

Big 12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 11, 2021

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

Texas Tech Lady Raiders

Krista Gerlich

Postgame Press Conference

Texas Tech, 75 - Kansas State, 65

THE MODERATOR: Questions for coach.

Q. Coach, just get some overall thoughts on the game and how you think it went and where you thought it was ultimately won.

KRISTA GERLICH: Yeah, you know, I thought the first half obviously it was a game of runs and I was really proud of our kids, because we talked about that before the game started, just about how we can't let them get out to a big lead.

I didn't think we let it get out control, but I was proud of the way we ended the half. In the second quarter they started going a little bit of zone and their zone is so big. We turned it over I think four-straight possessions, and that was a really big key for us during that little time. And that's kind of when they stretched that lead against us. I thought we did respond and closed the gap.

In the second half I really liked our mentality in the third quarter. I thought we battled well, made some really big plays. I think we got every 50/50 ball.

In the fourth quarter we lost some defensive assignments and gave up too many threes. We were having to pick our poison at that point with Lee on the inside and their shooters on the outside. We left some shooters, uncharacteristically left them. We had them and then we left them on the perimeter and gave up some big threes late. I think they hit four in the fourth quarter. They had only made five up to that point.

So that was I think a really big key for us. But also I thought our kids just battled so well. To out-rebound them on the offensive rebound, to have 16 offensive boards, I just think shows the fight that we had in our kids, that our kids had. We didn't get much payoff from that. We didn't see a lot of payoff on the scoreboards from those offensive rebounds.



Late in the game I thought probably in the last three to four minutes I didn't think we executed very well at all. I thought we took some ill-advised shots, turned the ball over a couple times, and didn't come out and execute when we had done that in the past when we were making a run to catch back up.

Overall I'm just so proud of this group and really proud of all the adversity they've gone through and how they've handled it this year and how they were committed to staying together and committed to doing what we asked them to do for the long haul and gave us their best effort tonight.

Q. Can you speak to the difficulty of the match up that Lee was tonight?

KRISTA GERLICH: Yeah, be well, I mean, she's just so physical. It's one thing to have 6'5"; it's another to be physical. She's really strong and physical and has great hands. They're very good at entering the basketball to her when they have a very small window. I thought that Haddie and Khyla did a good job of trying to limit her touches.

But they just -- they've young and inexperienced compared to her two years in the Big 12. I think that really showed. When we tried to go with Alexis Tucker she helps us offensively a lot, but it's just a tough matchup for her. She gives you up six to eight inches. So we just really struggled with trying to find the right matchup with her, and we had the philosophy of giving up more twos than threes, because we went didn't want to give up as many threes. Seemed like in the fourth quarter we paid too much attention to her on the inside. She was getting such easy looks.

Q. Looking forward I guess next year, what elements do you think this team needs to add to get this team back toward the top of the conference?

KRISTA GERLICH: Yeah, we need to -- we definitely need to focus on some defense. We need to get some defensive stoppers and obviously some more experience on the inside.

We obviously need to get a point guard that's truly a point guard. I think Najé and Bryn did such a great job this year of us asking them to handle the point guard duties, and that's going to help them so much moving forward. Also will help them if they don't have to handle it all themselves and they can play their natural positions.

So we've got a lot of work to do in the off-season, but it's going to be very much about just putting our system in and working on fundamentals and them understanding our philosophy and developing the type of program and team that we want to have on the floor.

Q. Just to follow up, talking about Najé and Bryn playing more of their natural positions next year. Najé I assumed you've used more of a two guard naturally.

KRISTA GERLICH: Uh-huh.

Q. Bryn is more of which position?

KRISTA GERLICH: A two-three as well.

Q. What did you expect to happen with your I guess seniors, with Vivian and Lexi in particular?

KRISTA GERLICH: Yeah, we haven't had those conversations yet. We were really committed to this team and to this season and we're going to have those conversations very quickly. I'm proud of those two and so I feel very honored to have gotten to coach them, and we'll see what they decided to with their future.

Q. One quick follow up on another senior, Jo'Nah Johnson. What's her progress been during this season when she hasn't been playing?

KRISTA GERLICH: Yeah, she's coming off her Achilles injury and is healing very nicely. So, yeah, she'll be able to go through off-season with us this spring. I think that will really be beneficial for her.

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