

Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 13, 2025

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

T-Mobile Center

Colorado Buffaloes

Coach Tad Boyle

Julian Hammond

Andrej Jakimovski

Postgame Press Conference



But these guys really took on the new season challenge and mentality, and obviously it showed in the first two games here. And even I think it showed today. These guys played their hearts out, and as a coach that's all you can ask for. Kelvin is right. We recruit high-character guys and I think that character showed as this season went on.

I'm really disappointed with our performance in January. I thought that was what really hurt us. But we overcame it and we got better. For that I'm proud.

But in terms of the body of work for the season, obviously I point to January as a point where we really didn't answer the bell, as a group, and I probably didn't do as good of a job as a coach as I needed to.

But in February we battled and we came here in March, something we will hang our hat on. I will live with what we gave the last three days, win or lose.

Q. Andrej, career high tonight. I know you would rather have the win, but what does it mean to you to say you had a career game in your last one?

ANDREJ JAKIMOVSKI: Feels good, but I was just trying to win the game, just trying to help the team live another day. And it feels good, but I'm very sad because I feel like I played my -- these three days I feel like I played my best basketball of the season, and I just wanted to help the team and we fell short.

But credit to Houston. They're No. 2 team in the country for a reason. That's it.

Q. Julian, throughout the game you guys got on a few streaky runs there, but Houston did a good job at eliminating high-percentage looks for your whole team at certain points and you guys being able to string together offense. What were they bringing defensively that was keeping you guys out of a rhythm?

JULIAN HAMMOND: You know, every game they bring a lot of pressure. They are always putting pressure in the gaps. They rebound the ball offense and defense. So it

Houston 77, Colorado 66

THE MODERATOR: Joining us on the dais is Colorado Head Coach Tad Boyle, along with Julian Hammond and Andrej Jakimovski. Coach?

TAD BOYLE: Yeah, it's never easy when it ends that's for sure, especially for our seniors, two of which are with us here in Julian and Andrej, but even guys like even Ruff and Trevor and Jack Pease, who is at home.

My heart goes out to them, because when the season ends, it ends quick. Today was the day. I gotta give credit to Houston. Kelvin Sampson is a hell of a coach. We cut it to 9 or 10 twice in the second half and Uzan hit big time threes back-to-back and we couldn't get over the hump.

Credit to them. They're the second best team by rankings in the country for a reason. Our guys battled. I got no problem with our fight and our competitiveness. We came here with a new season in mind, and we played like it, and I'm proud of these guys for it.

Q. Coach, we just talked to Kelvin Sampson and he said what a great coach Tad Boyle is and what high-character kids he has. You came into this tournament, No. 16 seed, and put on a nationwide effort that a lot of people saw. When you look at cumulatively your body of work in this tournament, how would you rate the effort and your message to what this team is capable of?

TAD BOYLE: Yeah, in the Big 12 Tournament has been good as it's been all year. Now, that doesn't say a whole lot because sometimes our effort throughout the year was suspect, and our performance was as well.

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was real tough to keep on getting in the paint, getting shots inside out, because they rotate so well.

We turned the ball over 13 times, so that's a few too many. And then when we did turn it over they are out in transition and, you know, it's real hard stopping a team out in transition and stuff like that.

Q. Tad, Emanuel Sharp didn't play in that first meeting in the regular season. He got into foul trouble, Roberts got injured, and others got into foul trouble. What was it about Houston's depth, could you speak on that, and their lineup that was able to extend the lead back out to 14 and close out this game?

TAD BOYLE: The thing that makes Houston so good is their mentality. It's just the way they play. Obviously the guys that start and probably are top-six guys with Arceneaux coming off the bench, and even Francis. They play with such energy and they make it really difficult for you.

You've got to make plays against Houston. They've got great individual defenders, but they're also a great team defensively. And Joseph Tugler is a big reason for that. He covers so much ground out there in ball screens and rotations.

But they're like a machine. They're just well coached; they're well disciplined; they're tough; they play hard.

Again, Kelvin Sampson, I've said this before, he's one of the top-5 coaches in our game, forget our conference, he was Coach of the Year in our conference, deservedly so, but their team is just unique in that they are really, really good defensively, but they also can shoot the ball.

Look at the first three possessions in the game. They came out what, what, what. They got great shooters. They got great one-on-one defenders and great one-on-one players that can create their own shot. They're legit.

And I hope to God that J'Wan Roberts is okay, because to me he's the heart and soul of that team. He's one of the top-five players in our league. I got a lot of respect for him.

Q. Andrej, a lot of character has been spoken about for this senior class. What can you say about that group and the brotherhood you guys have made this season?

ANDREJ JAKIMOVSKI: I think it's a special group. This is probably the best group I've been around. We've been through a lot. We have been struggling throughout the

season, but I'm proud of us because we stayed together. We stick together no matter what. We were working hard and we knew that our time is gonna come.

That's basically it. I love each one of the guys and the coaching staff and the whole team. It's very emotional because it's over. I feel like we could do a way better job, like Coach said in January, but I'm just proud of each of the guys.

Q. Tad, I don't know if you're a springboard into next season kind of coach, but especially in today's college basketball with so much roster turnover but for the guys that do return next year, is there something you can take from this week, you know, the win into the office-season?

TAD BOYLE: Absolutely there is, Pat. Look, it's amazing how my job will get buzzer starting tomorrow. Everybody thinks the season is over with, go take a few weeks off, go to the beach, nothing is further from the truth. I will be busier in the next three or four weeks than I have all year, it's the busiest time for a college basketball coach because you need to find out with your young guys. Who's coming back; who wants to come back. So those conversations need to be had. They've got to talk to their families.

You start from there. We have a great recruiting class in November, five terrific young men from -- that's not going to change. The guys that we bring into the program are guys of character and guys that want to work hard. I told the younger guys in the locker room, thank the seniors. It's those young guys that have to get better. It starts right away.

I'm not saying we're going to practice tomorrow but we gotta look and be very introspective, I have to do it as a coach, our staff has to do it, each player has to do it in materials of what they need to get better at. Whether they stay at Colorado or go somewhere else. Kids will make that decision. They got all the freedom in the world now. I want those guys that want to be Buffs, those kids that signed in November want to be Buffs. We recruited them and we will start constructing this roster in the next -- the process starts tomorrow.

Q. Julian, you spent four years here at CU. Just wondering what were some of the biggest lessons you've learned, whether it was this season or just in the past four years?

JULIAN HAMMOND: Really I learn something different every season. I've played in different roles every year. I can take away from this year, doesn't matter what your record is, just come into work every day, fight every day,



try and get better, no matter how that is. You know, like last year we were in a completely different position. I had to learn how to sit out and how to come back from injuring myself and stuff like that. So there's a lot of different things that I learned while I was here.

I think it's great being here for four years and putting myself in different positions and stuff like that to where I feel comfortable however I'm playing.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Coach.

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