

Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 13, 2024

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

T-Mobile Center

TCU Horned Frogs

Coach Jamie Dixon

Emanuel Miller

Jameer Nelson

JaKobe Coles

Postgame Press Conference

TCU - 77, Oklahoma - 70

THE MODERATOR: We have been joined by TCU Head Coach Jamie Dixon along with Emanuel Miller, Jameer Nelson, Jr. and JaKobe Coles. Coach?

JAMIE DIXON: Off to a good start. Wish we could have sustained it for forty minutes but they're a team that fights and battles and are very good offensively. They stretched us offensively with their pick and pops and their shooting throughout 1 through 4 and 5 at times, went small a couple times.

So, you know, our offense was good. I thought Eman played really good, we played through him a lot, tried to balance it out with some other guys, but the decision making was better through Eman. We did some really good things and beat a really good team with a high net, which is what you do in the Big 12 Tournament. So we're getting ready to go play against Houston. We played them once, beat them at our place, didn't play them at their place. So neutral court, Big 12. We gotta go play well and I'm sure our guys are excited about it.

Q. Jamie, I'm curious this time of year all the noise about the bubble, this, that and the other, how did you approach that preparing for this?

JAMIE DIXON: I think since the start of the year we've been kind of -- we've done what we needed to do and we were picked of that type of team to begin with. We weren't top-25 so if you're not, you're probably a bubble team and we lose a game early to Clemson. So every game has been a bubble for us, to be honest. There was a stretch



where we kind of got up to maybe a 7, 8 seed maybe at that point but, you know, had some injuries. We haven't been as good as you need to be over 32 games, but this is another win in the Big 12 and against a very good net team.

I think -- well, I guess what I'm trying to say, Steven, is it's been like this since after our first six games to be honest with you. As soon as we lost the Nevada game we knew we were pretty much going to be in that situation. So we played our way into it and that's good to see.

Q. It looked like the numbers on the sheet are pretty even across the board. Seemed like you guys were in total control of the game the entire time.

JAMIE DIXON: Again, we should have been better down the stretch. I think the lead got to 20 -- was it 20? I don't know what it got to, exactly; 19. Hey, it's why we're not a number one team in the country. We're not top-ten, to be honest with you. We're a team that just doesn't seem to sustain all the time. There may be some -- it's not like we're not trying, maybe some physical things, maybe some depth things, execution, new guards, could be. But I keep believing that we are, and we showed 20 minutes of it, probably the first 5 of the second half, but we're going to keep working on it, keep trying and putting this team -- I never thought this team was going to be ready at its best in November and I still think our best is going forward here.

Q. Eman, you said a couple days ago that this was going to be a fight. What do you think about ending this fight today?

EMANUEL MILLER: To be quite frank, we have to throw this game in the past because tomorrow we have a gritty team coming in that's trying to beat us. We have Houston and that's another fight, if not a bigger fight, right? It's about which one is going to step in the ring and win that fight, right? We have to prepare, get ready, get recovery in for tonight because tomorrow we are about to go back to battle again.

Q. Coach, you all are one of three teams to beat Houston this year, what's going to be the key to



beating them again tomorrow?

JAMIE DIXON: Rebounding, rebounding, rebounding. It's something we haven't done as well as we needed to do, but we've got to do it tomorrow at 2:00. Even this game here, even on the glass, we got to rebound. We are a team that I thought was going to be a better rebounding team, but we don't do it well enough. So we're playing one of the best rebounding-wise tomorrow. We've got to rise to the occasion.

I keep thinking that -- as I said earlier, it's going to -- it's going to get there, we're going to get there, it's going to click, we're going to recognize the physicality it needs. I believe tomorrow it's going to be, we're going to see a more physical team. They're going to let us play, I'm assuming, and that's how we're -- that's what we have to do, first and foremost.

Q. Eman, JaKobe, you guys have been here before, moving on to the next one, seemed like you guys weren't excited putting the TCU stamp on the next one. What is the message to the group moving on to the next game?

JAKOBE COLES: We've been in this position before. We shouldn't be surprised, we came in here wanting to win and knowing we need this win. We just need to move on, be ready for Houston tomorrow at 2. We have to come with a fight. We beat them the first time, but it's going to be a fight this time. So I think we're going to be ready and excited to play and I can't wait to play.

EMANUEL MILLER: You know, it's all about staying composed. Living in the moment, but not getting too comfortable, right? As exciting as it is to put our name and stamp it, we know we have so many more fights to come. I want to do something special here. I want to win this tournament, not just this game, I want to win this tournament. I want to beat Houston and I want to beat the next team and I want to win again and again and again all the way to March until the end, really. So it's a matter of staying composed, living in the moment and not getting too excited.

Q. Jamie, Oklahoma is in kind of a similar position. It's a bubble team. They weren't quite at full strength today but I'm wondering what you saw from them and if you can kind of put them in perspective?

JAMIE DIXON: We're a good team, they're a good team and honestly they're missing some guys. I didn't think Ernest was going to play, so he played. He hasn't practiced. So everybody has different things going on, they had some guys come off the bench and play well for

them, hit some big shots. So it is what it is. We've had guys out throughout the season. You just gotta get up and have guys step up. We started Chuck today and I thought he played really well. His numbers don't pop out at you, 7 points, but no turnovers, we're look for guys that don't turn it over and guard and don't make mistakes defensively. And to be honest with you he's done the best the last couple of games. That's why we went back to him. He's been in the program for three years and maybe that's what it takes because he was really solid for us and that's why we went with him.

As the big man. JaKobe, we played through him and Eman, too. So they've been here. They've been through it. I keep thinking we're go to cut down a couple of things we need to cut down, turnovers and field goal percentage defense, but today not quite where we need to be. So has to be tomorrow or we'll come up short. They've got some guys out, we've had some guys out. We didn't get any bonus points I don't think for it. But I tell you, their guys that came off the bench did well. The guy that hit a big shot, Cooper, we knew he could shoot. The guard hit a big shot, Manga, as well, and then Uzan just kept going and hit some big shots down the stretch to close the deficit. I wish it would have been more, but we don't seem to be the team that finishes out things like we would, but I keep believing it's going to happen here tomorrow.

Q. Jamie, forgive me if you have been asked this, but Houston has lost three times this year, you're one of the teams to beat 'em. It was early in conference, but is there something you can take away from that meeting?

JAMIE DIXON: We had them at home, not at their place. This is neutral court. They're number 1, they didn't play. And Eman will have to play a lot of minutes but he's built for it. It won't be that we're not ready to play or that we're tired, but as I said earlier, we have to outrebound them and that's a hard task. Again, coming off a -- even on the glass today. We've got to be better and we will stress it, we'll see and I do believe that this is the time that we will step up and do the things we need to do against a really good team.

Q. JaKobe, what's it like on the court when you get the ball from Eman, what was going through your mind seeing him play the way he did tonight?

JAKOBE COLES: When someone is hot, I'm telling them to get the ball. I want whoever is best to have the ball in their hands I want them to have it. He had the high end today. We play really good together in the high/low. So I trust him every time and he trusts me and that's why we've been successful and I'm going to trust him every time, and

any other teammate who gets hot. I thought he did a great job today at executing the plays and being strong and composed and finishing at the rim. So it was good.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you.

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