

Big 12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 10, 2022

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

Oklahoma State Cowgirls

Coach Krista Gerlich

Vivian Gray

Taylah Thomas

Postgame Press Conference



Oklahoma State 73 - Texas Tech 58

KRISTA GERLICH: That was tough. That was a tough pill to swallow right there. I think obviously a tale of two different halves, and you saw them, and it's difficult to understand what just happened.

I thought that our kids really fought hard in the first half to get themselves back in the game and even get themselves a little bit of a lead. And then the second half we just didn't defend the way we needed to defend, and we started turning the basketball over, and I think some panic set in and we started taking some bad shots.

But I couldn't be more proud of these two young ladies and Lexy Hightower as well for just the things that they have done for our program this year and how hard they play and how much they give every time they step out on the floor.

And it's unfortunate that we ended this way, and I hate that for them and I wish I could have done more for them, and I should have done more for them. But they both have etched their names in the Lady Raider record books, and so has Lexy, and I just think that speaks volumes of their character and their work ethic, and I'm really, really proud of them.

Q. Krista, for you, the game was a 3-point game there really late in the third quarter, and then everything just sort of seemed to snowball there early in the fourth. What was that like in the middle of it, and what do you feel like happened, whether it's on your end or theirs, that sort of got that momentum rolling?

KRISTA GERLICH: You know, I'm not real sure that I can remember, actually, in that time, but I know that we turned the basketball over and we took some early shots, maybe

some not good shots. And then they got some buckets in transition easy whenever we were taking shots that weren't ideal.

Defensively we had a couple of breakdowns, and they were able to get to the free throw line a lot more than we were, and then they started knocking down threes. And when they can do that, it gets a little bit contagious, and it seemed to do that and snowballed on us.

But we just couldn't get the stops when we needed them, and we couldn't execute.

Q. Vivian, you've gone against Lauren Fields and have been guarded by her quite a bit over the last couple of years. What were your impressions of what she did tonight, especially defensively, on you, after -- especially after that second quarter when you were able to wrack up quite a few points?

VIVIAN GRAY: Yeah, she's a really good defender. She plays particularly hard on me, which I take as a compliment. She did well. I mean, the whole team played well on defense, so keep it positive. I'm done with that.

KRISTA GERLICH: I thought Vivian played well in both halves. I thought that she made some really tough shots and did a really good job.

Q. Coach, obviously a tough loss tonight, but you're going to lose these great seniors. Can you just talk about the future of Lady Raiders, some more coming in and you keep growing the program?

KRISTA GERLICH: Yeah. These three seniors definitely laid the foundation for us just with their work ethics and just their unselfishness, their ability to show up every day and to be great leaders for us and positive.

And they gave us everything they had. Vivian has been here for two years, but Lexy and Taylah gave us their last year, and they just did some really great things. And I'm glad that they're going to be Lady Raiders forever.

They've laid the foundation for our future and what we

need to expect out of our kids. And I think that they'll -- I think our future is really bright. We've got some young kids that are doing some really good things, and we've got a lot of kids coming in that have been proven winners. So I'm excited about the future but right now this really hurts for these kids.

Q. Vivian, obviously an emotional night for you as well as you, Taylah. What are these emotions like? I know OSU was just in here talking about how tough you are to guard, and obviously you've received numerous accolades, but what is the feeling going through you right now?

VIVIAN GRAY: I don't want to take off my jersey.

Q. And, Taylah, same for you. You've obviously left your mark on this program. What has it been like to play with this program for your final year?

TAYLAH THOMAS: Bittersweet. Wish I had another one.

Q. Coach, I know this is not the way you wanted to go out as well, and you've mentioned being proud, but just this team as a whole going through this year. Obviously you guys have grind. You've beat some really big teams along the way. What did you see? Did it live up to your expectations, or do you see so much more left in this team?

KRISTA GERLICH: I think this team has been through a tremendous amount of adversity, and it's unfortunate because last year was so much adversity for every kid in college athletics, but I'm so proud of these kids. And like both of them, I just wish we had more time together. You know, you never understand the timing of things and why people end up where they do. But I'm super grateful for the time that we had with them.

And I wish that we could extend our season. I wish that we could play more, for these two and Lexy more than anybody, but also for our young kids to be around them as well. They've just done so much for this program and this team.

And I just can't tell you, you know, we have, we've beat some big teams this year, and we've been really, really close at times. And this group just continued to come to work every day and with their heads held high, with a great amount of dignity and respect, and they just continued to buy in, and they continued to be coachable.

And that's hard to do these days, I think. I think that's really hard to do. And you have to kind of block out the outside world and what people say and how they judge,

and I think at the end of the day these kids are just such great people.

And you know, I don't understand, you know, others that tear people down, whatever it might be, but I think this group particularly will always be one of my favorite groups, because they believed in what we're trying to do at Texas Tech. Even though they might not be a part of what's to come in the future, they laid the foundation.

And that sounds -- you know, it probably doesn't sound great to them right now, probably doesn't make a lot of sense to them right now, but man, I can tell you from experience, it takes people buying in and believing in you and believing in the vision that might not get to reap the rewards.

And this group isn't going to get to reap the rewards, but you know that they're going to be Lady Raiders forever, and I just appreciate them so much for that. Super grateful.

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