

# Big 12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Saturday, March 12, 2022

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

Texas Longhorns

Coach Vic Schaefer

Rori Harmon

Joanne Allen-Taylor

Postgame Press Conference



Texas 82, Iowa State 73 (OT)

THE MODERATOR: We are now joined by the Longhorns from Texas, Coach Vic Schaefer and Rori Harmon and Joanne Allen-Taylor.

Coach, your thoughts?

VIC SCHAEFER: First of all, I just want to compliment Iowa State, Coach Bill Fennelly, his staff, and that team. I told him it is no fun playing against them, and just a lot of admiration and respect for that team and how tough they are. They're just a really tough match-up.

I couldn't be more proud of our kids today, and really as I have been most of the year. Their toughness today, their resilience, their fight, it's just not real common, y'all.

Lots of times in that game you could have folded the tent or just said it's too hard, can't do it, but these kids, they don't -- that's not any part of their DNA. It's just not who they are. We have a thing at Texas we call Texas fight, and it's not just a slogan or a saying, we really try to embody it.

I think this team -- I've been doing it a long time, y'all, been in a lot of games, lots of gut wrenchers, just like that one. That one today is right up there. This team showed tremendous grit. We're no different, y'all. We're still a young, inexperienced, and a very immature team. We draw up plays in timeouts and go out and run them on the wrong side of the floor.

That's just part of it. We still go out and try to do it the right way. The one things that we don't ever do. And it was on the board yesterday, it was on the board today, is nobody -- don't let anybody think somebody plays harder than the University of Texas.

At the end of the day, win or lose, if we did everything we could, we left it all on the floor, I'm good.

And I'm good.

These kids were absolutely fantastic today. Just their will to win, refusing to have the alternative, it's just not common, y'all. Not in today's world. I don't care how old you are. Everybody in that arena, you could see -- you could see a flame in them. That's just not real common.

They played their absolute heart out. So giving God the glory for I think No. 25, maybe? Is that right, Danny?

THE MODERATOR: 25.

VIC SCHAEFER: Now you have a chance to play for a championship. That's why we're the University of Texas. That's why we're at the University of Texas.

There will be opportunities in the season to play for championships, and at the end of the day, that's what we're about at Texas. They're going to have a chance tomorrow.

We have a formidable opponent, one that we're really familiar with, but these kids, they will be ready.

You won't be able to question what's inside their breast plate, because I think you found out tonight what they have.

Again, I wouldn't be more proud of them. They're just tough, tough, boy. As a coach, that's all you want. That's all you want is just tough kids.

**Q. Vic, you were careful with your words earlier this week, but you made sure to say that you didn't think there were ten players in this league who could do what Rori does offensively and defensively both sides of the court. Do you think she proved that? Rori, were you frustrated or annoyed with the All-Conference Awards?**

VIC SCHAEFER: I will answer that one for her. I don't

think she is frustrated or annoyed with it. I think she is a humble kid and trying to find her way.

Again, I will stand by what I said earlier in the week. You give me ten, you get the other nine coaches in a room and go, Hey, you get to pick ten kids, I'm going to say she's gonna be in that ten.

I will go out on a limb and say it. I don't think it's a matter of proving anything. All those kids warranted it, they all deserved it, and we're good with that.

But, again, when you're talking about the ten best players in the Big XII conference based on both ends of the floor, Danny. We don't have offense and take 'em out and now we got a defensive team in there.

You've got to play both ends. I bet if you go ask everybody that she guards in the league, Hey, what do you think about Rori Harmon? I bet they get her vote on that end, because they don't like going against her. It's probably like going to the dentist.

I think she is a humble kid. She appreciates what she got. But, again, I think she is one of the ten best players in the conference. I'm going to tell you this: She needs to be considered for any kind of award for freshman because she's that dang good. You saw her today. She has done it on both ends of the floor. She don't take no plays off.

Did you come out of the game today?

RORI HARMON: No.

VIC SCHAEFER: That's about normal.

**Q. Rori, can you talk about the back-to-back three-pointers to start overtime, what kind of message you wanted to send there, hitting all the free throws? Then for Joanne, seeing Rori hit the back-to-back three's to start overtime and hitting the free throws down the stretch and seeming to have an answer.**

RORI HARMON: Well, when it comes down to games like that and it's that close in overtime, you want to make every shot that you take -- my teammates have so much confidence in me, and nobody's energy is -- our energy is incomparable, it's unmatched.

When you have that type of energy you feel like you can do anything on the court.

JOANNE ALLEN-TAYLOR: Yeah, I will just follow up by that. Like when I saw her hit the first one I was just elated, because I knew the second one was going to go in

whenever she shot it.

Just a feeling of just comfort. It's -- you can't even describe it. Like when your teammates are just hitting on all cylinders, like, it makes you want to just play your best basketball for them.

