

Big 12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Saturday, March 13, 2021

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

Texas Longhorns

Vic Schaefer

Postgame Press Conference

Baylor 66, Texas 55

VIC SCHAEFER: Well, just really proud of our kids and how hard they fought and competed today. Five-point game with three minutes to go. We got the stop but we couldn't get rebound. We fumbled it and ended up -- they had 22 offensive boards today and that was the first thing on the board was rebounding.

But I just couldn't be more proud of my team. Jo and Celeste gutting it out, another 40-minute game, playing as hard as they played. Lauren played 35, had 11 rebounds, and played through foul trouble. You know, I thought Kyra's had two really good days. I think she had one turnover in two games, double digit assists. So she's really done a good job.

So I think I take from it now we're getting better. We have competed now. You know, to me, if that's the two seed, we've obviously played them -- I'm not into moral victories, but we competed. We didn't blink today. When they made a run at us we fought back in it.

It just comes down to we get out physical when we play that group a lot of times. It's a physical game and you have to play the big lineups sometimes, and we sacrifice some things when we do play the big lineup.

When Audrey is in the game she impacts the game in so many positive ways other than scoring. She didn't make a field goal today but took three charges and had five rebounds and I think two steals. So that kid gutted it out too after being sick for the last two days, just feeling totally like crud.

So just, again, proud of our kids, proud of our team. Again, this is the time of year you want to be playing well. You know, I'm excited about next week, excited for the kids. They worked really hard. You know, they deserve what's -- being in the tournament. We'll get home tonight, rest up tomorrow, and then we'll get ready to play week wherever



they want us to play whoever they want us to play against.

So, again, disappointed they we lost the game. I thought when we had to five and made them miss we could have come down and scored, things get a little bit tighter on the other end.

Celeste and Jo both shot it well today, played well. Celeste I think was 8-for-17 and Jo was right there 7-of-15 I think. Those kids, they worked on their craft. They're getting better, making shots. I've seen it in practice now, and, man, things get a whole lot easier when you got some guards that can make some shots.

So, again, I see us getting better. Proud of our effort, especially the last two days. We're growing as a team, growing as a program.

Q. Elaborate on Audrey and how she went from being out and you guys not expecting her to play to being available.

VIC SCHAEFER: We got our team doctor with us and we've really monitored her and taken good care of her, they have. And she started feeling a lot better yesterday afternoon, and by last night she was pretty much getting close to being her old self.

We knew after two days of inactivity and sitting in a hotel room she might not be great, but she's still a vital part of our chemistry and our program. So she just an ultimate competitor. So this morning she came in, big smile, feeling -- after feeling bad when you start feeling good, you really can notice it and you can wear it on your face.

She was wearing it this morning at breakfast feeling good. Doctor examined her and said, Hey, she's clear. She's good to go. She's not contagious. She's been without fever. So just how good is she going to be. As always, she is pretty good.

Q. Clearly with Charli in the second foul seemed a little questionable, didn't help. But when you look at her games against Baylor, what's is it about this matchup that she is struggling so much?

VIC SCHAEFER: Yeah, I think it's a combination of things, but really, again, you have to give your opponent credit, and they do a good job. Smith is just so energetic up and down the floor and plays really hard. I just think that there is a real competitive spirit between both teams and both her and them, and I think they get up for it.

So I think they pay a lot of attention, and so for us, it's just learning to compete against that type of player. NaLyssa Smith is really a long athletic kid, quick. And so, when we play the big lineup, if you put Lauren at the top they're not going to come guard her. Then, you know, they don't stand behind you this the post. You got to win your battle down there.

So they really fight to take that away, and so we have to play the big lineup because you got to try to rebound with them, and at the same time, when you do that, you got to be able to attack them in some different ways. I thought we did that at times.

But foul trouble. She played 16 minutes today and obviously I can't talk about the fouls, but I just think it's a combination of a lot of things, Danny.

Q. You were talking about being disappointed in the loss but you liked the way they fought and battled. Do you feel like this team can play with anybody and play to where they can win games against the bigger teams?

