

# Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Tuesday, March 12, 2024

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

T-Mobile Center

## UCF Knights

## Coach Johnny Dawkins

## Ibrahima Diallo

## C.J. Walker

### Postgame Press Conference

UCF - 77, Oklahoma State - 62

THE MODERATOR: We've got Head Coach Johnny Dawkins along with Ibrahima Diallo as well as C.J. Walker. Coach, if you could start us off.

JOHNNY DAWKINS: Well, it's our first year in the Big 12 Conference and first tournament and just really proud of how our guys represented our program. They came out very excited in the first half, played with a lot of energy. I thought the second half was one of the best defensive efforts to start a half that we have had since I've been coaching at UCF. I thought it was a great defensive effort to kind of build a lead in the second half. I was just really proud of how our guys played.

**Q. Coach, what did you see specifically defensively in the second half to start?**

JOHNNY DAWKINS: Our identity has been defense and the thing I like to see is a lot of energy, a lot of effort on every possession. I thought our guys were moving as one.

A lot of the things we focused on in the game plan, I thought our guys followed the scouting report very well. And we just tried to take away what we thought were some of their strengths. They're a good basketball team. Small is a tough guy to cover, as you know. But I thought our guys did a really good job of showing him a lot of attention and trying to make it as difficult as possible for him.

**Q. The first game there was a lot of fouls. You guys shot 36 free throws, but not like that tonight. What was very different offensively for the approach?**

JOHNNY DAWKINS: Well, exactly what you said. You



know, we took a different approach from that standpoint. We knew we fouled way too much in previous games so we really wanted to make sure we guarded without fouling. I thought we did a good job of that. That's disciplined. Our guys were very disciplined in the game, understanding that we can't put 'em on the line. They're a good basketball team when they get free throws. They're really good when they get out in transition. We really tried to just contain the things we thought they did really well and our I thought our guys were really locked in.

**Q. Ibrahima, you led UCF in scoring with 17 points. Were you feeling it out there offensively?**

IBRAHIMA DIALLO: Man, I was just out there for my team, so whatever they want me to do, I just did.

JOHNNY DAWKINS: He's a man of few words.

**Q. Coach, you play BYU tomorrow in the tournament. You played two close games against BYU. What could be different about this one?**

JOHNNY DAWKINS: We have to start studying them again and we have to try to find adjustments that we can make, because we had two close games, as you mentioned. They're a very good basketball team. Mark has done a very good job with this group. We need to study them this evening and find out the thing we need to do better. All we focused on coming into this tournament was Oklahoma State because you never know if that's going to be your last game or not, and so you pour everything into it, and now we will pour everything into BYU.

**Q. C.J., first Big 12. What was the mood like in the locker room?**

C.J. WALKER: We knew it was going to be hard. Winning ain't easy, so we rewarded ourselves with a lot of smiles. That's it. Next play.

JOHNNY DAWKINS: Guys, thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.



