

Big 12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Friday, March 12, 2021

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

Iowa State Cyclones

Bill Fennelly

Postgame Press Conference



Texas 84, Iowa State 82

BILL FENNELLY: Obviously a great college game. I thought both teams played really hard. That's what March is about, this kind of game, four or five game, like I said, it's like an NCAA Tournament game.

I thought both teams played really, really hard. Great game for the Big 12. You know, they're a tough team obviously for us to match up to, but I thought our kids competed. I thought Ashley Joens did everything she could, like she always does, to impact the game in a positive way. We hung around. Just couldn't make enough plays when we needed them, and that's a credit to Texas. That's a very good team. Their age kind of wears on us a little bit. They're so old and smart and at times our youth showed. But great game. Disappointing, but excited knowing that we're going to get to play again.

Q. Wondering if you can talk about just I guess the fight in your team. You guys seemed to keep battling back. Seemed like a couple times you guys were almost done for.

BILL FENNELLY: No, I thought, yeah, there is no question late third quarter we looked like they were dead in the water a little bit. We got down nine. And even all the way until very end, just kept making another play and kept competing. That's what this group has been about.

We had to play some kids in the overtime. Kristin couldn't go in the overtime. Her legs were hurting her, so we had to play some people out of position maybe a little bit. That hurt us, not having that stretch offensive option. We just kept playing. I thought we did what we could.

Ash was great. She carried us through a lot of it, and we hit some big shots, but it wasn't the effort by any means. Few turnovers, missed assignments, all the things that coaches talk about, the one thing that you don't want to have happen that cost you the game. That certainly happened in

a couple positions.

But that's a very, very good team, and like I said, the maturity of their team and the physicality of their team is just obviously not something we can -- we match up with very well.

Q. What did you feel like you guys did better this time around against them?

BILL FENNELLY: I thought offensively we turned ball over 18 times, couple silly turnovers. We really tried to limit the playbook. Just wanted to get ball up the floor, open up the court, drive it, kick it, and get to the free throw line, not overthink it.

Try and give our young guys less to think about. Let Ash handle the ball in space a little bit. You know, so I thought offensively we were okay. 82, obviously with an overtime, but overall, offensively -- you know, 18 turnovers is not good, but the offense wasn't bad.

We had some defensive mistakes and they hit some threes. They're not a great three-point shooting team, but they made some. Seemed like every time they an offensive rebound they made a three right after it. So we just couldn't get the critical stop that we needed. Again, that's a credit to them.

Q. Coach, that's obviously a tough one to lose, but talk about the fight your team showed and just the different players that stepped up today. Ashley Joens having 28, the shots that Emily Ryan made, the three that Kylie had. Is that pretty much the best result you could hope for for a quarterfinal loss ahead of NCAA Tournament?

BILL FENNELLY: You know, I don't know.

Q. Sorry if I phrased that weird.

BILL FENNELLY: No, I understand. I completely understand your question. Yeah, I mean, I think what you want is -- it's like I just told them. The next time we lose this team will not be together again in a basketball setting ever,

so what you want to do is understand that you want to play as hard as you can play, because when you're in an elimination setting you can't say, I'll come back and practice and make it better the next time. There is only going to be one next time.

But I was really proud of how hard we played. You know, that within group, I can tell Connor, I've never had an issue with their effort. Our execution is an issue and that's my fault obviously. We got to coach that better.

But the effort is there. They play the game the right way. They play hard. They represent our program the right way. So I 100% appreciate how hard they play and the way they go about doing their business.

Q. I was just wondering too now you have to wait until Selection Monday, but how do you feel about the resume you guys have put together this season?

BILL FENNELLY: No, I think it's very good. Obviously every win counts, but if you look, Tommy, at the games we've one, the strength of schedule is ridiculously good. Our net rankings, all the metrics that I think the NCAA committee -- four seed in the Big 12 Tournament. So I don't know.

I feel good about what we'll hear on Monday and everyone, "Where do you think you'll be seeded?" For me, that's never been a big deal. I just show up Monday night. It would be a great reward for this team, and at that point we'll talk about it.

But it's always -- and especially this year with the tournament in San Antonio. You're not worried about going to someone's home court. It's just really different. But we'll take a couple days off, rest up a little bit, and hopefully Monday night Iowa State will show up on the national stage again and we'll get to keep coaching this team and get to play at least one more time.

Q. You mentioned turnovers and you had I think 18 turnovers and Texas was able to get 16 points off that. What kind of difference in the game did that make?

BILL FENNELLY: That's part of it obviously. That's their style, is to turn you over. Some of them -- it's good defense obviously. Some of it we made some bad decisions.

You know, we got caught in bad spots, couldn't inbound the ball a couple times, got caught dribbling one extra time. But I really -- you know, Megan, I'll be honest with you, 18 turnovers, there weren't a lot of live ball turnovers where they would steal it and pick six, go make a layup. So I don't think that was the biggest issue in the game.

We shot the ball great. We just -- shoot 56 percent but just didn't get enough shots. So I'm okay with it. Yeah, I really am.

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