

2026 Phillips 66 Big 12 Men's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 12, 2026

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

Texas Tech Red Raiders

Coach Grant McCasland

Christian Anderson

Donovan Atwell

Postgame Press Conference



Iowa State - 75, Texas Tech - 53

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Coach along with Christian Anderson and Donovan Atwell.

GRANT MCCASLAND: Iowa State was unbelievably tough, physical. Got down early. I thought their competitiveness and their fight was tremendous. Their physicality, just the way they stayed the course and got after it.

You can tell they had an edge and had the right edge in order to win this basketball game.

And we didn't match that physicality. We didn't match the effort in the second half. And I've got to do a better job helping our team understand how important it is to get after it -- for the entire game.

I loved our fight to start, obviously we made shots, we got stops. But just the game wore on us and eventually their size and athleticism caused us a lot of problems.

Q. Christian, how are you feeling? And can you just take us through the play where obviously you got injured and anything surrounding that? Do you think it was the floor? What led into that? And what's the status of your injury?

CHRISTIAN ANDERSON: I'm feeling good. Obviously the floor is a bit slippery, so I think I just kind of mis-stepped or did a movement that caused me to slip and kind of ended up in a little unnatural position. Yeah, that's what it was.

Q. Coach, could you go a little more into Iowa State's physicality throughout the game and how you think you guys handled that? Was that one of the major

factors that led to the second-half struggles?

GRANT MCCASLAND: Yeah, obviously 42 points in the paint probably tells a story. Part of it is their ability to put shooters out there and move pieces, and then you get -- Jefferson such a good scorer, and they can -- I thought he was great.

But Lipsey just controlled the game, and when he wanted to put pressure on the rim passing it to those guys, we had a hard time guarding them on some of their ball-screen coverages and figuring out the in-between.

Then when they did get it down there, just not putting our bodies on them the right way. Honestly, there's a real technique that we didn't do very well. And I've got to do a better job coaching us so we can apply physicality down there, so you're not giving as many angles at the basket. But it was consistent over the course of the game.

Q. You have a couple days now to figure out what's going to be happening with the NCAA Tournament. Just what is the main focus with your team going to be as you wait and then move forward to next week?

GRANT MCCASLAND: I told our guys, let's get home. Hopefully we can get out of here tonight at some point and get a day to watch some film and recoup, and let's practice on Saturday. Let's practice on Sunday. Let's figure out a way to keep getting better.

This team's shown that we can do it. I think we've hit a lull here. And the spike initially was just the competitiveness, I think, of guys flying around. We're starting to really lose, I think, the edge of just competing and kind of playing without trying not to make a mistake, I mean trying to just play the game and do right instead of compete to win.

It's hard to explain until you go out there and you see the guys overthinking possessions. I know we're throwing a lot at them in a short amount of time. This is Luke, Marial, Josiah -- we're throwing a lot at them and we're kind of through that honeymoon phase of, man, this is competing.

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Now you're coming up with different scenarios and different teams and changing things and still have to go out there and fly around and be physical.

So hopefully we can keep getting better at it. We've got a great opportunity ahead of us. Told our guys that in the locker room. Just gotta have people step up.

The truth is JT Toppin had been our physical fight. We were down at Illinois and he's the one that spoke up at halftime. We got beat at Houston, he's the one that spoke up at halftime. Just gotta have more fight and resolve with that group of forwards. If we can find somebody that can do it, then this team can have a special run.

Q. For the players, was there anything specifically that Iowa State was doing defensively that you felt differed from the games in Ames? Or was it just an off shooting night for you guys?

DONOVAN ATWELL: I just thought it was physicality. That was the main thing. Finishing possessions in the second half, we didn't do a good job of doing that. And taking punches, we didn't respond in the right way in certain moments.

So a combination of those different things is what led to what happened tonight. We just have to get better at responding the right way when we get down.

Q. Coach, T.J. Otzelberger talked about the first five minutes compared to the final 35. When looking at the game in that format, what did you kind of notice from both sides?

GRANT MCCASLAND: I thought that both teams obviously had such a wild game at their place where we came out and did some things maybe they weren't prepared for. They were prepared for it this time. We just got a bunch of defensive rebounds and got stops to start the game. And transition offense made a huge difference in the way that we were able to score. We had them on their heels.

And you can look at the second half, I thought their rate of scoring and their ability to get in the paint and score at the rim really changed it.

We had great looks at the rim. I thought we had three in the second half that were pretty good, and we just couldn't finish them. So when those things start to snowball on you -- and Don said it right, Donovan is right -- it's the response to the runs that we didn't handle well.

And I thought we got some decent looks and probably

matched offensive looks. We just didn't match the finish and the fight that it takes. And that's where they were different.

Let's give credit to Tamin Lipsey, man. What a great competitor. He's a senior that's put his heart into this, and I'm telling you, he was slipping and sliding all over the floor and getting up and getting right back into the contest.

I can't tell you how much respect I have for him and just his leadership. He was the guy -- he hadn't been shooting it great against us in the games we played, but he was 4-for-7. He had 20. He had no turnovers.

And I thought his fight was the difference in the game. Just his ability to go in there and find a way to win and to do with in a meaningful game like this says a lot about his character and who he is as a competitor.

Q. Donovan, the Cyclones fans traveled pretty well, obviously. How much was the noise a factor in this one?

DONOVAN ATWELL: Honestly, I don't really think it was the noise. It was really just an internal thing with us. Our circle wasn't as tight as it needed to be. Like I said earlier, just responding to their runs was just the biggest factor, and we weren't as physical as we needed to be. I just think it was us just not being as locked in as we needed to be in terms of responding in the second half.

Q. Coach, we asked Christian right off the bat about the floor. Do you have any thoughts on the floor?

GRANT MCCASLAND: It's definitely different, and it proposes -- it's a challenge at times. It's obviously a different surface than what we're used to playing on, and there were some challenging moments today, is what I would say. And I think with size around the basket, it's not. But the quickness and the guard play and start-stop and changing direction, it just has a different response than what we're used to. And I thought we had a hard time handling changing directions over the course of the game.

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