

Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Saturday, March 11, 2023

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

T-Mobile Center

Texas Longhorns

Coach Rodney Terry

Dylan Disu

Marcus Carr

Sir' Jabari Rice

Brock Cunningham

Postgame Press Conference

Texas 76, Kansas 56

THE MODERATOR: We are ready to begin with the championship team, the University of Texas, head coach Rodney Terry, and our student-athletes tonight are Dylan Disu, who happens to be the Most Outstanding Player of the championship; Marcus Carr, another member of the All-Tournament Team; Sir' Jabari Rice, another member of the All-Tournament Team; Brock Cunningham.

Coach?

COACH TERRY: Thank you so much. I would like to give a lot of -- thank God for this. I'm a strong believer and give him all the credit and everything likewise. I would like to also extend prayers to Coach Self, Hall of Fame coach, big-time program. A lot of respect for Kansas basketball.

But I'm really proud of these guys. These guys all season long, there probably hasn't been a team that has been challenged with adversity and staying the course. These guys worked hard every single day and really believed in what we were trying to get done this season.

We play in the best basketball league in the country, the Big XII. Night in and night out there were no nights off. This tournament we knew was going to be tough as well and we were excited about it, and these guys approached in their attitude toward this tournament, they wanted to be champions, they really did. They made it happen.

I'm really proud and excited for them. And, again, we tip



our hat to Kansas, a great team, great program, but we found a way to get it done today.

Q. Dylan, I would like to apologize for asking you if you were thinking about coming back to Texas next season. You were unstoppable this entire tournament. Talk about your mindset and the mindset of this team to get this done.

DYLAN DISU: We definitely have been talking about it all week, to put it on our defense. RT has really emphasized that, and we feel if we go out and play defense as hard as we can to the level we know we're capable of playing it at, there's not too many teams out there that can beat us.

So that's what we did be tonight, left it all out there on defense.

Q. Brock, you were here a couple years ago when Texas won its first one. How sweet does this feel after all you've been through this year and for you guys to be heading to the big tournament next week?

BROCK CUNNINGHAM: It feels amazing. Anytime you get to play in a scene like this is awesome, but it's a testament to the players and people within this program. It's good people from our managers and red-shirt players all the way throughout.

So I think that's been a big key to our success this season.

Q. Sir' Jabari, I think that was you that had the lob with four minutes to go in the game. At what point do you think, we got this? We're going to celebrate, but we're going to win this in Kansas City?

SIR'JABARI RICE: I don't think we thought about just the game was over at any point. I just thought we kept playing and whatever the outcome was going to be when the buzzer sounded, that's what we cared about.

But you try not to think about those type of things. When you are in the game you are trying to play to the buzzer sound, and we came out on the winning side.

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Q. Dylan, I predict that you're going to say that this was very much a team victory, but you got the Most Outstanding Player Award. Without Timmy on the floor this weekend, can you tell me what your thinking was and your thoughts now that you've been named the MOP?

DYLAN DISU: It goes back to my teammates, Timmy himself, as well and Coach just telling me to be aggressive anytime I get the ball inside. Obviously, like, I feel like I couldn't have got that award without my teammates.

A lot of my baskets I had to get the ball from a teammate, a pass from them. It was assisted baskets, so I mean, without them I wouldn't have had the award, so in my opinion it's a team award.

Q. Marcus, you got off to a little bit of a slow start shooting the ball, but then you drove it in, you got fouled, and you hit five shots in a row and you looked like you were in a total comfort zone. You were working the screen and roll with Dylan. Talk about what was going on in that game for you and how things seemed to slow down for you.

MARCUS CARR: Just trying to stay aggressive, but to be honest, things were opening up because the guys had to respect Dylan. They had to respect Jabari. He was scoring the ball as well.

So everybody was doing their part cutting, moving, knocking down shots. Brock hitting shots. Tyrese always being a threat. Everybody on the court was a threat, and I think I was just able to take advantage of these guys getting going early, and I was able to get to my spots and I was able to knock a couple shots down.

But I felt like we were all just flowing and playing well offensively.

Q. Is there a better way to enter the NCAA Tournament than winning by 20 in Kansas' backyard? What does that do for your hopes moving forward?

