

2026 Phillips 66 Big 12 Men's Basketball Tournament

Tuesday, March 10, 2026

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

T-Mobile Center

Oklahoma State Cowboys

Steve Lutz

Kanye Clary

Benjamin Ahmed

Postgame Press Conference



Oklahoma State 92, Colorado 83

STEVE LUTZ: Obviously we're excited to be advancing in the tournament. You know, this is our second year, obviously, as a program being here, and last year we played in the 11:30 a.m. game, and we were out of here at 3:30 in the afternoon. So I think that it's another step forward for the program.

But more importantly, I'm just -- I'm proud of the guys for their fight and their composure. Obviously when we went to Boulder, we did not play well. But more importantly, we didn't play as a team. We didn't show -- we didn't show love for one another, and I thought today that we played very well. We played very unselfishly. 17 assists on 29 made baskets is a good number for us. But I'm just proud of these guys and excited to face TCU tomorrow.

Q. Steve, I just want to ask you about your two freshmen that really handled a lot of the bulk of the post and then combined with Christian. How big was that with all three of their play today?

STEVE LUTZ: Yeah. I mean, guys -- I think this is our 19th starting lineup, right? Think about that.

And I always talk about it's finishing the game versus starting the game. But, you know, you lose Parsa, who's arguably one of your better players three, four games ago, and you thrust Ben into the starting lineup, and you thrust Millee in the starting lineup, and then you lose Millee today. You know, he wasn't able to go at tip. And you put Mekhi in there, and they all did such a great job.

I mean, you just -- you've got to think Christian Coleman has probably played the center position maybe 10

possessions all year long, and tonight he was able to hold it down as these guys were in foul trouble.

But they're continuing to work and they're continuing to grow and develop and get better, and that's a testament to them and their character and their work ethic.

Q. Coach, Isaiah Johnson has had a lot of big games in this conference this year. Even in the game of Boulder against you guys, he had a tough shooting night, and tonight. What was kind of the approach and the key defensively for you guys against him?

STEVE LUTZ: You know, we obviously know that your two guards score the bulk of your points. I think they get 50 percent of your points. And Isaiah's a very good player.

Obviously we started Kanye on him, and I think Kanye's one of the better on-ball defenders in the Big 12. But we had a bunch of different guys that guarded him. I thought that VJ did a good job for the most part with him, and really -- I really have to give it to the team and call it a collective team effort because not one person's going to be able to guard either him nor Hargress. I mean, they're both good players and they have the ball in their hands a lot, and they run a lot of different things for them.

Q. Obviously you guys are without Parsa Fallah, you mentioned that. But the Buffs being without Sebastian Rancik in Boulder, what was it like going up against the front court that was also down a player?

STEVE LUTZ: Yeah. Tad's like us, he's having to piece it together without a very good player.

And the thing about Sebastian is he spaces the floor for you, and so if you don't have him out on the floor in all those ball screens that they run, you're able to shrink the floor a little bit more and maybe keep your defense together, especially in all the pick-and-roll actions.

So it's just tough, man. When you lose good players in this league and there's very little room for error in the first place and then you lose a good player, it just makes it really,

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really tough.

But give them credit. I watched their Arizona game without him. Shoot, they had every opportunity to beat Arizona at home, and in my mind that's why Tad's one of the best coaches in the university's history and one of the better coaches in our league.

Q. Kanye, Christian had 17 and 14 tonight, seven of those rebounds offensively. Sort of what kind of difference maker is he when he's playing like that?

KANYE CLARY: Chris makes a big difference. You know, he's versatile, guard 1 through 5. He switch, he play hard. And when he's motored up, I don't really think there's nobody who can stop him. He's the only one who can stop himself, and tonight he went out there and showed how impactful he is.

Q. Coming into this tournament knowing you guys had to pick up a couple wins to give yourselves a chance for the tournament, the NCAA tournament, what was the mentality to coming into this one and just how nice is it to keep and this thing rolling and have the opportunity to coach this group?

