

# 2026 Phillips 66 Big 12 Men's Basketball Tournament

Tuesday, March 10, 2026

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

T-Mobile Center

**Kansas State Wildcats**

**Coach Matthew Driscoll**

**P.J. Haggerty**

**Nate Johnson**

Postgame Press Conference



BYU - 105, Kansas State - 91

THE MODERATOR: Coach Driscoll is joining us now along with P.J. Haggerty and Nate Johnson.

MATTHEW DRISCOLL: First of all, when you have a high-definition face for radio, it's always nice to have these two dudes sitting next to you. So I'm grateful to have two good-looking guys sitting next to me to make me look better.

This game tonight, we knew it was going to be AJ and Rob. We told them they were going to take 40 shots between them. So that means they were going to get somewhere between 40 and 50.

And then what we had to do was to make sure the ancillary people didn't get going. If the ancillary people don't get going and we score like we're able to score like we're capable of scoring -- we're an 85-point-a-night game team. If we can just do that, then we can get this thing 85-80, something like that. That's how we went at this thing. That's the way we approached in thing.

I really thought from the get-go, we did some really nice things. That 23-7 run was all stops that led to scores. But to end the half, they had three straight dunks, took the lead. And I told ESPN coming out, this is a fan's game, not a coach's game.

She said, what kind of adjustments do you want to make. I said, I don't know I might need some popcorn or maybe a Coke, because all about fans, because we're just trying to score; nobody wants to play defense.

Then they came out and made 34 3s and we called timeout

and then we whittled it back to three, and we fought and got it back to three.

And to their credit, they raised themselves, they made some plays. Offensive rebounding really hurt us, by them. They had 14 of them. They had 19 second-chance points.

So, really proud of the fact that we didn't quit. We never quit during this whole tumultuous situation. We were probably the most resilient team in the Big 12, bar none. We've been through everything you could possibly think of -- injury, illness and attrition. And attrition, obviously, being with Coach.

So to our guys' credit, this is going to say a lot for them, who they are. The guy to my left could have just opted out and quit. He could have just said I'm not playing anymore, because he was already averaging in one of the best scorers in the country.

But he told me personally, Coach, I'm playing. Like, I love to hoop. I'm hooping.

So there's a lot to be said about this team and about what they did. And I'm super proud to be their person that's temporarily in charge of them. Notice I said "temporarily." So there's no breaking news going on right here.

**Q. P.J. and Nate, could you describe what the season's been like for you guys overall? And what really stands out to you? How will you look back on this year?**

P.J. HAGGERTY: I would say it was an up-and-down season. Like Coach Driscoll said, we just didn't quit. We faced a lot of adversity. You all seen it. But at the end of the day we all stayed together and we just played, had fun and just was with each other every day and just grind.

But I'll say it was an up and down year. But I'm glad that I finished it with them.

NATE JOHNSON: Like P.J. said, it was an up-and-down year, it was a long year. But at the same time we still



found a way to stay positive and have a smile on our face. And with this guy right here, it's kind of hard not to. I mean, through all the ups and downs we just still try to stay positive and just look ahead.

MATTHEW DRISCOLL: In this day and age, I think the thing that's really missed -- because there's just so much money and so much social media and so much stuff that's said, right, and then the nastiness that they get behind closed doors, the DMs they get that are nasty DMs, and the emails that we receive that are nasty emails -- all that stuff doesn't echo in a thimble to the fact that all we do in this industry and all we do in this profession, for 38 years, is just pour into them until it's overflowing.

And during this time, that's what we kept doing, pouring into them, pouring into them. And they've grown as men. They're going to be better husbands. They're going to be better fathers. They're going to be better corporate people. They're going to be better human beings because they've accepted our ability to pour into them.

And shame on those that don't and look at it differently, because it's not fair to them because that's what we signed up for.

**Q. Kind of what you were just talking about, for you, Coach, what's this last month been like emotionally, because I know you said you didn't come to Kansas State to be the head coach and that you just got forced upon you here with Coach Tang being fired. What's this been like taking this team over for a guy who you respected so much, you worked with before?**

MATTHEW DRISCOLL: Absolutely miserable. I can't use another word than absolutely miserable. Every day, ulcers, not sleeping, not feeling good.

I have an issue, I have a problem, and I've had it my whole life, and when I reached out to our psychologist that did the testing on us, he just said, Coach, that's just the way you're wired. All you're about is making sure things are organized and things are right.

So if somebody gives me a task, my dad says, that your last name is on everything, don't ever screw up our last name. And so because of that, I'm wired differently.

So it's been very hard to mourn or be emotional, and I even asked my psychologist, like, why aren't I emotional? He's like one of my best friends. His daughter is my God daughter.

But it's because he asked me to do something, and I told these dudes I'm going to do it. And when someone asks

me to do something, that's the one thing I am, I'm consistent.

And so it's been miserable. From that perspective. But they wouldn't know that because all I tried to do was just pour in and pour in and pour in -- to the staff, to the players, to the GAs, to the managers.

And our staff, to their credit, they tried to pour in. It took a lot to hold it together, a lot. But if you're a man and you're a grown man and you make a decision to come to Kansas State, no matter what the outcome is or whatever the responsibilities are, when somebody asks you to do something and you say, yes, you do it. And that's just the way I was raised.

