

Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 13, 2025

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

T-Mobile Center

BYU Cougars

Coach Kevin Young

Trey Stewart

Richie Saunders

Postgame Press Conference



is obviously -- that's their hallmark, that was a really good carryover for us.

Q. Initial thoughts about playing either Colorado or Houston tomorrow night?

KEVIN YOUNG: Yeah, I mean, Colorado obviously came in here with some pride after having a disappointing -- going through the conference late. So they're playing with house money in a lot of ways, which can be dangerous.

And obviously Houston is a team who -- they speak for themselves.

So for us, we played them super early on. They were our first Big 12 road game and they smacked us. We've grown a lot since then. We feel like we've found our identity since that time.

Whoever we play we will try to go out there and be the best version of ourselves.

Q. Richie, the three to put you guys up 4 with about 40 something seconds left in the game, talk about the play and were you surprised at how wide open you were?

RICHEL SAUNDERS: Yeah, maybe a little bit, but just Dawson Baker is an incredible passer. He got to two feet and luckily I was the one that had a window.

Just talking about that, the 2 feet is so key for us. Yes, we shot 50% from three, that's incredible but it's because of the shots that we were taking and those kind of shots versus just off the dribble or just early shot clock shots.

We had a lot of we call them paint-to-great threes, and that was just one of them.

Q. Kevin, no one needs to remind you how many turnovers you had up in Ames.

KEVIN YOUNG: I knew you would.

Q. Only ten today. What was different? Obviously

BYU 96, Iowa State 92

THE MODERATOR: Joining us on the dais is BYU Head Coach Kevin Young along with Trey Stewart and Richie Saunders. Coach?

KEVIN YOUNG: Obviously hard-fought game. They had guys down and they had guys step up. The show that Curtis Jones put on in the first half was remarkable. Felt like no matter what we did he was going to make a shot.

Our guys did a good job of weathering the storm and did enough on both sides of the ball to give ourselves the lead.

Trey came in and gave us good defense; Richie has made some huge plays for us all year. Made some huge plays, some huge free throws down the stretch which is something that we rely on.

The last thing, big picture, I mean, to go 24 assists on 30 made shots is an incredible number, so I think that speaks to how unselfish our guys are and they play for each other, and I thought that was on full display.

Q. Coach, talk about 50% from three point range 18 of 36.

KEVIN YOUNG: Yeah, I mean, I think that's a season high for us, 18 makes. I just told the guys in the locker room though, you don't just show up to the gym and go 18 of 36 from three. It's not even just the shot-making. It's how those there's are generated, something we pride ourselves on in terms of spacing the floor and try to turn down a good shot for a great shot.

Our guys have been that way all season, so for them to do it under the bright lights here against a defensive team that



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they were down a couple of good defenders, but what did you do different with the ball?

KEVIN YOUNG: I thought we had more of a plan. Honestly, I thought we were more organized. We had a hard time in that game up there, and it's a credit to their atmosphere. Honestly it was so loud it was hard to orchestrate anything from the sideline. I thought our guys got a little discombobulated against it.

But tonight I thought we had more poise. Like Richie just said, we played more from a position of strength than we did in that game.

Look, let's call a spade a spade. Gilbert is one of the best defenders, and Lipsey. I think Gilbert doesn't get enough credit for how good he is.

So it was a different level of pressure for sure but nonetheless our guys executed.

Q. Trey, I wanted to ask you about the defense in that second half, specifically on Curtis Jones. I think he's 3 of 10 shooting; only one three-pointer. What changed mentality-wise with the team defensively?

TREY STEWART: Really, just like -- I mean, KY said at the beginning of the season our ceiling is going to be how we play defense. He was cooking. I can't lie. It was fun to watch. He's a good dude. It was fun to play against especially, so I love that defensive challenge.

I said fun to watch in terms of fun to watch that battle happen, not fun to watch him go off against us. But really just taking pride. We come into the game trying to play harder than the guy in front of us, and I feel like we really took pride that second half and executed that.

Q. Kevin, big picture, the streak you guys are on, was there a turning point? What happened to really kick things into gear the way you guys are playing right now?

KEVIN YOUNG: Yeah, I don't know if there was -- there was a couple different things that happened throughout the year where I thought our guys took a step forward. There was a moment in Colorado where we were not playing well and then the light kinda went off in the second half offensively; that stands out.

There was a moment at Central Florida in the locker room where we felt like we had to address our offensive toughness. Since those two instances I think our guys have played more to the identity that we set forth at the beginning of the year and just had to remind them what

they said they wanted that to look like. So that was it.

I think it's a testament to, you know, like we play ten guys -- 11 when we're healthy -- but all these guys stay ready. We have unbelievable -- this is the best practice team that I've been a part of in my whole coaching career. These guys show up every day and they get better every day.

When you have that growth mindset I think you're able to keep getting better and better as the year goes on and as a coach that's all you can really ask for.

Q. Coach, you guys, both teams set a Big 12 Tournament record for made three-pointers, which probably isn't surprising. What goes into that kind of shot making and have you ever seen that kind of a performance between two college teams?

KEVIN YOUNG: Jones was a one-man wrecking crew. He caught fire, and like Trey said, it definitely wasn't fun to watch from our seat, but I'm sure from y'all's seat that was pretty spectacular.

So credit to him for a great individual performance.

As it relates to our group, I learned this a long time ago when the three point barrage and analytic barrage set sail on the NBA. I was working for the Sixers at the time. I will never forget a meeting I had with Sam Hinkie. He was the GM at the time. He showed me a heat map of basically over a million shots in the NBA and shot location, everything that is common knowledge nowadays.

I was like, okay, that's great. How are we going to get these threes? He goes, I don't know. That's your job to figure out. I never forgot that moment. That's been sort of the backbone of trying to have an efficient offense for me over the years.

It's a credit for our guys for spacing, number one, being unselfish, number two, and then being able to knock shots down at the end of it. So there's a lot that goes into it, for sure.

Q. Kevin, you have been hammering the depth all season long. How do you think it impacted the game today and the contribution that Mihailo made for you guys?

KEVIN YOUNG: I thought our depth was the epitome of where we shined. They were down bodies, so I thought in the second half when Jones started missing shots it was a testament to wearing them out, and here comes Trey, just going back and forth, and not just him. I thought Jefferson got a little tired as well, all their guys, quite frankly. I just



told our players back there, for us to be able to have 41 bench points. You can't scout everything, you can't prepare for everything, every play, every guy so it's a huge luxury to have guys that can come in and step up and make plays.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.

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