

Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Friday, March 14, 2025

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

T-Mobile Center

BYU Cougars

Kevin Young

Dawson Baker

Postgame Press Conference

Houston 75, BYU 54

THE MODERATOR: Joining us on the dais is BYU Head Coach Kevin Young. He is joined by Dawson Baker. Coach?

KEVIN YOUNG: Poor start by our club. We came out a little flat, honestly. Not sure why in a big game like that.

But we couldn't throw it in the ocean to start the game; 3 of 16 in the first half from the three, which is obviously unlike us so that kinda put us in mud.

But, look, Houston is a really good team. They lost one game in the conference for a reason. Coach Kelvin Sampson knows what he's doing obviously, so you have to give them all the credit. I thought our guys battled back in the second half to make a couple of runs but fell short.

For me -- I know we're undressing this game, but for me I'm just excited for our group to win nine out of our last ten and play the way we've played. It gives us a lot of momentum going into the NCAA Tournament.

But credit to Houston for playing well, and we move on.

Q. Coach, do you see this loss more as motivation or do you see it as a learning experience for your squad as you look toward the tournament and the next chapter?

KEVIN YOUNG: Great question. Really a learning experience. That's what I just told our guys back there. I've been doing this for a long time, obviously not at this level, but you always learn in the postseason just how much things get turned up.

I told our guys for me I learned two things in that game.



One, the urgency that you have to have in postseason play and the level of focus, because everything comes a little harder in the postseason.

Every pass is more contested; every cut gets chucked a little harder; every blockout becomes more challenging. So you have to understand that you have to lock in even more than you normally do. And for me those are the two things that I feel like we learned from this experience.

Q. For Coach or Dawson, what was the immediate vibe by the players? Are they bummed out or looking forward to the tournament?

DAWSON BAKER: Initially we're bummed out. Obviously we wanted to perform on a stage like this, and performing well in this tournament was important to us as players.

But I think we have to keep the motivation that we had, and it's important for us to keep that going on into next week and focus on the next task at hand.

But we've got competitors. Of course we're going to be bummed out by a loss, but turn it into something good for us, motivate us and get back at it.

Q. Kevin, twice you've played Houston and they just locked down defensively like they do against every club. They just take you out of your sets or push you out on the perimeter even farther. How are they able to do that?

KEVIN YOUNG: The first game we played against them I thought it was all their defense. Tonight I felt like we got a lot of shots in the first half that we normally get that were good looks that didn't go down.

I don't want to discredit Houston. They're an amazing team, and I learned a lot from playing against them. But I think it was a combination of our inability to make open shots.

But the thing that they do really well is multiple efforts, you know? They take one thing away and you think you got 'em on a swing-swing or something like that, and they do a

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great job of continuing to play with multiple efforts. That's a credit to their coaching staff to get that done on a nightly basis.

Q. Dawson, what was said at halftime? You guys were down 20; seemed like you came out in the second half and the effort was still there.

DAWSON BAKER: Yeah, shout out to Dallin Hall. Great leader, part of this team, and he really just kind of gave it to us, things we need to focus on, about responding, and I think it just took us too long to respond.

In the second half you can kind of see the life come back into us, but unfortunately against a good team like that it's kinda too late. Dallin Hall got us motivated and told us there is a lot left on the table and how we are going to respond. I'm glad we did. We didn't just shy away from the opportunity to respond.

Q. Dawson, seems like during that run that you were talking about, Keba sparked you guys, plays like that. What kind of energy does he give you guys what he's able to go up and throw it down?

DAWSON BAKER: I think he set the tone in the second half. He's an enforcer down there and caused a lot of problems. Seeing him get a block and seeing him get passionate about it gets everyone else riled up.

He is a big part of our engine that keeps us going, and it's always fun to watch him in practice or in the games. Excited he's on our team, and I know he's going to keep bringing that and you guys will enjoy watching him for sure in the postseason.

Q. Dawson, you guys shot the ball well from deep yesterday and then kinda went cold today. How do you keep a short memory knowing that it can go either way.

DAWSON BAKER: Yeah, it's hard. That's kind of something you practice daily in practice, having a short-term memory, whether it's a turnover or shot that doesn't go in.

It's just a practice habit that you've got to develop. It's hard habit to continue to have confidence even though shots might not fall. That's part of the game.

But we've got great shooters on this team. And more than great shooters, we've got great competitors, you know, and I think they will eventually get their minds in the right place to make those shots.

Tonight they didn't fall but that's how it goes. That's the name of the game.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you very much.

KEVIN YOUNG: On my way out, thank you to the Big 12 and Kansas City. This has been a very classy conference tournament. So kudos to Kansas City and the Big 12, thank you.

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