STEVE LUTZ: Sure. I mean, our mentality has been the same every single game in the Big 12 because the league is so darn hard. And if you look forward, you have no chance.

And obviously we were able to avenge a loss to Colorado, you know? They kicked our butt pretty good in Boulder.

So like I said earlier, I'm proud of the guys for sticking together and banding together because we've obviously had some key factors or key people -- teammates go down, and so we've had to kind of piece it together.

But, you know, I think that that just shows the character and the toughness and the composure of this group. But, again, I'm just happy for them and excited to be able to face TCU tomorrow night.

Q. Benjamin, I wanted to get your take on kind of how your night went and how it felt out there, not just tonight, though. Also, kind of what it's been like here late in the season getting a lot more time on the court and how you think that's helping you.

BENJAMIN AHMED: I think I've just been, you know, patient and, you know, Parsa getting down, he spoke to me about it, too. I just had to be grow the field. And this is a learning process for me. Every day I get on the floor, I'm still learning. So I'm just excited to see what the future is

going to be.

Q. Coach, talking about shrinking the floor like you just mentioned, was there a bit of a second thought when Colorado came out and started hitting three-point shots? Was there a little bit of worry or any conversations that you had in the timeout?

STEVE LUTZ: Yeah, of course. As I said, Tad's a good coach. He's going to exploit those things when we play that way.

But you also have to believe in your job or your work, I should say, and, you know, the history of their season tells you that that's your best percentages and best options in terms of the way to guard it.

Now, Bangot Dak played phenomenally today, and I thought he really did a good job, made those threes early. As the coach, when you go down nine -- I think we were down nine in the first half -- you're sitting there tell yourself, man, am I guarding it correctly, right, because there's always second guessing.

But ultimately you have to believe in the staff. I thought our staff did a good job with the scouting, and the statistics always tell you, this is what history shows you over 31 games, so you've got to stick with it.

Q. Coach, I think it was the middle of the first half. It seems like you were pretty upset with Anthony Roy. You sub him out. He comes back in and ends up with 24 points. Overall, what was your message to him, and what were your thoughts on him game tonight?

STEVE LUTZ: Well, you've covered us all year long, so I'm sure you already know the answer to that question.

But the whole thing with Anthony and all of our players, right, is when we get antsy and start shooting quick threes or shooting tough shots, the biggest thing that happens is we're never in rebounding position, right?

So you have those surprise shots, and you're never in rebounding position. So now the ball comes off the rim and now you're at a disadvantage in transition D.

So at the end of the day, I told him to quit -- to make sure he shot good shots, just like I told the rest of the team that. And I thought that he did a better job down the stretch.

Q. Coach, it might be a similar answer here, but Anthony obviously had a tougher game. The first meeting with the Buffaloes, what was the biggest difference that you saw in his game today compared

with that one?

STEVE LUTZ: Well, I mean, he didn't shoot the ball extremely well from three. Again, I think he was two of five maybe. But the biggest difference was he got to the free throw line and made 10 of 11. The only one he missed was the one to start the game, right? And I obviously didn't expect that or I wouldn't have put him out there. So I thought that he did a good job with that.

And I actually thought -- and we tease him a bunch about his defense. I thought at the end of the game when it mattered that he played good defense. And he rebounded the basketball, right? And I think he probably scored -- let me look. He scored four, five at the rim, right?

And we need him to vary what he does. He doesn't need to shoot just complete threes all the time. We need him to be a playmaker and to finish some at the rim.

Q. Steve, you've had two really close games with TCU. Just your thoughts on the matchup tomorrow night?

STEVE LUTZ: Yeah. I mean, obviously I'll start on them tonight, but I've obviously watched them a bunch. They were two hard-fought games, but I think ultimately, at the end of the day, Xavier Edmonds and David Punch, they beat us. They single-handedly beat us. You know, I think in game one they had 40 points and 20 rebounds, and it was pretty darn close in game two.

With that being said, I thought, you know, we have -- we are playing well, and I think it should be a hard-fought contest tomorrow night.