So, yeah.

**Q. Vic, you seem comfortable rolling with Jo, Rori, DeYona, Lauren, and Aliyah in the fourth quarter in overtime. What was working with that lineup that made you want to keep them out there for the entire time?**

VIC SCHAEFER: Yeah, I thought at halftime I really challenged Lauren. She was 0-1. I challenged the whole team. It's not Lauren's fault. We weren't throwing her the ball.

And DeYona didn't play well first half. She had a, double-double and I thought she answered the bell. Again, she is guarding the other team's best players.

But I thought DeYona and Lauren had some good chemistry working when we started going inside to Lauren. Again, I thought -- again, Lauren has gotten so much better. She is shooting the ball better than anybody on our team over the last six, seven games when you look at those stats.

That combination -- I wasn't impressed with our other combinations at the end of the second quarter. So that combination is kind of what we went with.

Jo, I've gone with her all year long. I have a lot of confidence in her. She made some big three's for us. Plays really hard. She is just solid. I know what I'm going to get with her.

So Aliyah sometimes gets herself into a spot where she tries too hard, but if you can ever just get her to let the game come to her, like she made a great decision toward the end of regulation, a real contested shot, but that was the play.

She made a great pass, great decision. Then I think she made a tough shot on a drive in overtime, didn't she? She made a tough shot on a drive. Again, you need anybody to make a tough shot, she can make it.

So those are the kids I wanted to go with. When it got down to crunch time we were switching. I pulled Lauren out and put Audrey in and we had Shay in, but for the most part that was the lineup that was good, and I thought they

had good chemistry.

I thought defensively we were pretty good and I thought offensively we were dang good.

**Q. Rori and Jo, what's it going to take to beat Baylor? Get one over them this year?**

RORI HARMON: Limiting our mental lapses is probably the first thing that we need. I would say today with Iowa State we did focus on taking care of the ball. They're not all up in our grill and playing really hard defense, so Coach said there is no reason why we should be giving them the ball.

But if we start with that and execute the plan that they have prepared for us, we will be good.

JOANNE ALLEN-TAYLOR: Yeah, listening to the scout, that's all I'm focused on. Just preparing. That's it.

**Q. Either of you for this. Did those games you guys played earlier this season at Tennessee, at A&M, in Ames, did that help at all with this crowd? There was a swath of Texas fans, but this was a Cyclone-heavy crowd today. Did that experience help you at all?**

JOANNE ALLEN-TAYLOR: Everything we have been through has helped to prepare us to win today's game. We have played in tough arenas, so I think today it didn't phase us. We're used to being in a crowd where they're cheering for the other team, so I thought we handled it well.

RORI HARMON: It's usually everybody against Texas anyway. And, I mean, really doesn't matter about the court. We stayed within the team and got through it together.

VIC SCHAEFER: This team has been really good all year at being locked in on the road. We've -- every game. Every game we have been on the road we have had really good focus.

I felt good about today. I knew it was going to be a heavy crowd with Iowa State, and it certainly was that. But that's not our -- that's not going to beat us. Crowds aren't going to beat us.

I think our kids -- this group has embraced, you know, the us against everybody, they have embraced it because it's the life we live every day. You either embrace it or you crumble, and this group has really embraced it.

**Q. Vic, Baylor is big. Obviously inside they beat you up in the paint, points in the paint, rebounding. With**

**Lauren playing well, DeYona playing well, especially in the second half today, how big is their role in the paint tomorrow?**

VIC SCHAEFER: I think you go against athleticism and quickness, and they got shooters out on the perimeter. They're a pretty complete team. Certainly our inside presence. You can't go small very often against them because they're not small.

They don't have anybody inside at 4 or 5 that's Audrey's size. We've gone small during the course of the year with Audrey, so Latasha and A-Mo both are going to have to be ready to go, because they're going to see the floor at some point.

Those kids are ready. Again, it's -- you're going against a first-team All-American, another one that praise like one on most nights. Really aggressive mares so we're going to have to be really good. We're going to have to be -- we will have to be special tomorrow, there is no question about it. But, you know, I think our kids will -- I think we know what's at stake and I think we know the opportunity that we have. These kids, they don't know what's happened the last however many -- that doesn't matter. I ain't been here but two years, we're talking about it in 10 years I probably won't be here, but that doesn't matter. What matters is today and right now, and these kids will embrace that opportunity.

We gotta go play the No. 4 team in the country? That's what we do. Get 'em on a neutral floor. We've already played 'em twice. We played pretty well at our place, had a bad first quarter at their place, and then everything else was pretty good. So they're playing a lot better, so are we. You know what, when we tip it up tomorrow, we'll go play.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Coach. Congratulations.

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