that run that we usually make to get back in the game.

**Q. And Kevin, what's the message to the guys now? Maybe you guys will play in the NIT. I don't know if that'll be decided by the university or what, but you might get to play some more games together.**

KEVIN OBANOR: I'm not trying to think about that right now. One goal was the NCAA tournament, and that's first. And to be honest, nothing is second. Yeah, I'm not trying to think about that right now.

**Q. Pop, what was West Virginia able to do defensively to keep you all from getting in a rhythm?**

POP ISAACS: They're a tough, hard-nosed team. They were denying one pass away the majority of the time. So it was kind of hard to swing the ball and get the ball from side to side. They did a great job with that, so it kind of messed up the flow of our offense. I really feel like that's just what it was. They're long. They play hard. So they're a good team.



**Q. Coach, can you just talk about what you saw in the second half in terms of the shooting for your team? It seems like you guys just could not get into a rhythm at all in the second half from a shooting standpoint?**

COREY WILLIAMS: If I'm being honest, it's a lot of weight on these kids right now. They've been through a lot in the last week or so. And in some ways, I just feel like it caught up with them, and they wanted to win. They gave their best. And once the ball stopped falling in a little bit, it got a little bit more tougher. The hill became a lot steeper, and unfortunately we weren't able to make up the difference.

**Q. Coach, you guys have a lot of young players on this team. Kevin is the oldest one, I guess. From your perspective, is there a bright spot for those young guys in order for the future of this program? I just wanted to get your opinion on that.**

COREY WILLIAMS: Certainly. When you look back at our season, we were very competitive in a lot of basketball games. This is an anomaly, I think, in terms of what we had going on around us, and having to respond to that. But those guys played well throughout the year, been very competitive, and I think they have a bright future moving forward. And, you know, that's something to be excited about.

**Q. Coach, how would you describe what it was like to play in this league this year?**

COREY WILLIAMS: Well, first of all, I mean, you get -- you don't get very much sleep at night knowing that you don't have a dull game that you can look forward to that you feel like you can win. Every game, every team is extremely competitive. And if you don't rise to that occasion, you get your butt beat by anybody. But on the flip side, if you play well and your team plays well, you can beat anybody in this league as well, but this is an extremely competitive league, and it's not for the faint of heart. And certainly you wish you had more teams that you could wake up in the morning feeling like you could get a W on, but that's not this league.

**Q. Coach, what was your final message to the team after the game?**

COREY WILLIAMS: Well, I talked to them a little bit about life, you know. Life. Nobody's going to feel sorry for you. Anything in life, you gotta go out and grab it, and you know, sometimes the only time you get a chance to impress people is the first time, and you gotta do it now. And it's not -- life doesn't guarantee you a second opportunity.

And as painful as this is that the guys are not losers,

they're winners. Yeah, this is just a small bump in the road, but hopefully if you learn from it, then you become a better person. But I told them how proud I was of them. To allow me to be able to coach these guys up under these circumstances and be able to point in their lives, I wouldn't take that back for nothing in the world, and I thank God for giving me that opportunity, but these guys are special. And they're special young men, and they'll do great things in life. Yes, it hurts. Yes, it's painful, but pain don't last always. It subsides.

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