

2026 Phillips 66 Big 12 Men's Basketball Tournament

Tuesday, March 10, 2026

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

T-Mobile Center

BYU Cougars

Coach Kevin Young

AJ Dybantsa

Khadim Mboup

Postgame Press Conference



BYU - 105, Kansas State - 91

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Coach Young, along with AJ Dybantsa and Khadim Mboup.

KEVIN YOUNG: Just a hard-fought game. Obviously a high-scoring game. They got off to a great start, were shooting the heck out of the 3. I thought our guys did a good job of responding.

I thought that run we made in the first half was critical for us to obviously cut the lead but then gain momentum. And we were able to get enough stops and string enough stops together there in the second half to get a spread. So it was a good game for us.

Q. AJ, earlier today, Big 12 Commissioner Brett Yormark mentioned you as one of the players he believes is deserving for national player of the year honors. With the performance you put up today, obviously helping your case quite a bit, what do you feel when you hear him mention you in that sort of regard, and why should that award be yours?

AJ DYBANTSA: I mean, it's an honor for him to be the Big 12 commissioner, I feel like this is the best league in the world for college basketball. And for him to recognize my talents and think I should be up there with one of the best players in the country, this means a lot.

But, I mean, today I was just trying to focus on the win, whatever it took to just get the win.

Q. Coach, was there a turning point in this game, a singular moment in this game where you felt like it turned the tide in your favor here?

KEVIN YOUNG: Yeah, that first little spurt in the second half where we were able to get, I think, the first kind of 10-point cushion, I thought that was really what allowed us to think we could put them away. Challenged the guys in the timeout, where that was kind of how we started the game, that they went on that big run. So I thought our guys did a better job of responding once we did get that lead there kind of midway through the second half.

Q. You talked about that run right at the end of the half. I believe Robert had a fast-break, wide-open layup and instead kicked it over to AJ for the dunk. Can you talk about the unselfishness of plays like that for the whole team?

KEVIN YOUNG: Yeah, I mean, it's something that we've been really on our guys about all year. You know, I thought that we have talent, obviously, and so we just try to make simple plays and play together. And that's easier said than done.

But I thought that play that you mentioned with Rob, I thought AJ made a lot of unselfish plays as well. And so that's something that just really helps the team, when you feel like you have a good shot but your teammate has a great shot, being able to share the ball is huge.

Q. AJ, could you just talk about that play and the unselfishness of your teammate to just let you get the dunk?

AJ DYBANTSA: Yeah, I mean I actually slowed down because I wanted him to get the layup, but he told me that he wasn't going to dunk it and he needed some energy going into the half. So just credit to Rob for getting me that dunk.

Q. You ended with 40 points. I don't know if you knew the record of this tournament is 43. Was there anytime you did know that, anytime of this tournament where you felt like you could go for the record?

AJ DYBANTSA: No, I'm just trying to win games. That's



just the main goal is try to get us to the championship. If I need to score 43 for that then, yeah, but I'm not going for the record.

Q. Khadim, could you talk about your advantages on the glass, that was a really big deal in the second half. Just what got in to you guys board-wise? Just seemed like you were pulling down everything.

KHADIM MBOUP: I mean, every time before I go to the court, Coach is just going to be in my ears, like, I put you in to get the rebounds, so you got to get the rebounds. And it's just like a big motivation for me. And every ball that bounced off the rim I think is mine, so I'm just going to go get it for sure.

Q. Kevin, two questions, of all the performances you've seen out of AJ this season, and there have been a lot, where does that one rank? And, two, did you expect such a good contribution from your role guys tonight, and how did they contribute to the win?

KEVIN YOUNG: Yeah, as it relates to AJ, I mean what he was doing was super impressive because he was scoring every way possible. He was scoring in the post, he was scoring in transition, scoring in pick and roll, scoring in isolations, come off some pin downs, making good passes out of the post, making good passes out of the pick and roll.

