

# Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 12, 2025

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

T-Mobile Center

Cincinnati Bearcats

Coach Wes Miller

Jizzle James

Postgame Press Conference

Iowa State 76, Cincinnati 56

THE MODERATOR: Joining us on the dais is Cincinnati Head Coach Wes Miller, along with Jizzle James.

Coach?

WES MILLER: Yeah, well, I thought our guys were -- obviously our whole program was disappointed coming into the tournament with our play the last week of the regular season, and I was really proud of the way our guys came here and responded.

I thought we played with great effort yesterday, and I thought for 35 minutes tonight we played with great effort.

Again, I thought our frustration got the best of us when it felt out of hand there at the end. Our guys fought, and I thought it was a little bit of a lid on it tonight.

They're a great defensive team but we generated some really good shots tonight and just felt like we couldn't get them to go like we wanted.

We kind of stayed with it, and then I think Dillon's dunk at 4 left in the second half cuts it to three, we get it back to five a couple times. You know, obviously not happy with the outcome and disappointed, but we had our chances against a good team.

**Q. You kinda mentioned the three point disadvantage and also against Kansas State when they took a three-point lead and how dejected your guys were; did you see that situation today having a big impact?**

WES MOORE: No, I didn't think that happened. I thought we dunked it, they go down, and I think they score at the rim. And then I think we just made a bad read.



We ran a good action and it kinda wasn't there. We got the turnover on the baseline and we get it back to five.

I didn't see that. I think when it got double figures in the last two and a half minutes in the game, I think a lot of frustration and being where we are at this point in the year kind of showed there. I didn't think while the game was still in hand -- I didn't see that, I just think we didn't convert come plays.

I thought our guys' fight was there. If anything, they wanted it too bad. I think Josh has a three with four and some change, and I think it's a 9-point game, and if it goes in it cuts it to 6. It was a really good look.

You could see on his face when it didn't go in. Sometimes we've wanted it too bad at times. I didn't see the give-in at all.

Listen, in the last two minutes when they kind of felt like it was over I thought we showed some frustration. Outside of that, no, I didn't see that when they made a run.

**Q. Anything you can pinpoint on the rebounding? You rebounded the ball really well yesterday and then today, Iowa State got you pretty good again.**

WES MOORE: I think it was lack of effort. I think AZ getting into foul trouble, that hurts, and we gotta play small. We're just giving up a lot of size and physicality.

Certainly there's possessions here and there where you miss a box-out or you don't get after the ball like you should but I thought the overall effort to the ball isn't necessarily accurate and the rebounding disparity.

I thought some of it was just playing a really small front court, being depleted in the front court. Again, you take out the last two minutes of the game our fight was fine. We couldn't convert enough. We made a couple of defensive errors in the second half, but it wasn't for lack of trying.

**Q. Yesterday, the news record, 12-2 start for Iowa State out of the gate. How detrimental was that getting**



### **off to that slow start?**

WES MOORE: You always want to get off to a good start. That has not been a problem with our team. We usually get off to pretty damn good starts.

There was a little bit of a lid on it. We got some early looks there in the game but they just didn't go. We stayed with it. I told our guys at halftime, we were down 9 at half and we could not make a shot, and I thought their toughness and their fight was the only reason we were in a three-possession game.

### **Q. Jizzle, what would you say is the biggest thing you've learned in year two in the Big 12?**

JIZZLE JAMES: I would say the biggest thing I learned this year is responding to adversity. We had some tough stretches, you know, and we had some games go how we did not want them to go.

So it's how you bounceback, you know, sticking together, blocking the outside noise and staying together as a team and trying to complete the mission that you set out to do at the beginning of the season.

### **Q. Coach, what happens from here? Assuming you go to the Crown Tournament, that's 19 days away. What does the schedule look like? I'm sure you haven't wrapped your head around that, but that's a long time.**

WES MOORE: The thing that we've been focused on is trying to play in the NCAA Tournament. I think we were fourth in the NET before we played Kansas State at home less than a week ago, so it felt within reach.

You come here, we felt like we could play with everybody in this league and make a run here, so that's been our -- we haven't talked about anything past that at this point.

I think the thing that I told our guys in the locker room is, and Jizzle just echoed it a little bit, we're disappointed to be in the position we're in. We felt like we had a team that could make a run in the NCAA Tournament, not just before the season started but at a bunch of points throughout the year.

The thing that I implored each of them to do, and I think we need to do the same thing as a staff, every one of us, is to take what we experienced this year and learn from it.

Like this can be a very, very valuable thing for all of us moving forward if we will learn from it. There's a lot of lessons to be learned this year and to me that's -- again,

my mindset right now is there, and my mindset is, you know, getting this team back to Cincinnati.

### **Q. Would you have enough if you got into another tournament?**

WES MOORE: I hadn't thought about anything other than the NCAA Tournament at this point.

### **Q. What would you say is the biggest thing you learned? You talked about how year one was such a big change; what about year two?**

WES MOORE: Yeah, like I said to the team, there is a numerous amount of things that we learned this year. I'm not going to -- you're local with us and you can ask that question at the next press conference and we can kinda dive into that.

We're crushed off a game. Our guys played their hearts out here in Kansas City. They're crushed. They were responding to a bad week last week the way we all expected them to. We just couldn't get over the hump tonight and they're crushed. I'll get into -- there is a laundry list of things but I think -- I don't even the to start, right?

There is a laundry list, but there is -- you mentioned rebounding, there is a physicality in this league that's different than the other leagues and you gotta have a level of physicality, that's for sure, but there's a number -- that's just off of tonight, right?

I don't think our effort to the board was any different tonight than it was yesterday. I don't think it was any different. I think Jizzle would tell you the same thing. But the teams that are in the top half of this league, it's a different deal. That's where we expect to be. So there is just one example. Like we have to make sure that we have the right level of size and physicality when we put line-ups out on the court, and tonight, again, it wasn't a fight thing, but you're looking at line-ups where -- Dishon Jackson look at his numbers, 15 rebounds. He's 260, 270 pounds. Joshua Jefferson, he's 6-9. I'm guessing, but he looked like he's 245, 250 pounds. There is a level of physicality that we gotta make sure that we have.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.

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