

# Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Tuesday, March 11, 2025

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

T-Mobile Center

**Arizona State Sun Devils**

**Coach Bobby Hurley**

**Alston Mason**

**Basheer Jihad**

Postgame Press Conference

Kansas State 71, Arizona State 66

THE MODERATOR: We're joined now on the dais with Arizona State Head Coach Bobby Hurley along with Basheer Jihad. Coach?

BOBBY HURLEY: I just want to compliment my team just not only tonight, but over like the last six weeks. Just got a ton of respect for the heart and the will and the determination to keep competing.

I know it hasn't resulted in victories and wins, but these guys with where our numbers are at and the bodies we have for these guys to play the minutes they played and been very competitive.

We didn't get off to a great start in this game and they jumped us early and made a lot of threes early in the game. I think they shot 2 for 21 from 3 versus Iowa State their last game, and that wasn't the case early.

They were really putting the ball in the basket. You take those few minutes out of the game it's fairly even, an evenly played game. We got good balance.

But I feel really bad for our seniors in particular. I think Alston and Basheer gave us their hearts and had tremendous seasons individually, both of those guys.

To a degree our staff and myself let them down by not having enough guys in the program that could contribute. You gotta project that things could happen and injuries could happen and stuff that can derail your season.

So that's something weigh on me. I will have a lot of regret because these guys, I think if we had the whole puzzle



together it was an NCAA Tournament team and that's just not what it is right now at the moment.

THE MODERATOR: Alston Mason has joined us.

**Q. Can you players talk about the fact that this team hasn't quit. This game looked like it took the same pattern of a lot of games where you had a chance down the stretch and maybe not enough stops and not enough baskets.**

BASHEER JIHAD: We want to win, so we're going to go out there and give it our all no matter how many bodies we have, so that same mentality.

ALSTON MASON: Yeah, piggyback off what Basheer said. All the guys want to win, and all we can do is just show up and play hard and play together.

But, unfortunately, we just couldn't, you know, get the outcome that we wanted.

**Q. Coach, Alston had 17 points tonight; he's been nearing forty minutes every game last couple of weeks. What do you say about the way he stepped up for you as a leader on and off the floor?**

BOBBY HURLEY: I would say with no disrespect to any guards in the Big 12, over the last five or six weeks he's playing as good as any guard in the conference. You love to see that for a senior to finish his career playing the way he's played. He's really picked up the slack for the losses that we've sustained. He kind of in some of these games put the team on his back.

Got a lot of respect. I looked at the box score after the game and he picked up some foul issues. If you look at his plus-minus it's a plus 6 in a game we lost by five, and he was only out of the game for four minutes.

That tells you his value and why I don't take him out of the game too often.

**Q. Coach, Terrell Miller tried to play today; he clearly didn't look the same. Did you try to shut him down in**

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## **the second half?**

BOBBY HURLEY: Yeah, there was nothing he could have done to make that injury worse, but he just was struggling to move in a normal way. I'm not great at math. My Duke education is no kicking in for that. But, 75%, 60%, I don't know what he was, but it wasn't the same guy I've been seeing.

And then all the time at halftime, just that 15 minutes, and then he just got stiff and there was some other stuff going on and he was cramping, too. He just hasn't had a lot of practice time. It was like, let's see if we can get him to play tonight.

## **Q. Coach, your first year in the Big 12 officially over. What is something that you may have learned about the league that you may not have expected coming in?**

BOBBY HURLEY: It's like what I touched on before. We need a deeper team. You can't expect to play against the caliber of the opponents we are playing with, the athletes and the physicality and the schedule. You're going to play at BYU, then you got Colorado at home, and three days later you're at Kansas. And then you get -- your award is you get Baylor at home.

So it's like -- there is a lot of heavy hitters in this league. You've got to have depth. You've got to have more players, more options, more physicality.

Those are certainly things that I would say just off the top of my head.

## **Q. How about the players? I'm curious as to you both played in other conferences. For Alston and Basheer, your take on playing in the Big 12 this year?**

ALSTON MASON: Well, I've been here before. My freshman year I was here, so I kinda had a good feel of like what it would be like, the physicality and all that.

But with our team I had the highest expectations with the caliber of players we had and the people and the characters that each of my teammates had.

But with the injuries and everything kinda made a lot of things a lot more difficult and gave us a challenge that was kind of hard for us to overcome.

BASHEER JIHAD: Like Coach said, having those heavy hitters almost every game, coming back home, having to play Baylor stuff like that, it's a big challenge, you know, and it's tough for sure.

## **Q. Bobby, I was wondering you said about trying to get more guys, a year ago you were saying you needed to go out and get people excited to give you resources, hit the portal. Do you need more of that or are there other strategies to do what you're talking about?**

BOBBY HURLEY: We had full commitment from ASU, and we put the team together. We were supported, and we were able to go get elite guys in the portal, like Basheer and Mason, and we brought in high-profile freshmen.

And for the freshmen, they both, at different stretches in the season, had significant injuries that they had to go through, and both of those guys were a big part of what we're doing.

So when I was saying that I mean like we just have to do a better job of having more options in case something happens with the key player that you try not to miss a beat or you could overcome it until those players get back and healthy again. I didn't do the best job, but ASU is not the problem whatsoever. They really backed us to go out and put together a team that should have been an NCAA Tournament team but we did not get the job done in that regard.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much.

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