I thought it was probably one of his most complete, outside of the lob -- we already talked about that on the way, the lob he threw shot to Khadim at the end there.

But I thought it was just a full display of his skill set. I think he's the most skilled offensive player in college basketball, and it was on full display tonight.

In terms of where that stacks up you've got to put it right near the top just given the fact that it was in the Big 12 Tournament and helped propel us to a big win.

In terms of the role guys, just super happy for those guys. You know Dom's a guy, I'll speak to him, I'll speak about -- there's really a lot of them -- Aleksej, Moo, Khadim -- they all contribute to the win.

And the thing I love about it is it's been an up-and-down season obviously, but none of those guys have batted an eye. They've just stayed in the gym, they've stayed hungry and they've earned trust to get out there and be able to help contribute to a win.

So it was really cool to see. I thought Dom's play was extremely inspirational for the team and something that we

could build on.

Q. AJ, is there a beverage postgame that really fuels you going into tonight? And secondly, more seriously --

AJ DYBANTSA: Definitely Red Bull gives you wings, for sure.

Q. Secondly, more seriously, you had six assists tonight -- I know everyone focuses on scoring -- but how many has your passing started to open up scoring opportunities for you this year?

AJ DYBANTSA: I just try to make plays for my teammates. Guys like Mboup and R. Davis, just trying to get them open shots. And I know they doubled me a lot in the post, so I was trying to make that early read. I think earlier in the I was just trying to shoot over two, three people. But I was just try to make that early read to the cuts, people that are coming and the people that are just open.

Q. AJ and Mboup, there's been a lot of opinions going around the court. Could you just give us your thoughts and feedback on what it was like to play on the court and how, if it did, changed the impact of the game?

AJ DYBANTSA: I like the idea of it, LED for the starting lineups. I seen it. You had the BYU logo, you had the Kansas State logo. I liked the idea for sure. But the only negative, I'd say, is it's a little slippery just because it's glass. But other than that, I like the idea of the court.

KHADIM MBOUP: I'd probably say the same thing. It's really nice, for sure, having the logo over there. But I think it's kind of slippery, especially when you're trying to pick up point guards like full court, it's kind of slippery, for sure.

Q. Coach, in regards to your role players, with Kennard Davis having another nice night tonight, how important is he for what you guys want to accomplish as we go into March here?

KEVIN YOUNG: Huge, huge. Arguably, the biggest X factor on our team in a lot of ways because we brought him here to be a two-way player. He's a really good defensive player and he's found a nice offensive rhythm, I think, in the last little bit.

When Ritchie went down, he was a guy we started to put in a lot more actions. He's been getting a lot more open 3s as well. He's hitting them at a higher clip. I think he's comfortable, but more than the offense, I just think he's playing with an edge that permeates our group. I think the

other night we played Texas Tech at home, he was kind of the -- him and Rob were the key to defensive intensity and our guys feed off of that. When he's making shots, it really kind of opens up things up for AJ and Rob too. He's a huge part of what we're doing.

Q. Rob left the game, I think, with about eight minutes left and didn't return, do you have an update on him? And do you expect him to play tomorrow?

KEVIN YOUNG: Calling it a lip laceration. So everything else checked out. So barring anything unforeseen, Rob's a pretty tough young man. I'd assume he's going to play.

Q. Jerome Tang no longer with K-State. Coach Driscoll took over. Just wanted to get your thoughts on the job that he did today.

KEVIN YOUNG: Well, first of all, Jerome's a great person. Wish him all the best, whatever's next for him. He's a great human being.

As far as Coach Driscoll, you know, they're just quality guys, right? I think sometimes in coaching we all understand what we sign up for in this business. It's not an easy business to be in. A lot of things out of your control.

Coach stepped up in a situation that was a challenge for him. Had their guys playing hard till the end. Put up a great fight against us tonight. I thought that first half, they were tremendous. Haggerty is a great ball player, and wishing those guys the best at whatever is next for all those guys.

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