

2026 Phillips 66 Big 12 Men's Basketball Tournament

Wednesday, March 11, 2026

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

T-Mobile Center

TCU Horned Frogs

Coach Jamie Dixon

Tanner Toolson

David Punch

Postgame Press Conference

TCU - 95, Oklahoma State - 88

THE MODERATOR: Coach Dixon has joined us along with David Punch and Tanner Toolson.

JAMIE DIXON: Proud of our guys. I've got two guys up here that played really hard, and I think everybody saw that and has seen that all year.

But told them I think it was about the six-minute, seven-minute mark that it's our time and this is what we do and we're right where we need to be. We just kept chipping a way and got the rebounds from minus-4 in the first half to plus-4 in the second half, so it ends up an eight-rebound differently. We just played hard.

They carved us up early. Give them credit. They're a really good team. I would say you know they're an NCAA Tournament team if you take away the three losses to us. I mean that's 19-11; that's an NCAA Tournament team. So they're really good.

They carved us up offensively. We had to change defense a couple different times. And the adjustment, I told my buddy in the tunnel there, we finally got the fourth one worked. The fourth one worked on the defenses.

Great job responding and we have a variety of ways to guard. And the guys handled it well and believed and executed and pounded away on the glass and got a turn against a team that played really well, really well.

I mean they carved us up and we're a good defensive team. To their credit they got it done.

And we stuck with it and believed, and a great effort from



these two guys. I mean, I don't know how many rebounds, how many offensive rebounds these two guys got. It seemed a good shot. We took good shots -- they didn't go in, these two got it or X.

Q. Jamie, you guys have won six in a row, nine of the last 10. What's been the key to this run you guys have made as you guys get deep into March?

JAMIE DIXON: I think good players and just putting them together. And I think we're young. We're young and got better as the year went on.

So probably the youngest -- everybody tells us we're the smallest -- I think we're the youngest in the league or a Power Five.

But I mean our practices are really good. Our walk-throughs are really good. They giggle a little bit too much for me, but it's a good thing.

But they care. And they believe in each other. And I believe in them.

Q. Xavier Edmonds was just 1-of-3 from the floor in the first half. Was it a point of emphasis to get him going later in the game?

JAMIE DIXON: Well, he had a couple of fouls. I don't know I've never seen a guy get a T that quick for smiling or looking at it but beside the point.

I mean, we've got guys, we have a seven-, eight-man rotation that all can make plays. We've had this and we had it numerous times. It's not a surprise. And we've handled it before. And just took (indiscernible).

And I think the versatility of this team, even with just the seven guys -- and V gives us good minutes, too, when he's in there defensively.

But the practices are good. We're prepared. We played many different lineups at practice, many different groups. So I think we're prepared for these things.



But talk to these guys. They're the ones who got all the rebounds. I just ran up and down.

Q. Your initial thoughts on Kansas? Obviously lost that nail biter in overtime in Allen Fieldhouse earlier this year?

JAMIE DIXON: Yeah, we lost. We played hard, but we're a lot better team than we were then. I think that was a good -- I wouldn't say a good experience, but a learning experience.

Q. Tanner, about 5:45 left, you had a free throw. You missed it. You guys were down two. Xavier got the rebound kicked it out to Jayden. He made a 3. Put you guys up 1. That just seemed like the energy moment for you guys in the game. Like Coach said, you guys had been chipping away for a few minutes. What did that moment do for you guys as a team after Oklahoma State took that time out?

TANNER TOOLSON: I think we have a bunch of battlers on this team. We got a bunch of guys that want to win and we'll do anything to win.

We struggled defensively tonight, like Coach said. As we chipped away we just kept saying one more stop, one more stop, one more stop. And that play was a huge energy boost for us.

Huge offensive rebound from X, huge shot from Jayden. It kind of gave us a lot of energy to buck up and play defense the last six minutes of the game. And we did exactly that and the toughest team won tonight.

Q. Punch, a career high for you tonight, four blocks seven rebounds as well. What do you feel like you just showed tonight as you guys get started in March Madness?

DAVID PUNCH: I think it was just a showcase of my versatility. It's been a talking point. I feel like this year, and I feel like today was a great opportunity -- Oklahoma State they gave me a lot of looks. I've seen the ball go in too many times and I just kept rolling with it.