BROCK CUNNINGHAM: You only take this win for one night. I've been a part of a team that won this tournament and was on the receiving end of a terrible upset that first game. So we will have this game for tonight and then we will get back to work on Sunday after Selection Sunday.

Q. Brock, we know what you've been through this year and the job that Coach Terry has done. Why does he deserve that permanent job? What would you say to someone who asked that?

MARCUS CARR: Watch the game we just played and every single game we played this season.

SIR'JABARI RICE: If you watch the locker room afterwards, a lot of praise going to RT. Just everything that we've been through, I mean, for us to get to this point right now, especially to win it is like -- it's not us. We're playing the game but our preparation comes from him, so everything is RT.

BROCK CUNNINGHAM: My two cents is his appreciation for every day. You can be coming off a bad loss or a great win, but he's going to appreciate the day and have a good attitude going into that day, and that's huge.

Q. For Sir'Jabari, Coach talked about you getting starter minutes, and you got it today, but everybody knows you're the sixth man. In speaking about the contributions from the bench, did you feel that you had that edge on Kansas with quality depth for the Longhorns?

SIR'JABARI RICE: I don't look at it like an edge. I think all the guys on the bench came and did their job. Everybody did their job today. We usually have a good bench. Usually I come off the bench, but the next man had to step up for Timmy and we knew we had to get this done for Timmy.

We didn't want it to be a disappointment. My mentality is every time I come to a game do what I need to do. Whether it's start or off the bench, it's no real difference, so it comes down to getting stops and playing defense, so I think that's what we'll always focus on, and our bench gave us everything we needed.

Q. Marcus, Kansas kind of saying one game shouldn't defined a whole season, but for you guys, you have blown them out twice on two consecutive Saturdays. You may have gotten your coach a permanent job. What does this too for Texas now and going forward?

MARCUS CARR: First things first. Our coach, if he gets a permanent job he earned that himself. Secondly, obviously Kansas is one of the top teams in the country. This league is one of the top leagues. Anybody can beat anybody.

We're obviously proud of our two wins, but just like Brock was saying, we're going to have this win for one night and then prepare going forward. Always respect Kansas. We have had some great battles with them in my two years here, and I'm sure they are a team that's going to make their mark in the tournament as well.

So all respects to them and we're just looking to keep

moving forward.

Q. Brock, as a guy who is a defensive hound, can you talk about the job that Tyrese did tonight on Dajuan Harris and Arterio? Hunter went out and Arterio came in and defended him and kept him under wraps.

BROCK CUNNINGHAM: Both those guys did a great job on Dajuan Harris. Dajuan Harris is famous for initiating their offense, and having another player have to initiate their offense and bring the ball up doesn't allow them to get into a rhythm, and it make them start their offense closer to 18 to 20 seconds, which is a benefit to us, and Tyrese and Arterio did a great job.

Q. At the beginning of the game you all were basically neck and neck with KU, and then you were able to maintain a lead. What strategy did you use in order to maintain the lead and blow them out tonight?

MARCUS CARR: I think our defense. Like Dylan was saying earlier, it's definitely something we are able to hang our hat on. It's something we can control. You can't always control whether the ball goes in the basket. Some nights you're going to make shots and some nights you're not.

And you can always control the defensive end. I feel at some point we were able to take it to another level that we knew we could and we were able to string stops together.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, gentlemen. Congratulations.

Questions now for Coach Terry.

Q. Coach, how do you feel about your chances? National Coach of the Year by one outlet, 19-7, you win the Big XII tournament. How do you like your chances now?

COACH TERRY: Again, like I said earlier to open it up, I give all the glory to God for this opportunity. Just so blessed to work with a great group of guys, a great staff.

Man, we just enjoyed this journey. I've really tried to live where my feet are every day, and like I tell our guys all the time, live in the present, right now.

You can't control the future or the past, but you live in the present, and, man, it's a great day to be alive. I say that every day to our guys.

But me personally, I haven't given a lot of thought to that. Really tried to dedicate this season to my dad. I lost my

dad in August, and he would be really excited right now.

Q. RT, the team -- I mean, it was such a complete win. I mean, across the board. You said these guys want something more. What's giving you that sense? Take us behind the scenes on that.

COACH TERRY: Well, I think over the last six or seven ball games I think our guys have really bought into the defensive side of the ball and really tried to work hard at having our defense travel for us.

