

Big 12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Friday, March 11, 2022

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

Oklahoma Sooners

Jennie Baranczyk

Madi Williams

Taylor Robertson

Postgame Press Conference



Oklahoma - 80, Kansas - 68

MODERATOR: We're now joined by the Oklahoma Sooner team, and we have Jennie Baranczyk as the coach, and we brought two student-athletes, Madi Williams and Taylor Robertson.

Coach, welcome, and if you'd like to make an opening statement, or however you want to run this.

JENNIE BARANCZYK: Well, it's nice to be in-person. So it's really nice to see a lot of you I've only see on a screen for last year, so that's special.

I'm so proud of these guys and what a great game to start off the Big 12 Tournament, and Kansas is an incredible team. And I hope they do an incredible job in the NCAA Tournament. It's a beast of a league. It's been really fun, and I'm almost speechless. I'm just so proud of these guys. So it's pretty much all I have.

MODERATOR: We'll take questions.

Q. This is for Madi and for Taylor, for Madi first, just wanted to ask you about just that second quarter, what you guys were able to do offensively and defensively to pull away from Kansas?

MADI WILLIAMS: We were able to do what we do. I think we were able to focus on ourselves and be the aggressors in that quarter. We got to feel out how the game would be in the first quarter. That's what we took from that. And we were able to come out and hit them hard in the second quarter.

TAYLOR ROBERTSON: Going off of that, we were just trying to be us. And we know that if we're us, that it's

enough. And that was like prime Oklahoma basketball. And offensively and defensively, both sides of the ball, we were just being us, and it was a good quarter.

Q. First to Madi and then to Taylor, in Saturday's game you struggled in the paint and almost stopped attacking as much. How much of a focus was that to keep attacking going into this game, and what do you feel like y'all did differently or better to get to the basket?

MADI WILLIAMS: I think we kept being aggressive. Once we realized that they're probably not -- they're tall, they're big, but they're not as scary as they seem, and once we realized that, that we could be the aggressors and that they would back off, then we could attack that and keep getting to the rim and keep getting fouled.

TAYLOR ROBERTSON: We were just trying to be super aggressive. And that was on mindset going into the game, was to be the aggressors, and I think you guys all saw that play out.

Q. For Madi and then Taylor, Kansas cut that lead to six, and you guys responded really close, strong. Just what did you guys see their down the stretch that allowed you to be so confident there and not coast to the finish, but not have to finish off at the line and eek that out?

MADI WILLIAMS: I think we got some really good point guard play that allowed us to be steady. And then along with me and Rob being leaders on the floor, just talking to each other allows us to be steady and be able to run our offense.

And even in the hecticness of them coming back and getting closer and closing out that gap, I think we were able to keep being aggressive, which we've been talking about for the whole day. But yeah.

TAYLOR ROBERTSON: I think that we have a lot of experience, and I think that definitely helped. We've been in that situation a bunch of times, not just us from playing for four years, but everybody this year. We've had quite a

few close games. So I think that experience, we knew what to do in that situation, so we were going to be okay.

Q. Good to see you again, Jennie. What are you gonna miss when OU leaves the Big 12? What are you gonna miss about this whole Kansas City thing, the experience of the Big 12 Tournament? And you've been involved -- this isn't like it's your first year. I'm asking you Jennie. What are you gonna miss?

JENNIE BARANCZYK: Well, we're undefeated.

Q. The whole tournament experience, the combined, tournaments, and everything like that.

JENNIE BARANCZYK: That's a really good question, and I don't know if I can actually give a great answer to that because I haven't gotten a full experience yet. And so I love -- I'm partial to the Midwest, obviously. I love that we're in Kansas City. But I haven't even thought about it, to be honest, in comparison to tournaments because I'm still trying to figure out this one.

So I don't even think I could give you an actual answer to that. But I do know that I'll miss these guys because they probably won't play in the SEC.

Q. Coach, you talked on our show a lot about this team having fun and being differently -- playing completely differently when they are having fun. I saw you giving Tot a hug; Madi, I saw you smiling all throughout game. It seemed like you guys were having a different energy about you compared to last Saturday. What were the emotions like on court today?

JENNIE BARANCZYK: I don't even think one time during that game we thought about last Saturday. And maybe -- yeah, I don't think we did. I think we just kept focusing on it's tournament time, it's March, let's go have fun and do this together.

The biggest thing we focused on was staying together and playing. And there were a couple possessions we got really excited because I think we were -- I don't want to say this the wrong way, but we were finally doing some of the things we do in practice. And we could see it. We could see it translate, and we could see us setting each other up.

25 assists, how is that not fun? I know you have to make the basket, and I understand that, but I thought we did an incredible job of playing together today. And that's people that played a lot of minutes, and that's people that maybe didn't even get in the game; that we just were really, really good together.

So from that standpoint, I think we always have energy. We do. We do. We always have energy. And we do an incredible job of trying to have passion and play. Doesn't mean the ball always goes in the hole, but our philosophy is the more we can bring to the game, the more the game is gonna give it back to us. That's all we really focused on.

Q. For Jennie, you just talked about 25 assists on 30 made baskets. You were hitting them with back cuts and it seemed like everything was flowing for your offense today, the way you always like it. How just pleased were you with the way you shared the ball and everything did offensively?

JENNIE BARANCZYK: Well, I love, and I talked about this quite a bit, when -- and Madi alluded to our point guard play, I thought our point guards did a great job today. Our point guards, we have a freshman and sophomore in those two positions, so there's not a ton of experience there. And even in our center position, we don't have a ton of experience.

To be able to have 25 assists -- typically they come between your point guard and your center. For us to be able to share the ball that we the way we were able to today I thought was great.