**Q. I was chatting with Taj in the locker room -- not a fan of the floor, the lights. He said someone got a migraine. What did you guys think of playing on the floor and the lights and all that?**

P.J. HAGGERTY: The floor is a little different. I see the idea they had with it. But, I mean, I just would say it was a little different. But at the end of the day, it's just basketball.

NATE JOHNSON: I'd say the same thing. It took a minute to get adjusted to the floor, but at the end of the day, it's still a basketball game. You play outside, you play indoors, all that stuff.

MATTHEW DRISCOLL: The wind ain't blowing though. My wife, Carrie, who's amazing, said to me today, you know what, sweetheart, I was thinking. Remember how Chaz Lanier, with the Detroit Pistons, played for us, and she was, like, remember how he had migraines. She said, I wonder if these lights and all that blinking and stuff is going to affect people with migraines.

And I was, like, I don't think so, you know, whatever. But maybe there's something we need to look into from that perspective that maybe we didn't think about, that there's a possibility. Hope she didn't speak it into existence but you know what I mean.

**Q. Curious if you could comment throughout the last several months what you hoped the lesson these kids take from what you and Coach Tang and the rest of your staff were able to kind of instill in them over the last year?**

MATTHEW DRISCOLL: The one thing we always try to do, right, at the end of the day, just so you know, life is about relationships. It's all about relationships. It's all about putting a dot on a map, and as you move around through those dots, those different relationships come



back. I'm going to officiate my 10th player's wedding here in Puerto Rico in a couple of weeks.

So the message we take away from this is, when you have these relationships, while you're there, you better embrace where your feet are planted. If you embrace where your feet are planted and you pour into them and try to make them the best version of themselves that they can be, now you've got an opportunity to lead.

And when you lead, whether it be here or even globally -- like we have on our team, right -- at the end of the day, if you care and you're generous, right, and you're a servant, that's going to be your legacy when you walk away from it.

I want those guys to understand that. If they truly embrace where their feet are planted, they can do whatever they want to do at whatever level they want to do. It's when you're seesawing and you're not right sure, you've got one half in, one half out, that's the biggest lesson that we want them to take away.

That adversity comes. And it comes in wins. It comes in rains. It comes in storms. But if your foundation is solid and you're really, really rooted in where you're at -- that's why I've been able to be successful and be a head coach for as long as I was and do all these things because I was never looking for a job. The only thing I did, I said I did my job. If you do your job, everything else will take care of itself.

Same thing as players. If you're worried about the next paycheck or you're worried about the next whatever, then you're probably going to get in your own way.

But if you do what Chaz Lanier did, and you do it the way you're supposed to do it, then everything else will take care of itself. That's called embracing where your feet are planted. So that's the message and the lesson we'd like for them to learn.

**Q. I guess how much did that kind of hit with you guys and, I guess, for your team as well, throughout the last several months and weeks?**

NATE JOHNSON: You're talking about -- what are you talking about, what are you asking?

**Q. Coach Driscoll's message there, be where your feet are and the lessons they're trying to instill, how do you feel it hit with you and your team?**

NATE JOHNSON: Basically telling us just to be present and not, like, worry about what's going on outside of being like inside the lines with us as a team. As I go back to

saying, like, as we found a way, just to be positive and just look ahead and see, like, the next day is just trying to go 1-0 again. So really just us being together and staying together and just keep building chemistry no matter what's going on.

P.J. HAGGERTY: Like Nate said, Coach Driscoll just told us to be positive, like block out the outside noise. Just stay together, like we say, go 1-0 every day. And that's what we did throughout the whole season. And like I said, it's just adversity. But at the end of the day, it's just how you overcome adversity.

MATT DRISCOLL: If you pitch a tent in adversity, you're going to die. Darkness comes, but the light is where you need to be. So you need to make footprints in adversity and get to where you're going. So don't pitch a tent. When there's adversity, don't pitch a tent.

I didn't realize I was going to sweat so much. I'm going to pass the plate here in a minute (laughter).

**Q. You were describing the misery, I guess, as you put it over the last month in some ways. What was the feeling like, the finality of going into the locker room tonight and what will you take away from that?**

MATTHEW DRISCOLL: When I hear the word "misery," I just think of that lady with the board between his ankles and breaking his ankles. Wasn't that the movie called "Misery", something like that. We knew it was going to come to an end eventually, right? There's going to be a culmination, because there always is. And, quite frankly, I was actually walking in the locker room with my head up. I was walking in the locker room proud of the fact that these guys didn't quit, proud of the fact these guys remained resilient.

The other thing too is, nationally, I think these guys deserve a lot of credit. Like, they deserve a lot of credit about how they did it, the way they did it, and how they represented K-State.

Like, this could have went -- there was no headline here or this guy did this or arrested for this. There was a lot to be said for what these guys did. And so I kind of -- I wasn't sad at all. I wasn't sad at all.

I was really, really proud that we were able to weather this and continue to move forward, because if you look through the windshield, you always get to where you want to go. It's the rearview mirror that holds you back.

**Q. P.J., if the administration asked you what are some traits you would like to see in the next Kansas State**



**head coach and maybe some advice you would have for him about what it takes to win here, what would you say to that?**

P.J. HAGGERTY: That's not really my decision, but, I mean, as they do hire a great coach. This is a great fan base, great town. They all welcomed me. So for the next coach, it's not my decision, but just know it's a great fan base, it's a great place to be.

MATTHEW DRISCOLL: I thought you were going to say a 5'8" redhead.

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