You know, we really are trying to put ourselves in the best position for the regular season crown as well. We had to go on the road and play two top programs at Baylor and TCU.

In each of those losses we still guarded pretty hard but we were disappointed with the outcome and as we got a chance back home to play KU at our place, the guys took it to another level in terms of playing really extremely hard defensively.

Once they got a taste of that against a top-level program coming into your home court, I think we have just taken off from there. We put everything on our defense today. We tried to sit down and set the tone in terms of guarding hard and leaving it on the floor and having no regrets and trying to get offense off our defense.

Q. Sorry to hear about your dad, Coach. Timmy Allen, any worries about him being ready for NAAs, or does he seem good to go for NCAA?

COACH TERRY: We have a great trainer in Warren. John Reilly does a great job, our strength coach. Those guys have been working with him tirelessly over the last few days. He's made a lot of good progress. When you are going into this tournament that we weren't going to jeopardize him in this tournament because we wanted him to be in the big tournament, because, again, we still want more and we want to be a hungry team that gets a chance to get in journey going for a ways.

We'd like to have him back in the big tournament, and we will continue to work him day-to-day.

Q. Rodney, looked like y'all had success with the screen actions. You even had Marcus involved as the screen guy in a couple of pick and rolls. How do you think you all performed in that?

COACH TERRY: In the last two games our guys were important for us, and we thought that juncture of the game it was working for us. Dylan was playing really well.



Marcus found his groove. A lot of time you want to play through guys that kind of got of got the hot hand, so we just kind of milked that for as much as we could and rode that on that end of the floor.

We got into trading baskets, and we didn't really want to trade baskets. We wanted to try to get some separation, and I thought our guys did a really good job sitting down, guarding. Arterio came in and did a good job on Harris.

You do a good job on Dajuan Harris, that's really the key to their team. Jalen Wilson is going to do what he does. Plater of the year and he's going to score the basketball, but if you do a great job on the supporting cast, and Harris in particular, then you're going to put yourself into a pretty good position to have a chance to beat KU.

Q. Dylan shot like 73% in this tournament. The guy was a monster. Got in foul trouble tonight. Picked up his third foul, 15 minutes left to play. Every time he came back in he was right back in rhythm. Talk about what's going on with him right now?

COACH TERRY: He's a very confident player right now, especially on the offensive end of the floor. All season long he has given us incredible rim protection in terms of shot blocking. He's one of the top shot-blockers in this league, and he's doing some of the dirty work, taking some charges as well.

But his offensive game over the course of the Big XII play has gotten better and better, and obviously having a presence in the paint has created a lot of scoring opportunities for our guards as well. So him raising his level of play for us has taken our team to another level in this highly competitive Big XII conference.

Q. Rodney, Selection Sunday is tomorrow. A lot of people have you guys as a 2 seed, but you are second in the nation in Quad one wins, won the tournament for the best conference in the nation. Do you guys think you have played well enough to deserve a 1 seed?

COACH TERRY: I think our body of work and building a resume. Every time we have stepped on the court we have tried to respect every opponent that we played this season with the thought in mind that every game is a NCAA Tournament game. I thought our guys have had an incredible run this entire season. I think, again, our body of work, our strength of schedule, playing in the best league in the country, you know, I think we made a good case for what comes our way some Sunday.

Q. RT, of what does it say about Arterio that he's come -- his defense at the beginning of the season to now?

You're putting him on Dajuan Harris, and the -- he got a steal, another break-away, that's three in two games. The alley-oop. Talk about what you're seeing from him.

COACH TERRY: He's a guy that's continued to develop over the season. He's played with older players this year that have done a great job really spending time with him, sharing their experiences that they have had at this level. I think his work ethic has gone to another level perform.

The thing I tried to echo to him throughout the course of the season is just keep working. There is going to come a meaningful time throughout the course of the season, in postseason play where you're going to have to step up and play big for us, and significant minutes for us, and he had a chance to do that in this tournament.

Give him a lot of credit for staying the course. So many times when you have a young player that has a chance to be really, really good in the future, they get caught up in the distractions and listening to other people. I think he's done a great job down the stretch of blocking the outside noise and just working and staying the course. I give him a lot of credit for doing that.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you so much and, again, congratulations.

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