

# Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Friday, March 14, 2025

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

T-Mobile Center

**Arizona Wildcats**

**Coach Tommy Lloyd**

**KJ Lewis**

**Caleb Love**

Postgame Press Conference



Arizona 86, Texas Tech 80

THE MODERATOR: Joining us on the dais is Arizona Head Coach Tommy Lloyd and KJ Lewis. Coach?

TOMMY LLOYD: Texas Tech has had some delicate situations with injuries over the year, and obviously we didn't know what was going to happen until we kind of showed up at the arena, but I knew it was going to be tough.

They beat Houston without Toppin at Houston. They didn't have the two guys, Williams and Chance, you know, McMillian, when they played Houston at home and played them tough.

So I knew it was going to be a hard game. Our guys did a great job finding a way. It wasn't easy. They were tough. They fought us every step of the way and they made those early threes and they did a really good job of putting foul pressure on us and getting to the free throw line, and then they were great on the offensive glass.

So all in all I'm proud of our guys for hanging with it and making enough winning plays to come out on top.

**Q. Coach, after you guys extended the lead in the second half they kept chipping away and each time you responded.**

TOMMY LLOYD: It was great. These guys made some big-time plays. I wouldn't chalk it up to much coaching; I would chalk it up to having competitive guys.

They have a knack for hanging in games, Texas Tech does, and making a big three here and there, getting an

offensive rebound put-back, and it's just so timely.

Our guys did a great job for the most part all of answering those. I think they cut it to 4, down the stretch there, so it was late, but like we did a good job holding them off enough and giving ourselves enough cushion. If we made one or two more plays it was going to be tough for them to get over the top.

**Q. How did you manage to limit Texas Tech on the three point line? For all of you.**

TOMMY LLOYD: Well, you know, we have to be attentive. They made some early. I think they made, what, five of their first seven when I looked at the scoreboard. If I'm good at math that's two of their last -- I don't have my glasses, two of their last, whatever, 17 or 18. I can't read it, guys. I can't tell if it's a 28 or a 25. My fault.

But our guys did a good job of being attentive. They probably missed a few they wish they would had but, but I thought our guys did a good job of being attentive and not overhelping in situations.

They're a team -- you've got to make those guards find a way to make two-point shots, and you've got to be comfortable giving them penetration downhill and making them finish over size, and our guys did a good job hanging with it.

Some of the fouls are regretful. I wish that free throw number was a little bit lower, but all in all, limiting them to nine threes when they want to make ten plus, we'll take it.

**Q. Tommy, these conference tournaments, a year ago it seemed like not playing on Saturday might be a bad thing to give you rest; is it different this year?**

TOMMY LLOYD: No. I mean, if we're going to play a game we're going to try to win. I'm not that smart. I'm not that smart to throw a game to think we're going to play good next Thursday or Friday. If we have Arizona on our chest and we have the dudes we have, we're playing to win.

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That's how we roll. We're not overthinking that. I mean, hey, we're going to try to win tomorrow. We know it's going to be a heck of a challenge, but we're going to try to win tomorrow and we're not going to worry about the next week.

**Q. Getting momentum, how critical is that for this team?**

TOMMY LLOYD: Listen, we will find out tomorrow. We could get our ass kicked tomorrow. I don't know. So we gotta come out and play tomorrow. It's great to come down and get two really good wins against two really good teams.

You beat Kansas in Kansas City, that says something. You beat Texas Tech that found a way to take second in the conference, that says something.

Now we got the champ. We're staring down the champ, and let's see what we got.

Hey, get these guys some questions. They're the ones that played their asses off.

**Q. Coach, tomorrow's game, you guys specialize on offense, Houston specializes --**

TOMMY LLOYD: We're not that bad on defense.

**Q. Right, but you're known for offense. Houston specializes in defense.**

TOMMY LLOYD: Houston specializes in winning basketball. They're great on offense. They're great on defensive. They're great on the glass. I know if you want to drill it down and say defense that's also fine, but they're also great on offense, and that's what makes them so hard to beat. And obviously they're tough as nails.

It's a great honor to compete against a guy like Kelvin, and I hope as I grow my coaching career and I hope I get a good stretch of competing against him, because I think it's going to make me a better coach. I've got a lot of respect for him and his program.

**Q. For Caleb and KJ with not having Darrion and Chance, how did that change without those guys and the flow of the offensive tonight?**

CALEB LOVE: Obviously it was different personnel but they're really good players and their role players showed up. Overton had 20 points, so they stepped up. Our game plan didn't change as far as, you know, who we was guarding and things like that. But we just adjusted, and,

you know, we came out on top perform.

KJ LEWIS: I mean, they're a tough group regardless of who is out and who is playing. Much respect to those guys and that coaching staff. Like Coach Lloyd said, they're known for winning without players being in the lineup and they played us to the end of the game, so much respect to them.

**Q. Did you change anything defensively of how to crash down on JT when he got the ball in the post?**

CALEB LOVE: He's the Big 12 Player of the Year so obviously our attention was on him. And, you know, we've got to give him the respect that he deserves. Obviously he's a monster on the boards. A monster in the post. So, you know, we had to come in and play as hard as we can to keep him off the glass and, un, make every shot tough for him.

KJ LEWIS: He said it to a tee.

**Q. What felt good about your shot in this game?**

CALEB LOVE: I think it was just the energy of the game. I started off hot, but I just wanted to give that spark to my team. I knew they were going to follow up with that.

I had it going, but as the game was flowing KJ chipped in, big numbers from Trey, and, you know, it went on from there.

**Q. KJ seemed like you were tugging at the wrap. Is it better off to go without stuff? The adrenaline taking over? There?**

KJ LEWIS: I can't even tell you. In the flow of the game try not to be distracted by whatever and do whatever I can do to help my team win and not be distracted by wrap on my wrist. I guess screw the tape.

**Q. Tommy, you work with Grant with Team USA. What's your relationship and how does it feel to go into these matches with somebody like that?**

TOMMY LLOYD: Well, listen, at first I was like, hey, this is going to be a little bit awkward because he's, you know, somebody that -- he and I confided in each other when it comes to basketball things, and now we find ourselves in the same conference.

I don't think over the course of our 20 plus-year friendship we would have ever thought this. So that's different. We're probably not talking as much as we once did, but we still catch up every week.

I thought this morning, you know, it's really cool we're playing for the third time. The only time you're going to play for the third time is going to be in the postseason.

And for it to be deeper in the tournament says we're both doing approximately. I'm proud of him. I'm proud to compete against him. I'm proud of our guys for finding a way to get us over the top tonight.

**Q. For Caleb and KJ, tomorrow you guys got to focus on strategy and game play, but what does it mean to be in the final game of Arizona's first time in the Big 12?**

CALEB LOVE: It means a lot. We are playing for something bigger than ourselves, playing for players that played before us, and things like that. So we take pride in it. We going to come in and play as hard as we can, try to execute the game plan as best we can, and we will see what the outcome comes from that.

KJ LEWIS: I mean, definitely what Caleb said. We had a goal this year to get to this point, and we're going to do our best and execute a game plan to try to go win tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much.

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