VIC SCHAEFER: Absolutely. I mean, I have a lot of confidence in these kids. I have a real deep appreciation because I know how hard they worked to get to where we are now.

I think that if -- we've obviously now played Baylor twice in the last two weeks and really competed hard with them. I know the committee will take that into consideration.

So it's all about getting hot and how you're playing this time of year. So for us we just got to keep taking care of ourselves. We'll take tomorrow off. Monday will be fundamental day because you don't know who you are going to play until Monday night. Then Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday are prep days and we could possibly play Friday. We not might not play until Saturday but could play Friday.

So I'm really pleased with my team. Proud of how hard they're competing. I like our execution in certain areas and I like our toughness. I like our competitive spirit right now. It's changed. It's different. You know, that's what we've been trying to really impart on these kids is to change is to

grow. And they needed to grow a little bit since we got here. I see it now, and that's what's fun about coaching. It's fun watching your kids evolve into the team you want them to be.

Q. And also, you talked about getting hot. How do you keep Celeste hot as you head into the tournament?

VIC SCHAEFER: Yeah, just stay in the gym. You know, the game won't cheat you. You spend time on your game, on your craft, the game will reward you. You don't spend time on your craft, the game is smart. It will not cheat you.

And so I think you're seeing a kid that's put in the time. Free throws, honor shooting. We've talked a lot about some things. Again, I just think it's the game, the game honors those that spend time on their craft, and she's not distracted, she's focused.

Jo is the same way. Jo is playing with a lot of confidence, a lot of -- just playing with a lot of juice, a lot of emotion, and I just love that. It permeates through the team. So I'm excited about those kids. Those kids could be around a long time at Texas, and they're my kind of players. They are. They're turning into my kind of players even more so. So it's exciting.

Q. You lose Charli I think the last seven or eight minutes last night. You come back and win and then you didn't have her for most of the first half today. How important has the leadership been of Celeste and Joanne and how much have they matured from that standpoint?

VIC SCHAEFER: Yeah, I think you throw Ky in there as well. I think those kids are competitors. You know, I think Audrey is your -- she's just somebody that you can really feed off. She's your forgiveness player, stick her nose in there, take a charge. She is just that kid that when you do make a mistake she's there to forgive you if that makes sense.

And so I think those kids on the floor right now, put anybody with them, it's a good team. Lauren played 35 minutes, 11 rebounds. Missed some bunnies, but again, she's not the only one. We missed bunnies the first time we played them.

I think the thing we can take back, we stood and played behind their post players early on and you can't do that. You got to try to take away that option for them. So proud of how our kids have competed and through adversity, like you said.

Q. Are you concerned about Monday or do you feel

this is a tournament team, not worried about it?

VIC SCHAEFER: Oh, yeah I'm not worried about it. Our net is going to be mid-20s after today. You know, what are we? Are we -- 18-9? Won 12 games in the Big 12. I'm not the least bit worried at all.

I mean, I think we've played our way to a six to be honest with you, Danny. I think we've shown the country now that if that's the sixth ranked team in the country, we've gone toe to toe with them and competed with them our last two ball games. You know, I just feel like we're in a good place right now and getting better. That's what I'm excited about.

I'm happy for these kids. They've worked really hard, you know what I mean? You don't get to come to practice but I've told you all. These kids really work hard.

And it's what we do. We talk about it all the time. It's not what we do but how we do it. They're seeing the fruits of their labor now and how we're playing and coming together and our chemistry and our just everything.

So you never know what's going to happen. Still a young, inexperienced, immature team. You are going to go get in the tournament -- and, you know, I thought tonight we were tight early. You know, you can't go to the tournament and be tight. You've got to play loose, turn it loose, and go play. I thought tonight the first five, six minutes we were tight.

They had all the energy and we weren't ready to play. They were beating us up and down the floor, on the boards, in transition. Finally got the tempo slowed down to where I wanted it for the night. And so it's just -- I'm happy for these kids. We've got to now go back and get better. We got to a week to get better. Let's see what we can do.

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