

Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 13, 2024

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

T-Mobile Center

Oklahoma Sooners Coach Porter Moser Milos Uzan

Le'Tre Darthard

Postgame Press Conference



we were guys down.

I thought these guys 100% battled, toughness, and their mentality was we were going to win. We didn't play the best, we had 18 turnovers, but in terms of believing and gritty against a very good TCU team, I got a ton of respect for my guys and I love 'em.

Q. I know you guys are confident that you're going to be in the NCAA Tournament. The Committee says that they consider injuries and a team's injury situation. Are you confident that the committee will take a look at what you guys have done as a whole rather than what you are now, down a few guys?

PORTER MOSER: Absolutely. We have zero Quad 2, 3 or 4 losses. Like I said, we were 18-6 full strength. The good thing about it is -- like, Rivaldo is almost day to day. It wasn't worth it for him to come out tonight. It was about 65, 70%. If we played Houston tomorrow he might be ready to go. So he will definitely be back. Javian is the same way and John has been working out, practicing, and he is going to be at full strength. We are going to be at full strength by this weekend. I know the first round is not until the second weekend, but in terms of our body of work, we have zero Quad 2, 3 or 4 losses in the best conference in the country. You look at our defense. We were 31 going into the game and TCU has one of the best offenses. So we could end up top-30 defenses. Our offense is the top-50. With the schedule we've had, with zero Quad 2, 3 or 4 losses, being 20-12 going into this week, and our guys know that we are going to be at full strength and where we were at full strength until we just hit this bug these last couple of weeks, but we're going to be at full strength by this weekend.

Q. Milos, wondering how much pride kicked in for you guys in the second half, just kind of keep chipping away at the lead and not quitting on this game?

MILOS UZAN: I mean, yeah, sure, we got a bunch of guys on this team that want to win. We knew what was at cost. We had a couple guys down, and I love our fight and our bench for coming in and impacting this game. Yeah, shoot, I mean, that's all I got.

TCU - 77, Oklahoma - 70

THE MODERATOR: We have Oklahoma Coach Porter Moser with us, along with Milos Uzan and Le'Tre Darthard. Coach?

PORTER MOSER: Just so proud of our guys. I thought they were absolutely gritty at this, tough. Under the adverse circumstances, I thought they played their tails off. They competed until the end. You talk about a kick to the manhood at the end of the half, that shot being down 14 to come into the locker room. You come into the locker room after that crazy sequence at the end of the half and to have our guys fight back after that, to come back and hold 'em to 32 points the second half. I just thought the guys never quit, they always believed and they knew there were adverse circumstances being down some guys.

Q. Porter, you mentioned the adverse conditions you guys were faced with today, just being down a few key guys. How did you think the rest of the team responded to those extra minutes?

PORTER MOSER: I thought some guys off the bench that hadn't played a lot. Kaden Cooper came in, knocked down a three and got 4 rebounds. Maks came in and knocked down a three. This this team is very close. They're very, very hungry. They knew we've been down. We stayed healthy, almost the whole year. First 23 games, we were at full strength -- first 24. We were 18-6 at full strength with the top-20 schedule in the country. And we just hit this injury bug the last seven or eight games and the guys know it and they know it's about to come to an end. We are going to be at full strength probably Friday or Saturday. I thought these guys were absolutely --- had tremendous belief in each other, belief in one another, even knowing



Q. For both the players, how have these injuries the last few weeks disrupted you guys, especially on the offensive end and getting those guys back here hopefully for the NCAA Tournament? Are you concerned about having to kind of re-gel as a team with those guys back?

MILOS UZAN: Yeah. I mean, shoot, like Coach said, this week we got three guys down right now and they'll be back. I'm super excited for them to come back. I do think we will be in this tournament, so I'm excited for them to come back and come back with a healthy team.

LE'TRE DARTHARD: I could piggyback off that. This team, we gel well together, like Coach said we love each other. So that gelling part does nothing. If the Committee is looking at this game, they should see we have fight. Like Coach said, we've been 18-6 when we're fully healthy. So come the tournament, that we should be a sight to see. We're really good when we're fully healthy.

Q. Porter, what do the next few days look like? Obviously you don't know if you will for sure be in, or who you will play, so what does it look like for this team?

PORTER MOSER: Obviously you don't know who you play. I feel very confident we will be in. With our resume, we should be. Obviously we're going to go back, get some recovery. I've been in this boat before. You get some recovery, you get some skill work, you stay sharp and then you see on Selection Sunday.

But it's Wednesday, we're going to take a day or two where we're going to get our bodies and mind recovered from this so we can be completely fresh and healthy at our best going into next week, because it's a grind this Big 12. It is every three days, and it's going to feel like Christmas for these guys to have a reprieve to get their body and minds healthy and ready to go.

Q. Coach, you haven't had an eight-day stretch of just practices in a long time. What will the focus be, things you can fine tune heading into the tournament?

PORTER MOSER: Man, my mental arithma -- I don't know what would be better for him: To have a nine-course meal or to have eight days of practice. That's how much he loved having a practice break. I think it's going to be great to recover fresh, get fresh everything, bodies, everything, and then work on some skill. Work on everything, spacing, getting -- everything that sometimes when the grind of the season happens.

So we're going to take advantage. Would I like to be playing? Hell yeah, I wish I was playing Houston. I wish I was playing the day after Houston. But now what can we control? That's what we're going to do. We're going to get fresh, get our minds right, our bodies right and work on skills, spacing, stuff like that.

Q. Coach, I asked this to a lot of coaches, but I think it's especially true in your case. After the grind of the Big 12, how excited are you to play somebody outside of the league once you go to the NCAA Tournament, and obviously I'm assuming you think you're well tested?

PORTER MOSER: We for sure are well tested. Our non -- even when you look on the our nonconference, we played USC they were a top-20 team. They're fully healthy now and you just saw 'em beat Arizona. We played -- our one loss in nonconference was North Carolina. They could be a one or two seed. Houston is going to be a one seed. Kansas, we played at Kansas when they were at full strength both times. So we played the best of the best, and we're going to take a break and we'll see who we play in the tournament.

And hopefully - I know everybody -- I think everybody says that in every conference, so I will be honest with you, I think everybody says that in every conference. It's a new chance to play someone different, so we're not alone in the Big 12 wanting to play somebody different, and I'm sure we will be the same way.

Q. Porter, what do you think of Jalon's performance stepping up when you were down three major contributors tonight?

PORTER MOSER: Jalon does what he does. He competes every play. He competes every play. He gets his athleticism into the game. He gets his passion into the game, and I thought he competed every second of the game. And I mean, just -- he's a warrior, as all these guys are. Both these guys, I mean, Milos literally had to handle the ball 98% of the time. Not easy against a veteran, older team like TCU.

He had to handle that thing like 98% of the time. Not easy. It's physical, and he did it. Tre, guarding up there -- you know how many ball screens Tre had to get through at the top? Very physical game. I thought my guys were warriors battling and not having any excuses. It was never like poor us, it was let's go. Let's go compete, and that's why I love coaching these guys.

Q. Porter, you talked about it yesterday. You felt like Otega was poised for a big bounce-back. What do you

think about what he was able to do today?

PORTER MOSER: I thought he just -- I thought he had a great bounce in practice. I thought he was locked in defensively. Offensively he had a bounce, smiling, and he just looked like he was back to old Otega and ready to go, and we said that among our staff, too. So that's a great sign for us. Because he did some good things tonight.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you very much.

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