

2026 Phillips 66 Big 12 Men's Basketball Tournament

Friday, March 13, 2026
Kansas City, Missouri, USA
T-Mobile Center

Kansas Jayhawks

Bill Self

Melvin Council Jr.

Jamari McDowell

Postgame Press Conference



Houston - 69, Kansas - 47

THE MODERATOR: We'll start with an opening statement from Coach and then take questions.

BILL SELF: Well, obviously we weren't very good tonight, and they got off to a good start and we were playing catchup and never had offense the entire game. So it's disappointing. I actually thought we tried defensively, for the most part, the entire game, but certainly when you can't score, you know, it puts you in a hole, and certainly we were in a big hole tonight.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions.

Q. It's obviously not the outcome you want, but I just want to know what good can you take from this week and into the tournament?

BILL SELF: Well, that's actually a good question because I think that will be the key thing that we have to come up with. We beat a team yesterday that will be the type of team we play either on Thursday or Friday. Hopefully get a little confidence from that. But the thing about it is the conference tournament is important. It's a great tournament. Of course that first game was probably as good a game college basketball's seen this year, a high level, from what I saw of it.

But still yet after Sunday nobody's going to remember this tournament. Everybody's going to be focused on next week. So hopefully it's an opportunity to get our batteries recharged and do the same thing. I would love to have played longer. I would have loved to have been more competitive tonight and everything. But the reality of it is on Sunday is a new day that everybody's 0-0 and

everybody will be fired up to play.

Q. At what point did you kind of feel like this wasn't going to happen tonight? Did you sense it in the energy or did you sense it in --

BILL SELF: I didn't think our energy was as good as it has been at times. I didn't think it was great yesterday either, though, to be honest. I thought we were so bad early offensively, but when we got it to 29-25, I'm actually thinking, you know what? All we need to do is finish the last minute and a half decent and we're going to go in with a little bit of momentum, we're going to be fine. And then they score four to end the half. That was disappointing.

But to come out the second half down eight, I mean, how many times have we been down eight this year? Many. And to come out and lay an egg, you know, that first two minutes was disappointing to me. We got the ball exactly where we wanted to get it. We missed a shot or whatever. And then they make a harder shot on the other end. It wasn't game over, but it was to the point where it was deflating enough that I took -- I think it took a lot of the wind out of our sails.

Q. I know you mentioned you will have a feeling of a reset as of Sunday, but what did you try to get across post-game to these guys?

BILL SELF: I haven't really talked to 'em post-game. I told 'em that, obviously, we weren't very good tonight, we weren't as competitive as we want to be, but in life -- you know, I hate to say this, and I wish that we never had to deal with it, but how hard is it to be a good person and think of others and add value to life whenever things are going well. I mean, the key is can you do it when it's not going well. That's what good teammates do. They pick each other up and that's what we're going to have to do as well.

Q. Obviously Houston's a good defensive team and you guys didn't hit shots, but what stood out to you about, like, what needs to improve offensively for you?

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BILL SELF: Well, we were terrible, terrible playing behind ball screens. I mean, we knew how we wanted to attack it and we didn't attack it. We were really bad at that. They did a great job loading up. The first game we controlled it from an offensive standpoint, and then they made some adjustments.

But I don't know if they made a lot of adjustments that was different than the first game. Obviously, they weren't going to let Darryn beat 'em. They were going to have two guys on him and drag guys to him and switch so he always felt guarded. They did a great job with that. But in the openings and the ability to play behind when they pressured, we didn't do a good job. I didn't do a good job getting the guys ready for that. You got play four on three behind their pressure, and we didn't do that but maybe once or twice the entire game.

Q. Wondered if you guys could just speak to where you feel like you are headed into March Madness here.

MELVIN COUNCIL JR.: I mean, I feel like this loss, you know, took a hold, but March Madness is win or go home, so that's basically what we're looking at. And, like, starting with me, starting in practice, we just got to get ready for March Madness.

JAMARI McDOWELL: Yeah, I'm going to kind of follow on Melvin. This is behind us now. We got to look forward to next week and get prepared for that, for sure. It's either we're going to be there or we're not, so...

