

# Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 12, 2025

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

T-Mobile Center

**Kansas Jayhawks**

**Coach Bill Self**

**AJ Storr**

**Zeke Mayo**

Postgame Press Conference



Kansas 98, UCF 94

THE MODERATOR: Joining us on the dais is Kansas Head Coach Bill Self and he is joined by AJ Storr and Zeke Mayo. Coach?

BILL SELF: Well, we're happy we won. We didn't play our best, but I think they had a lot to do with that. When we had a chance to kinda break the game open, we didn't take advantage of it.

But fortunately Zeke and AJ both made shots and Hunt made three threes in the second half that were all huge, and we needed every one of them. That was not a very good defensive performance out there tonight.

**Q. Coach, you decided to go with AJ down the stretch. Talk about that decision, his performance, and the trust you might have in him now.**

BILL SELF: Well, I think I was told by a third party today I got a good feeling about AJ Storr and I actually agreed with him.

Although we didn't do anything different from a substitution deal, but he was obviously one of the better players in the game without question.

We needed his offense without question, so he was big for us tonight. We don't win the game without him.

**Q. Bill, can you take us through what the intention was on the last play of regulation, last offensive possession you guys had?**

BILL SELF: In regulation?

**Q. Yeah.**

BILL SELF: I think if I'm not mistaken we were running a play to get the ball to Hunter and didn't they deny you and you back cut it? They denied it, we threw the ball to KJ, which wasn't the play, and KJ tried to do too much there.

That was poor execution. We didn't do anything like -- the ball was supposed to go to Hunt and we didn't get it there.

**Q. AJ, how does it feel to get your KU career high in points and did you feel it tonight?**

AJ STORR: It felt good, just happy we walked out with a dub. Heck of a game. Looking forward to the rest of the tournament.

**Q. What was the difference for you tonight in scoring so many?**

AJ STORR: I think I just started off going downhill. I seen the ball go in couple times and I stepped out to the three and then it was money, so...

**Q. Is it a great relief or happiness to do so well?**

AJ STORR: I'm just focusing on the next game; just looking forward to winning it.

**Q. Zeke, what do you think of AJ?**

ZEKE MAYO: I thought he did fantastic. We've known that he could score the ball like that. This was a great game for him, coming out party for sure. We needed every bucked.

As long as he stays aggressive I'm sure we will live with the results.

**Q. Coach, you talked earlier about not being super pleased with the way you played defensively, but KJ was good down the stretch it seemed like on Keyshawn Hall tonight. Could you explain your thoughts on his effort on that end of the court tonight?**



BILL SELF: Yeah, we take KJ for granted, but if we didn't have KJ to guard Keyshawn, I don't know what he would have gone for, because once you get 25, and KJ probably guarded him 25 of his 43 minutes where he was a primary defender at least.

He may have had 5 or 7 in those times so obviously we didn't do a good job when he wasn't on him. We tried to switch ball screens early, which put different guys on him and that wasn't very smart, so we tried to play straight the second half.

But KJ down the stretch was really good.

**Q. Coach, what is the challenge and the benefit of playing a team that you just saw four days ago like you will with Arizona tomorrow?**

BILL SELF: It's going to be a challenge because they've got really good guys and they've got a really good team. The benefit is -- when we get back at midnight and have dinner at 12:30 and then get up tomorrow morning, the benefit is from a preparation standpoint, they're going to be more familiar with it than -- at least I think they will be than what we normally would be. So I think that's the benefit, if anything.

**Q. Coach, more on that topic. Is there anything -- I know you're still digesting the performance tonight, but is there anything that you take away from that performance on Saturday that you think you can bring into tomorrow or game planning you might have been doing?**

BILL SELF: I actually thought on Saturday we had four seniors play very, very, very well and it was barely enough. So -- in our building. It's going to take a great energy-type game. We're going to have to play big, obviously, and we gotta be able to guard the ball probably better than we did on Saturday.

I thought Saturday was a really good basketball game that was well played by both teams. It could have gone either way. We just made probably a couple more plays down the stretch.

The biggest thing for me and I think our guys is that was a great effort by us. It was barely enough, so we gotta bring at least that plus tomorrow.

**Q. Bill, you commented in your opening statement about the defensive effort. Beside the point total, what specifically stood out to you about that?**

BILL SELF: I thought we didn't play to the scouting report.

Their players got to their strong hand way too often. I didn't think we defensively rebounded the ball poorly at all. I thought there were some good things from a defensive rebounding standpoint which is an area that we can always improve on.

But I thought our bad switches, not getting to shooters and then overguarding nonshooters and certainly not being in good help position when guys drove it. Because it's not really fair to the guy that's playing one-on-one to say, go stop Johnson and Hall.

They need to feel like they're being guarded from either side, and I didn't think we did a good job at all tonight.

**Q. Zeke, you've had two 5 of 7 from threes the last two games after kind of a rough stretch. What's going on there, and do you expect Arizona will defend you differently tomorrow?**

ZEKE MAYO: It's just honestly about my confidence and being aggressive early. Obviously seeing that first one go down helps a lot. Just seeing the ball go through the basket gave me a bunch of confidence throughout the rest of the game.

I mean, Arizona is going to play me how they decide to play me and that's that.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you.

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