

Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 13, 2024

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

T-Mobile Center

Kansas State Wildcats

Coach Jerome Tang

Arthur Kaluma

Tylor Perry

Postgame Press Conference



Dai Dai. Super proud of him. Like Ar just said, it's just the tip of the iceberg for him. To play in his first Big 12 Tournament game and for him to have zero turnovers, you don't get that from freshmen too many times. And for him to stay poised the way he did, couldn't be more proud of him.

Q. For either of the players, doesn't matter which one. Talk about the start of the second half, scored the first 7 and you were in the game the rest of the way.

TYLOR PERRY: Going in the locker room and Coach Tang telling us we got to get back to being us. We knew we didn't want to beat ourselves so getting back to being grit and grimey and playing harder than them. And we think we let them get away in the first half by them playing harder than us and that's not who we are. We're not going to out-talent anybody. So we have to be the hardest working team and the hardest playing team and we had to get back to that in the second half.

Q. Guys, curious if you could put into words the emotions you guys are feeling right now coming off that big win?

ARTHUR KALUMA: It's not done yet. It's not over. We still got games to win. But I'm glad that we got this one out of the way, but we're focused on the next game.

TYLOR PERRY: Biggest one is tomorrow. We can enjoy this one for the next couple hours and then we got the number 17 team in the country on the same floor as us. So we gotta respect 'em just like we did when they came to Kansas a couple days ago and we gotta bring the fight to them.

Q. Coach, just talk about Iowa State. They're rested tonight. You guys have a quick turnaround. Talk about what you are expecting tomorrow against Iowa State.

JEROME TANG: Yeah, I'm going to go and just enjoy this with the guys for a few minutes and then we will lock in on Iowa State. Obviously they've had a great year. They're going to probably be a 2 seed in the NCAA Tournament.

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THE MODERATOR: Coach Tang has joined us early. We will have the players join us momentarily. We will ask Coach to go ahead and get things started with comments about the game.

JEROME TANG: First of all, I want to thank my Lord and a Savior Jesus Christ. God has been doing wonderful things with these young men. He has done such incredible things in all these guys' lives. I'm most proud this year of how much they have all matured as men. How much their care factor for each other has grown. I thought in the second half that showed in the way they played.

Q. Coach, you played this team about a month ago down in Austin and Dylan Disu had 20 points. What was the game plan tonight to limit Disu?

JEROME TANG: I don't know that we limited Dylan Disu. I think he got in foul trouble so he didn't get to play as many minutes. He only played 22 minutes this game. We did have -- he's a First-Team All Conference guy so obviously there was a lot of attention paid to him there, but sometimes foul trouble causes that for a young man.

Q. Question for both players. Dai Dai Ames comes in and gives you a and electric second half. How much of a boost was that for you guys?

ARTHUR KALUMA: Dai Dai has been huge for us, even in practice. He's always had that dog in him and for him to come out here and perform on a big stage I'm super proud of my guy. Tip of the iceberg for a really good player.

TYLOR PERRY: Everybody knows how I feel about that



One of the best defensive teams in our league. They pride themselves on all the things we pride ourselves on, too. So TJ does a great job with his program. I'm just happy we get a chance.

Q. Jerome, in what areas have you seen Dai Dai improve the most when he first got on to campus to now, when he's playing more like a sophomore than a freshman?

JEROME TANG: In all areas, right? He's learning how to play with pace, you know, and not just one speed. Today in transition I saw him look up and see numbers and pull it back. And it ended up getting us an easy bucket because he didn't just go attack one on two. You see growth in him every day. I'm really proud of him. The thing I know is he's not afraid, never afraid and that's what I love about him.

Q. Jerome, I wonder if you could speak to the defensive effort in the second half. Was that part of the halftime message or were there specifics that you thought the guys locked in on?

JEROME TANG: I thought Coach Maligi put a great game plan together in what we wanted to do to be able to slow them down. In the first half I didn't think that we were executing it the way we needed to. I told the guys, the team that was beating us was in our locker room. It wasn't the dudes on the other side. If we could get ourselves out of our own way then we would have a chance in the second half, and they did it.

Q. Coach, I'm curious, you had a hug with Brett Yormark as you were going into the tunnel. Was there anything said in that moment and what did that mean to you for him to acknowledge a great win?

JEROME TANG: We have a great Commissioner. He is on it. He is very in tune with what's going on across the country athletic-wise and then what we need to help our conference, not just be the best conference in the country but be -- because, you know, there is a saying you don't just want to be better than everybody else. You want to be one that stands alone. I believe we can have a conference that can stand alone and he's the kind of leader that can get us there. The fact that he's so personable and so forward thinking, it means a lot.

Q. You had quite the moment with Jareem headed to the locker room. Curious what that guy means to you and what were the emotions in that moment?

TYLOR PERRY: He's like my big brother. He's the reason that I'm here, him and Coach Tang, and I know he wants this moment just as much as I do, and the rest of our team

do. I couldn't be more thankful for that guy, and I don't tell him enough. I couldn't be more thankful for him, for what he's done in my life, and we have a big brother, little brother relationship, and I'm just blessed to be in his presence. Nobody has a clue the stuff he does behind the scenes and the type of coach he is.

I know he's always on his phone and putting things on social media, but nobody really knows what he's doing. So I'm blessed to have somebody like that in my life and that's a long-time person I can call.

Q. For the three of you, I was wondering if you could put into words exactly what the crowd was like tonight. Seemed like there was a good turnout of Kansas State contention out there.

ARTHUR KALUMA: I mean, felt like I was playing at a home game, know what I'm sayin'? We in KC, everybody came through. Just love from the fans. I'm glad they were able to come out and support us today.

TYLOR PERRY: We need 'em. Got the best fans in the world, and I truly believe that. When they run with us, I feel like we're invisible. We need 'em. Just as much as they want to see us play, we appreciate them so much. Hopefully they're here again tomorrow and get us going again.

JEROME TANG: I would like to tell them to go buy up those tickets that people are getting rid of and come support us tomorrow, because we really need you.

Q. Jerome, you said you wanted this game to be a rock fight, but you scored 49 points in the second half. How fulfilling is that when the initial game plan isn't there and you find another way to win?

JEROME TANG: It was great, but in the second half they shot 29% from two and 27% from three, and then we got to the free throw line. We had more paint points than they did. That was what I wanted to see. You know, and it helps when some shots go in, but I thought us living in the paint was the kind of grittiness I was looking for.

Q. Two turnovers in the second half. What was it you did so well in the second half?

TYLOR PERRY: I stopped turning the ball over. (Laughter.)

JEROME TANG: Amen!

THE MODERATOR: Okay, Coach, thank you.

