

Big 12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 11, 2021

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

TCU Horned Frogs

Raegan Pebley

Postgame Press Conference



TCU - 75, Kansas - 72

RAEGAN PEBLEY: I'll open with this. Kansas is a team that is never out. I mean, just look at their scores. They've lost by one point, two points, overtimes. They just are never out. We completely lost our focus in the fourth quarter with that lead, and you cannot do it against a team like Kansas, but it's also a great experience for our players to learn. We have a lot of new pieces that are learning still, as we speak, into March.

I'm very proud. Any time that you survive and advance in the postseason, it's very hard to do and really, really proud of our team today. Opening up the beginning of the game not in the best way, but staying true to their vision and continuing to work and lock in and make corrections where they needed to be made took a lot of grit, and I think it's evidence that this team still wants to be competing together. They weren't ready to go home.

Q. You talk about that desire to want to keep playing, and I don't know if that's something you can instill in a player as a coach. What does that say to you about in a tough season, in a COVID year, every excuse in the book, right? What do you think it is about these women that makes them want to live to play another day in these moments?

RAEGAN PEBLEY: Well, we didn't get to play this game last year. There were players on this roster that really wanted to play this game last year. I think that's a big part of it. I think they've made -- you know, we say something in our program a lot. There's no such thing as sacrifices, only choices, and they've been making choices for eight months to be able to be right here and be in this moment.

Would we have preferred to be a higher seed? Yes. But this is where we're at right now, and it's still part of that vision and those choices they've been making for eight months. I'm not surprised.

I know this team likes each other. They've gone through a lot with each other, and they're working hard for one another, and there's no other option but to keep fighting together.

Q. You look at the way that Lauren played down the stretch, and it just seems like in every close win that you've had, it's been her at the free throw line kind of determining how the result of the game ends up. Her mental fortitude and her moxie is just well beyond her years. What is it inside of her that gives her the confidence -- even when she's had a tough night at the line, she seems to make the one or two free throws that she needs to every single time.

RAEGAN PEBLEY: You and I have talked about this. It's her identity. It's what she puts her identity in. It's not about the game. It's not about wins and losses. It's about leadership. It's about faith and work and toughness and being brave. That's an incredibly vulnerable moment when you've got to step to the free-throw line and hit game-winning shots.

You've got to have a lot of bravery to be willing to do that, and Lo definitely has that and models that for her team and for hopefully a bunch of little girls out there dreaming of putting on a purple uniform one day, that they see that's what it takes. She's just an awesome role model. She's phenomenal.

Q. You talk about bravery and courage, and I think that Yummy kind of emblazoned that tonight. Her role, I don't want to say it's been minimized, but she's gone from a starter to a bench player to a rotational player. She was huge for you guys tonight. She really stepped up. What do you want to say about her effort and what she gave the team this evening?

RAEGAN PEBLEY: Adversity can break you or make you. She's gone through plenty of adversity in her life. She knows how to make it be something that fuels her, and she's continued to work hard throughout the season and stay engaged and stay invested and growing. Competition, internal competition in our roster with Kayla and with Patricia will make you or it will break you. How you're going

to allow that to help you get better, and I believe that's helped her get better.

We started our lineup today really based off of experience. Aja is, I think, a very quality player who's got a huge future, huge future. I think she's one of the top freshmen in this league, but our staff just really wanted to see some experience on the floor in postseason and understanding that everything gets amped up that much more. Yummy got that nod today, so she -- because we just knew she'd understand what she was going to have to bring -- performed very well.

Q. Experience is awesome and great, but you can't teach some of the things that Tavy Diggs can do as a young player. She was super impressive this evening and I think was a huge part of getting you guys back into this game and putting you in position late. We talked a lot about her development over the last several weeks, but to do it in a postseason win or go home game, what does that get you excited for with the future for her?

RAEGAN PEBLEY: Well, I hope you can teach people that. That's the point of practice, Melissa.

Q. You make a good point.

RAEGAN PEBLEY: We're not going to take all the credit for that because, I mean, Tavy has -- to use your word that you used for Lo, I'd say the same thing. She has a moxie about her. She's got a wiggle about her. She's continuing to grow in her confidence. In that perimeter shot, I thought she probably should have taken it a few more times today, but she's just got a soft touch and a nice high release.

What I'm incredibly proud of Tavy for is that she's really worked hard to become a better defender, and that's allowed us to keep her on the floor more because, if you score a lot but you give up a lot times two, then it doesn't work out, and she's now gotten herself to a space that she's more of a reliable defender for us, and we needed that.

Q. She's just like so fun to watch. I mean, you've got amazing players up and down this roster, but there's just something about that kid that seems like -- I think she's going to be just really, really special in all the players you've had. The last question. You all put together some -- grinded through that fourth quarter, overcame some adversity late, and the reward for that is you get to face Baylor, a team that you've had some tough games against this year. How do you kind of wipe the slate clean ahead of facing this team tomorrow?

RAEGAN PEBLEY: Well, again, I think it's survive and advance is the theme of March, right? You've got to have a mentality that we all have here at TCU. You've just got to be willing to fight them anywhere. Fight them on the ice, if you have to, and it's anybody. At some point, if you're going to go win this conference championship, it's going to go through Baylor, whether you're going to play them in the first round, second round, or the final round. We've got to have that confidence and that grit, and definitely we've got to get our legs underneath us. So a lot of recovery between now and then.

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