Q. Xavier has been a double-digit rebounder against this team all three times that you've played them. What have you seen in the way that he matches up with this team that's made him so effective?

JAMIE DIXON: I guess later in the year we got him. He's gotten better. He came from a junior college, played for a really good high school coach, played for a good AAU

program, Coach Breeze, and Coach Mitchell (phonetic) in high school. But it's all an adjustment to go junior -- he played for Coach Rice at junior college, really good coach too -- but it's still an adjustment -- junior college to the best conference in the country.

Took some time. Took some time. And by the time we played Oklahoma State, you know he's been progressing. And that's now where we're at -- I can't make this more clear -- Oklahoma State is a really good team and really well-coached. And we just fought through it and battled through some challenges and adversity, a team playing really well.

And like I said earlier, they're an NCAA Tournament team if you take away our three losses. That's what makes our league so hard.

Q. You and your players have mentioned some of the defensive struggles that you had today and other little hiccups here and there. But, like you mentioned, you guys were able to keep your chins up and find a way to adjust. What does that say about the character of your team and the ability to overcome adversity?

JAMIE DIXON: I think they believe in each other. We've been through it. And this league, it either wears you down or builds you up. And I think it's built this group up.

And we did this at our place, too. We were down big against -- not big, but down and then we fought back. So we've done this numerous times.

I think there's a belief. There's a trust. We take great pride in the four-minute games, the two-minute games, situational games that we do. So we believe that it's a long game. And we were down 3-4 I think in that timeout, and it's like we're right where we need to be. We're right where we need to be. And I think they believe it.

And they executed. And really good clock management, too, down the stretch with using clock and making decisions. These guys did all the things. I just got the bus here on time.

Q. Tanner and David, what can you tell us about the feelings and emotions of being able to rely on your teammates and have that culture in the team of overcoming adversity and persevering?

TANNER TOOLSON: I think it's kind of the story of the season. Game 1, we lost to a team that we should have beat. And a lot of people counted us out from that day. As the season continued, like Coach said, we're a very young team, and we get better every single day.

And, like, I know that we're going to compete. We are a small team, and we're going to be a feisty team. We're going to be an annoying team to play against. As we've gotten better throughout the year, it's been really, really cool to see guys come together.

The fight that we have is unreal. The competitiveness, we compete every day in practice. And that is a tribute to our success. So it's great to be able to rely on our teammates to push us every single day so when we get in situations like today, we can come out on top and be the toughest team and do what it takes to win even if it's not flashy or pretty.

DAVID PUNCH: To add on to that, I feel like through every game our bond has gotten stronger, more unbreakable. It's amazing to see. I've never really had this type of bond with players like this. And I love it so much. I love these guys, and we've built this through every game, through every loss, through every win.

I feel like the guys are excited, and we're happy to see how far we came.

Q. David, following up that career high night question, Oklahoma State's head coach said you and Xavier would be the two guys that they would focus on heading into this game last night. Were you aware of that? How have you maneuvered scouting reports that have focused on you in the front court this season?

DAVID PUNCH: I wasn't aware. But I mean I had an idea I'd be a focus to attack. You know, just dealing with that, it happens. You just gotta keep your head down and continue to push through it. And my teammates, they continue to instill that belief in me. And it just motivates me to keep going. And same thing with the coaches, they keep me motivated out there. Regardless of what any team throws at me, I'm going to find a way and my teammates are going to be there with me.

TANNER TOOLSON: He's going to be a focus of a lot of teams. He's a really good player.

Q. Coach, what are the specific challenges that Kansas presents tomorrow, and then what areas do you think you guys have grown the most since that game?

JAMIE DIXON: Well, we played good in that game. I think we've been very good down the stretch. We've won all the close games, every close game since then. We're putting in a lot of different sets. We put in a press 0. I think we've tightened up our defense, I thought, until tonight.

But give them credit. We found something that worked down the stretch the last ten minutes or so, and we stayed with it. So I think each player has gotten better. I think that's probably the simplest way to put it. Each guy has gotten better as a player, and that's collectively made us better.

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