

# 2026 Phillips 66 Big 12 Men's Basketball Tournament

Tuesday, March 10, 2026

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

T-Mobile Center

Cincinnati Bearcats

Wes Miller

Jalen Celestine

Baba Miller

Postgame Press Conference



Cincinnati 73, Utah 66

THE MODERATOR: We'll start with an opening statement.

WES MILLER: Yeah, listen, I think we tied for seventh in the league but lost the tiebreaker with a couple other teams. The way I look at it, we get to play today on the first day. Like, I take it as a blessing.

I have a lot of respect for Utah. We played them, it feels like a month ago now, but when you were doing the scout, they were in every game. They had so many opportunities to win games. They were in every game. We had to play really well at home at the end to come back and win.

I thought we did a nice job after we got the jitters out. We stayed in it with our defense in the first half, then we started rebounding and running, and there was a little bit of a lid on it early, but our defense kept us in it. I thought we played well there for a while.

We pushed out a double-figure lead, but give credit to them for making a run. They haven't been able to get buried all year. Like, you know they're going to kind of come back and fight.

They made a nice run. It feels like Terrence Brown made every mid-range shot during that run, so give him some credit.

But I thought our guys at the under-four time-out did a nice job of regrouping, executing, and then finding a way to get some stops.

Some of the blocks at the basket late were big for us.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

**Q. Coach, you've talked all year about how important your bench is. When you look at that 12-0 run to close the first half, how crucial was the play of Keyshaun, Shon and Sencire at both ends of the court?**

WES MILLER: Yeah, I actually said that in the team in the locker room just now. I thought our bench was the catalyst to our success tonight. That run in the first half -- they had some really good minutes there in the second half in a run, as well. It was a complete team effort, and our bench was extremely important to us winning this game.

**Q. I think after the first media time-out, they had you on the boards 12-4. Then you end up winning 40-36. What type of motivation did you have for them to get them going on the boards?**

WES MILLER: Well, we talked, I think at the under-12 media, we talked about the rebounding war. I thought the guys, again -- we defended early, and I thought that kept us in it when we couldn't score. But we weren't rebounding and running early.

I thought, as the half wore on, we started rebounding the ball on both ends, and we started running the floor. I thought, again, that had a lot to do with the run we made to finish the first half.

**Q. On that 12-0 run to end the first half, could you just maybe describe what was shifting in the momentum for your team that really helped you guys take over the game there?**

WES MILLER: Yeah, defense to offense. We've become an excellent offensive team over the last month and a half or so. I think, analytically, over that stretch we're like top-25 on offense and defense in America. We're a good offensive team. Our best offense is when our defense leads the offense. In that stretch, defense led the offense. We got stuff in the open court.

Again, we got extra possessions on the offensive boards,

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too.

**Q. Coach, what was it like finally getting out there on that glass floor?**

WES MILLER: Yeah, you know, I give the league a lot of credit for being innovative, different. It's not like people haven't played on this floor at a high level. I think the NBA All-Star Game was played on it. I think there's EuroLeague teams that play on it.

For me, it's no different. I'm on the sideline. The lines are the same. I didn't see much of an effect to our guys.

But I give the league a lot of credit for being innovative and different and setting the stage. Again, I'm just proud to be a part of the Big 12.

**Q. Jalen, big day for you today. A thousand point mark and leading your team in points. What does it mean for you to do that on this type of stage?**

JALEN CELESTINE: It's just a blessing to have teammates and coaches that put me in position to score and just help the team win.

Whether it be hitting threes like it was today or rebounding, whatever the case may be, the end goal is just to win. So grateful.

**Q. Jalen, after all the back issues and stuff you had early on, did you see yourself getting to this point where you'd be playing at this level, because it took a while to get you going, but once you got going, you were going pretty good.**

JALEN CELESTINE: Yeah, I mean, I got the best PT and strength coach in the country, and I can honestly say that with a lot of confidence. Coach Rehfeldt, Bob, Abby, the whole staff just got me right. I knew I'd be able to get to this point. I wish it happened in our first game, but we're here now, and I'm pretty confident.

**Q. Jalen and Baba, I wonder if you could follow up on that floor question. What was the grip like? Did it feel like a wood floor or different? Do you even notice the lights that are going on?**

JALEN CELESTINE: I feel like when you're not playing in the game you notice it, but once the game is going on, it's just basketball, at the end of the day. We've all played on concrete, hard wood, tile. It's just basketball, at the end of the day.

BABA MILLER: Yeah, I think it was the same thing.

Honestly, I thought it was going to be a little bit slippery, but the grip was pretty good. I don't know, I think it's pretty cool.

**Q. Baba and Jalen both, this is it for your college careers. What kind of motivation is that for you, and how did the one dunk rate in your array of dunks this season?**

BABA MILLER: Me and Jalen were talking about it at halftime; we don't want to go home today. We've got to keep it rolling. Obviously we've been here for a minute, and I feel like we're a great team, and we have great chances of staying in this tournament. That's what we're going to try to do.

**Q. Baba, you battled some adversity in the most recent loss at TCU. How much did this quick turnaround help with keeping your mind right and the bigger focus on this tournament?**

BABA MILLER: I mean, everybody is 0-0 in this tournament. I feel like just coming in with the right mindset, everybody connected as a group. You can't really think about your individual struggles when you're trying to win a team game. So I feel like just being connected with the guys and locked in for this game was really good.

**Q. Wes, if my math is right, this is your 100th win at Cincinnati. What does that mean? I know you're in the heat of the battle of the tournament and everything, but does that mean anything to you?**

WES MILLER: Right now it means nothing to me, but I didn't know it. But glad to hear it.

No, I think the only thing I'm thinking about right now is what can we do to get 101. But thanks for sharing.

**Q. Wes, you guys will meet UCF for a third time tomorrow. What are some of the challenges and advantages you have with already seeing them multiple times?**

WES MILLER: Challenges with UCF?

**Q. Challenges and advantages you might have as far as already seeing them twice and this being the third meeting.**

WES MILLER: Yeah, listen, this league, like, we don't have a bad team. So Utah tonight, who finished last place in our league, they're really good. I don't think there's a league in America that can say the bottom of their league is that good. Obviously the top of our league is incredible,

but it's all the way throughout.

So every single game in the Big 12 is challenging. Every single one. Every single win in the Big 12 is a big-time win. There's not such a thing as a bad loss in the Big 12.

For the next game it's the same thing. There's tons of challenges. To be specific, I think they're deep, they're old, they're tough, they're very dynamic offensively. They have a ton of guys that can shoot it over the top. They can play through the post. Their guard play is good.

But that's like any Big 12 game. Great players, depth. They're a two-way team. They defend. They play offense. We're going to have to be good on the boards.

Yeah, every game in this league, it's going to present challenges. We'll get to work as soon as we're done here and start working on what we can do to try to get our guys ready.

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