

2026 Phillips 66 Big 12 Men's Basketball Tournament

Wednesday, March 11, 2026

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

T-Mobile Center

UCF Knights

Coach Johnny Dawkins

Jamichael Stillwell

Themus Fulks

Postgame Press Conference



steals. I thought it just disrupted what they were doing. They had a flow going. And I thought that kind of changed the game right there.

Q. Did you guys want this more? This was a game both of you guys needed, but in the end, with that type of finish, do you feel your guys wanted it more?

JOHNNY DAWKINS: I think our guys approach every game the same way. We approach every game like it's a championship game. And so when these moments do occur, I think our guys are kind of prepared for it because we talk about it all season long.

So now we're in the position where we're having that true one-game-or-go-home scenario. We've practiced that 30 games already. So our guys came in with the mindset of having a desperation every time we stepped foot on the floor.

And of course, it's an added incentive with everything that's being talked about, absolutely. But our guys mainly were focused on winning and approaching it the way we've done all the games that we've played this season so far.

Q. When you have a shooting night like this where you don't hit all your 3s going (indiscernible) 24, what are some of the things y'all focused on on the floor? And just talk through that.

JAMICHAEL STILLWELL: Coach been preaching a lot on getting on the defensive side. Our shot's not going to fall every night, so we've got to do something that don't involve shooting. And actually it's, like, our first game getting eight kills. And how we go, like, a kill is three stops in a row. So there's like a 90 -- I want to say 98 percent chance of winning.

JOHNNY DAWKINS: Jamichael, let's not tell them everything.

JAMICHAEL STILLWELL: My fault. (Laughter).

JOHNNY DAWKINS: I love you, though.

UCF - 66, Cincinnati - 65 (OT)

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by UCF coach Johnny Dawkins and student-athletes Themus Fulks and Jamichael Stillwell.

JOHNNY DAWKINS: It was a great game. Hats off to Cincinnati. I thought they did a great job. I thought our guys had to fight back on numerous occasions and I thought they were able to do it.

But this team has done this all season long, just their competitive spirit. It showed in the summer. It showed up again tonight, just their will to win.

Like I said, they beat a very good Cincinnati team tonight, a team that was playing very well. And our guys just stepped up and made the plays I thought down the stretch of the game when they had to make them.

Q. Coach, can you just walk us through the 8-0 run to force overtime? How did you guys get it done?

JOHNNY DAWKINS: We are a multiple defensive playing team. So we can always change strategies throughout the game. We felt down by eight coming down the stretch, we needed to do more in the full court, we need to do more pressing to see if we couldn't speed them up, see if we couldn't get some turnovers. And fortunately we were able to do that.

I thought some guys made some big plays in the press. Jordan Burks up front, very long and active, I think he disrupted a lot of things in the full court for us. And our perimeter guys were just flying around like whirlwinds, picking up the ball, getting 10-second counts, going for



JAMICHAEL STILLWELL: We just locked in on the defensive side and we got it done.

THEMUS FULKS: Same thing. We hope every game that the shots go down, make it easier for us. But at the end of the day we gotta hang our hat on defense. And it's March, and we knew that Cincinnati was hungry. They were hot.

We knew that we needed to come in locked in. And I felt like we was locked in. We let them get off to, like, good runs throughout the game. Yeah, we just hang on our hat on defense, and we know defense wins championships.

Q. Wondering how you guys feel about facing Arizona. You guys are playing pretty well down there, almost got them in that game in January. I don't know if you remember much about that. But what do you feel about it, and what do you remember about that game?

JOHNNY DAWKINS: Absolutely, what you said is correct. It was a long time ago. I can't remember much about the game. I know they're a terrific game. They've had a great season. And I know when we leave here we have to start preparing for them.

But very talented. Again, well coached. And, so, like all the teams in the Big 12, we have to make sure we go do our homework and study up on the stats as we can. We have a quick turnaround because tomorrow at 2:00, we'll be tipping it off again.

Q. Themus, what can you say about Jamichael's game today; 17 and 15, led you guys in both categories?

THEMUS FULKS: You know, I was with him last year. I seen this every game. But like I told him, just be yourself out there. He's an anchor on defense. He's important to offense. They can't just key in on me, Riley, Burks, or Jamike is going to explode for a night like this.

But I think he's doing to a tremendous job just being the ultimate teammate, just doing whatever the team needs, because it's hard to sacrifice sometimes. But him, as a person and as a leader, he's doing a great job, sacrificing what the team needs. And I'm glad he's getting his flowers on the biggest stage.

Q. You guys got off to that hot start, too, earlier this year. Was there anything about the game against Arizona or the middle of the season you kind of transitioned from, learned from, et cetera, that made you where you are now?

JOHNNY DAWKINS: Like I said, that game is so far removed from where we are now. I have to go back and look at my notes and go back and start studying the tape and rewatching them when we played them the last time.

But as I said before, the one thing I was impressed with just was their overall talent. I was impressed with how well they played together. In this day and age, it's so much turnover on rosters, and it's hard to get guys to understand the importance of being connected out there because everybody's coming from a place where they were doing a lot of different things, and now they have to all kind of sacrifice where they are.

And so I thought the Arizona players have done a great job of that. When I watched them play, seeing they're playing for each other. They're playing for Arizona.

Q. For either of the players, what's kind of the mindset for next game? You guys are the big underdogs. How do you go into that game being ready to win? What's the mindset?

JAMICHAEL STILLWELL: Next-play mentality. We know it's a big game because we're playing in it. So we've just gotta come in dialled in and be ready for a fight.

Q. Maybe I misphrased it. But what I was wondering, the second half of your season, what's developed for you guys? What's going well? You know, what have you learned, et cetera?

JOHNNY DAWKINS: Well, the second half of the season, I didn't learn anything because I know the league is great. Every team is very good. Every team in this league is capable of beating one another. Think about the teams in our league, most of the teams went through different stretches, patches where they were winning a lot, then of all a sudden they're losing a lot. We definitely were nowhere near the only team that went through something like that. And it's because of the level of competition.

I don't think people really appreciate how good this league really is. Like I said, I've been in multiple leagues as a player, and as a coach I was in the ACC. As a coach, I was in the old Pac-12. So I've been multiple conferences and I'm telling you, from top to bottom, I haven't seen a conference that is better than this conference right here in college basketball, and I watch, as you can imagine basketball, every day all day. That's what we do. Hats off to this commissioner, hats off to this league, assembling these coaches and the talent they have on these teams. So absolutely, everybody is going to have rough patches in this league, and sometimes I think people can hold that against you when you're not realizing that every team that

you play can beat you.

There's not one that you can walk into the game knowing, you know what, we've probably got a win or we're going to get this win over there. It's not happening in this conference. That's why I love it because it is so competitive.

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