

Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Friday, March 10, 2023

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

T-Mobile Center

Iowa State Cyclones

Coach T.J. Otzelberger

Postgame Press Conference



Kansas 71, Iowa State 58

COACH OTZELBERGER: Things along those lines. We worked so hard to get the lead, and then it got away from us quick.

So credit to them, but proud of our guys, how they fought back.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Coach?

Q. Coach, what things did you try to throw at Jalen early in the game to try and slow him down after that hot start, and did it work?

COACH OTZELBERGER: No. He got it rolling there early. He had 11 right out of the box. You know, we do a lot of switching off the ball, so different guys end up matched on him, especially later in the clock.

We talked about making sure that, again, even though he had made the perimeter shots early, his greatest strength is driving, especially getting to that right hand and finding a way.

We were a little more intentional after that fast start, and then, like I said, he does a great job. He's an elite competitor. He gets to the glass. He makes cuts. He makes it hard. He does so many things. We tried to have better awareness, but certainly not good enough.

Q. T.J., you played them multiple times, three times this year. I wonder if you can describe Dajuan Harris. He's so slight, he's not imposing, but -- physically imposing -- but drives you crazy.

COACH OTZELBERGER: You can tell he loves to play basketball. He's a great teammate. He has fun out there. He plays with a tremendous spirit. He's a competitor. He finds ways to impact winning in so many ways. He had

four steals. He's all over the place. He did a great job on our Gabe Kalscheur, who has been our leading scorer.

He finds so many ways to win. He is the heartbeat of the team, and as good as the other guys are and as much as Jalen Wilson is a tremendous scorer and great talent, Dajuan Harris controlled that game. A lot of respect for him.

Q. Coach, couple years ago, I don't know when it was exactly, Iowa State won this tournament as a No. 5 seed, which was the lowest seed of any team to win this tournament. Given the balance of this league, do you foresee a day when a 5 seed or lower wins this tournament?

COACH OTZELBERGER: It's certainly possible. There are so many good teams in our league right now that you feel like coming into it almost everybody has a chance. You want to be healthy, certainly, and we all are kind of playing our best basketball at different times.

Everybody goes through a tough stretch, so I could definitely see that happening because the league is so good, the teams are so good.

The right team gets hot at the right time it certainly could happen.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.

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