BILL SELF: Can I add to that? If we would have played better and gone not 14 -- or what were we? 14-52 as starters. If we would have played better and gone 22-52, which is still 40 percent, basically, and been more competitive in the game, does that make us more prepared for next week? I'm not sure it does. I think there's some things from a standpoint that we can do that we have control over. I think that we can -- our personality, the energy, I think physicality, hitting first as opposed to being hit first. I think there's a lot of things that will play into success next week more so than the outcome of this game.

This game, if anything, if we have any competitive juices at all, should inspire us to can't wait to get back out there again. And I believe the guys will respond in that way. The one thing about this game tonight, it didn't camouflage our deficiencies. It exposed them in a big way. So maybe it will be easier for us to understand that and understand why we can't -- sometimes when things don't go well, you actually can rationalize, well, they didn't go well, but it was close. It wasn't close. So there's no reason why we can't look at this and see a very clear picture of what we didn't

do well and what are the intangibles that would allow us to do better because I do think that's it as much as anything.

Q. I wanted to hear your thoughts on Kohl Rosario's game. 11 minutes for him, second leading scorer behind Darryn Peterson. How much confidence do you think that gives him going into the tournament, and end result you as well with the bench?

BILL SELF: Well, you know, he hasn't made a lot of shots, but he did make a couple tonight, which was great to see. And these guys know this. Kohl tries so hard every day. So it was good for him to see a couple go down. And to be honest with you, he almost had four more points on layups or whatever that could have easily gone down. So it was good to see. We made seven threes tonight, but we really didn't make seven. We really made four up until the under four timeout. Last night we made four. So us shooting the ball and having, whether it be him or 'Mari or whatever, that's a bonus having those guys see the ball go down, because we definitely need that.

Q. Heading into this game with Houston being a really very high-ranking team, what were some things that you wanted to try and focus on before the game started to help you guys get the advantage?

BILL SELF: Help us get what?

Q. The advantage over them.

BILL SELF: Well, focus on, you know, the physical play, the rebounding. They're really good at turning people over and scoring off their defense. They didn't do that to us. And they're great at offensive rebounding, and they did that to us to an extent, but the combination of the two, we were actually decent at. If you look at their offensive stats, Kelvin's not doing, you know, he's not doing handstands and all that stuff based on their offensive numbers as well. It's just ours were so poor it made theirs look better. But I think the fact that, you know, shooting 41 percent, the best thing they did tonight though was they made threes. And seeing that got 'em off to a great start by making threes.

Q. No Bryson in the second half. What kind of what went into that decision, and you said you hadn't really talked to him, but what would your message be to him?

BILL SELF: Well, my message is to rebound and play competitive. That's it. Be physical, rebound, play competitive. So it's been the message for a long time.

Q. So it was just coach's decision on performance. He wasn't sick or anything?

BILL SELF: Of Bryson? No, no, no, that was just my call. That's my call.

Q. What do you think about tomorrow's game?

BILL SELF: I think it's two really good teams playing. Of the three teams that played today out of the four, three of 'em played like teams that would have a chance to go as deep as anybody. We didn't, obviously. But I think it will be a coin flip game. Should be a fabulous final.

Q. Is there a benefit for having, to having a game like this before you enter the tournament? Because, I mean, you've been around a little while and seen it both ways.

BILL SELF: I don't know that there's a benefit of having a game like this. There could be a benefit of not playing. You know, the thing about it is, if you play on Saturday, you might as well win, because you're going to play regardless. But there's some thinking that sometimes the rest before is actually more beneficial. When the Big XII switched it to a Saturday final was one of the smartest things that the league's done, I think. And that was done a long time ago. Because obviously a Sunday final, and you play on Thursday, it's too tight a window when you play back-to-back-to-back, and then have to take a day or two off, and then only have a day or two to prepare. So could it be a positive? Sure it could. Our bodies could be better rested moving forward. There's no doubt there could be a positive in it. And you're a glass half full guy, I like that.

Q. How important is it to get Flory going early, and were you disappointed at all with how few looks he got today?

BILL SELF: Well, he was wide open on a layup to start the game, and we didn't get the ball to him. I mean, so, yeah, it's disappointing he didn't get looks. I don't think he put himself in position very often to get looks. But, yeah, we ran a little something to get him a layup, and he had one, and we just didn't make the pass. But I think these guys would agree, Flory having success early is something that usually bodes well for us.

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