And, yes, some of it was back cuts, but a lot of it was also somebody else cut and got somebody else open. And so I think we did a really nice job of selling out -- I don't want to say sell out to the system, but almost sell out to the system where we just moved and started to put some concepts together, and then we were able to really set each other up.

So that's -- I thought our player movement was as good as it's been in a while.

Q. Jennie, 24 three-point attempts in the first half and just 9 in the second. Is that you guys going away from that so much, or is that something, a product of them tightening down in the perimeter?

JENNIE BARANCZYK: Well, I think -- no, it wasn't an intentional let's not shoot the three. We shot a lot of threes in the first game against them, and Madi alluded to their size a little bit. But I do think -- I think our objective is always to take what they are giving us.

And so I think in the second half, they were really out on that three-point line, so hence the back cuts. So I think we were really doing a much better job of being able to make those reads.

I think in the first half we had a little bit more opportunity from the outside than maybe we did in the second half. Or maybe not. I don't know. It felt that way. You go back and look at film, and you're completely wrong.

But, no, I think Kansas is a great defensive team. They do a really good job. They've got size on the interior, they do a good job of getting out into passing lanes. And I thought we did a much better job today not passing it to them as much, still turned it over, but didn't have a lot of pick sixes that we did in the first game, but I think this game I thought we did a better job of being on the same page. We didn't focus as much as them, we just focused more on read.

Q. I have one for Taylor and Madi and then for Coach. Taylor and Madi, just this is your first Big 12 Tournament victory. I know you guys lost a Big 12 Tournament because of the pandemic. But just in a season when so many things, cool things, really, happened for you guys, how big is this for you? And then for Coach, could you talk -- you mentioned your point guard play, but Kelbie in particular, it seemed like she was so aggressive when you needed her to be at the beginning, playing her first Big 12 Tournament game. How big was that?

TAYLOR ROBERTSON: Yeah, first Big 12 Tournament win, it's obviously really cool. We get to stay one more night. It's just really fun because the way we play, obviously winning is fun, but the way we play is just so much fun. And I'm really glad we get to play another game tomorrow.

MADI WILLIAMS: Rob hit the nail on the head. We're just gonna keep going. And this is great and all that we got our first win, but we gotta a big goal, and that's to get that trophy out in the hallway. So we're just gonna keep being us and keep pushing.

JENNIE BARANCZYK: Taylor did start her own "One More Night" chant after, and nobody picked up on it with her, but she kept going. So if you need to hear that, you can probably ask her later.

I thought Kelbie was phenomenal when we needed her to be phenomenal. And I thought -- I thought they did an incredible job, especially when we spotted them I think 13 in the first quarter, and part of that is they came out hot. And that's part of the game sometimes and you have to adjust to it.

But I thought Kelbie came in, I thought she was aggressive. She does that. She has a knack of being able -- she's so fast. She can set people up. I thought her mindset was incredible. I thought her energy was

incredible.

And we needed that. We don't come back in that game if we don't have that. And then I thought Nevaeh did an incredible job in the second half. When we needed her to be really steady for us, I thought she was.

Q. Jennie, wanted to ask you about the rebounding. You guys won that battle 53-41. You got 18 offensive boards. How much of an emphasis was that, and what did you see from the physicality of the team in that regard?

JENNIE BARANCZYK: Well, I thought Madi did a great job of being able to set that tone in terms of rebounding for us. And I thought offensively I thought we did a much better job -- and here I went and said I didn't compare from one game to the next, but I thought we did a much better job this time of being able to crash and get back in terms of transition.

Because Kansas does -- they do push it. They do a really nice job in transition, especially on misses.

So in the first game didn't get back nearly as much. I thought this about game we did a much better job of going at those boards. I thought Skylar did an incredible job. I thought Kennady Tucker did an incredible job of at least going.

And so from that standpoint, I was really pleased in that. But we just wanted to be aggressive today. And we know we're outsized pretty much in every game we play, so we have to rebound by committee, and I thought we it that.

Q. For Taylor, a few minutes ago you said when you guys got going there in the second quarter, you said this was just us being us. When you're at your best, at us, what's that look like? And for Jennie, the first five, six, seven minutes was an incredible pace, you guys played fast, but that was extra speedy. Did you slow down on purpose, or did just the flow of the game sort of get both teams settled down?

TAYLOR ROBERTSON: When we're at our best, it's when we're not thinking about anything and we're having a ton of fun and we're trying to make the person around -- make everybody around us be so much better and just like trying to set everybody up for shots and put them in a good position. And that's when we're us.

MADI WILLIAMS: Yeah, I'll add to it. I think us is just going out there and hooping. Regardless of what's going on in the game, what the attitude looked like, what the atmosphere is, we're just out there hooping like hoopers

do.

JENNIE BARANCZYK: She took the words right out of my mouth. No, from a pace standpoint, that is the pace that we do want to play. And we do get up and down, and I think we do a good job.

I think today we did a better job of when we didn't have something in the full court, we made our up tempo in the half court; hence the cuts and player movements. I thought we did a better job of that today, and I thought that translated for us.

And I think some of the pace slowed down a little bit also because of them. I think there's so much you can do in terms of pace, and we're not out there pressing to be able to keep that pace, it's more of an offensive pace. And so I thought they kind of slowed the pace down a little bit with some of their stuff. But they also run too.

So that's why I think it was a great game. It was a fun game for anybody to watch. If this is the first time and you're from Kansas City and you come out and come to a game, you're going to definitely come back because it was a fun basketball game, and I think it's a great game for women's basketball.

MODERATOR: Thank you very much, and congratulations on the win, we'll see you tomorrow.

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