

Big 12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Friday, March 10, 2023

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

Municipal Auditorium

Texas Longhorns

Coach Vic Schaefer

Rori Harmon

Shay Holle

Taylor Jones

Postgame Press Conference

Texas 60, Kansas State 42

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by the Texas Longhorns. Student athletes, Taylor Jones, Rori Harmon, and Shay Holle.

Coach, if you would like to offer an opening statement?

COACH SCHAEFER: Well, first of all I just want to, you know, congratulate or give some really special recognition to K-State. I thought coming back from last night I knew they would do something different.

Part of what we set on the board was adjust to their adjustments, and we obviously did not adjust the first half. I thought they were really good and we were really bad.

But I'm really proud of my group, because they came back in the second half and showed some growth and maturity and played with a little bit of presence.

We talked about being competitive, communicating, and having composure, and I thought our composure in the second half was way, way better.

But our defense all night was really, really special and on a night when -- I mean, it's just like a road game. You're on the road playing in an arena that we had 45 minutes to shoot in in two days.

So the secret to winning on the road is defense, rebounding, and an inside game. We couldn't make a shot, but I was proud of our kids that they didn't stop defending. They didn't get down when they weren't able to



score. They just kept playing hard and trying to play through it.

I thought they responded out of the timeout after we got down seven. Bad as we played, at halftime we were tied. We just needed to respond, and I was really proud of how we responded to score 42 points.

Doesn't make sense, does it? 18 points the first half, 42 in the second. That don't wash! But that's where we're at right now, and so I was proud of our kids.

I thought Rori was really special in the second half. It was kinda rough for everybody in the first half. Our guards did not shoot it well and we turned the ball over too much. Had 11 turnovers. Only had 3 in the second half. We forced 22.

Again, I'm really proud of our kids. On our not-best night we found a way to win. It's hard to win, ya'll in this league. Coach Mittie, his staff, that team, they are tough and really competitive.

We just really played well in the second half, and then obviously last Saturday we played really well for almost forty minutes.

On to the next one. You just win and advance.

Q. Rori, thoughts on your team being able to find a way to win today.

RORI HARMON: Um, like he said, we did not -- I don't think we were ready to play, but I think I looked at the scoreboard it was 16-7. I feel like everybody was like, all right, we needed to stop playing around, put our heads in the game if we want to make it to the next day.

And I think once we got out of the locker room from the second quarter and was ready to play the third quarter, I think there was a change in our energy. Like you can completely see that it was different. That's just something we need to start doing from the get, from the jump.

Yeah, I'm pretty happy that we won, of course. I guess it

doesn't matter, like you said, if it's an ugly win or not, a win is a win. But I'm proud of the team for coming back like we did.

Q. Shay, you guys handled them pretty easily the first couple of games. Did you sense they were playing with a little more urgency, desperation, knowing that their season was on the line? Did you sense that was the difference in their energy coming out?

SHAY HOLLE: I mean, Kansas State is a really good team, and they have been every time we've played them. We've been super hot that last two times we have played them, just shooting the ball really well.

Obviously with every team the urgency is a little different at the tournament. You don't have time to play around. But they're just a good team and they have a lot of talented players, and I think that showed this game and we didn't match their energy in the first half.

But when we did I thought obviously our energy was a lot different in the second half, and it helped us a lot.

Q. Rori and then Taylor, seemed like in the second half you made a point to get the ball inside. They have length on the perimeter that is probably tough for the guards, but y'all took it inside and broke it open in the third quarter. Was that a point of emphasis from Vic? What was his halftime speech like?

RORI HARMON: Yeah, that's been the point of emphasis for this whole year. Nobody can guard our inside posts, but once -- since that's a scout, they're going to triple, double, try to shove you up the block.

I think we were able to space it out and be a little bit more composed. We did find the inside, and all of them were above 50%. If they're not going to stop one play, just keep running it, and they did pretty well there.

Q. Taylor, talk about your ability inside and the rest of the post.

TAYLOR JONES: We knew going into the game that we had size over them, so that was something that we needed to capitalize on.

First half we didn't get the ball in the paint, let alone to the rim that much. So we were settling a lot in the first half, and we knew if we got it into the post we were already pretty close to the rim. So just finishing the shots that we got as the post.

Q. Shay or Rori, either of you talk about the third

quarter defensive performance and what y'all were able to do after halftime.

RORI HARMON: Since I wasn't able to make but 2 shots out of 15, I felt that defense was going to be my key thing. I'm not one of those players who is going to be like, I can't make a shot, just sit me down.

No. I'm going to play defense, make penetration, get people open, and I felt like I did that pretty well today.

SHAY HOLLE: Coach Schaefer says if you're not making shots, help us win a different way. We took that to heart coming out of the locker room at halftime. We weren't making shots, so we knew we needed to do something else, get the ball inside, get defensive stops, get in the press, maybe get steals and easier buckets that way, so I think that was a point of emphasis.

Q. Rori and Taylor, again, can you talk about Oklahoma State? You split with them during the season. Winning in Austin; losing up there. What do they represent and how do you see that match-up tomorrow?

RORI HARMON: They're obviously a pretty good team. Like you said, we went 1-1. We just have to follow the game plan. I believe sometimes we get a little bit immature in that area; sometimes we're not ready to play.

We have to follow the game plan and it usually ends up working anyway. You wouldn't want to come to this school if you didn't think so. But I think following the game plan and understanding that what they're capable of, what are their weaknesses, and using our strengths to capitalize on them.

TAYLOR JONES: Our coaches are going to do a great job at giving us an amazing and accurate scout. We're going to study it hard tonight, go to shootaround tomorrow, and come out and execute.

Tonight hopefully we learned that we cannot start the way that we did. And I think as long as we jump on 'em and play the defense that we have in this last second half and in the game that -- I guess when we played Oklahoma and K-State at their place, I think we'll do good.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, ladies.

Questions for Coach.

Q. Vic, if you could just talk about your team's ability to get the ball inside so consistently in the third quarter, and then once you are making shots you can

set up your press and it leads to their turnovers.

COACH SCHAEFER: We're obviously big. We've got size. We're bigger than just about every team in the league, and we've tried to be good down there all year long. I think we've gotten better. I thought Amina was really good today. She gave us a good defensive line. Her and Haddie (phonetic) were on the floor most of that third quarter when we held them to 4. We went 4 for 7, 3 for 7, 3 for 5, and 5 for 8. That was our four fives. Those are pretty good numbers.

Again, like I told them on the board before the game, we've gotta get our shots, you know, in our spots.

I just felt like the first half we were just beating our head on the wall. We were 1 for 20 at the one, two, three. I mean, just stubborn. I didn't think we were working. I thought we let 5-8, 5-9 guard us at times down there.

It was disappointing. Look, I saw it coming. I've been doing this long enough. I knew they would -- I knew K-State, number one, would do something different so we would have to adjust. Sometimes it takes us a while to adjust.

Been around my team enough to know it's just hard. We've played 'em twice and we've played really well against them both times. Again, I thought Jeff had his team ready to go and mine wasn't ready, and it took us a while to get ready to go.

But there in the second half we kind of ran the same thing. They weren't going to guard us in the high post and DeYona Gaston made a bunch of shots up there, and it always helps when a four player can make a 15-footer from the free throw line because you can't double down at that point.

Q. What were your thoughts on Amina and how she played considering where she was a week ago at the Baylor game?

COACH SCHAEFER: Yeah, she is a typical freshman. She didn't play well at Baylor. Earlier in her rotation, she looked the same way. I was concerned going in leaving her out there. I think I had to get her out. Her second and third rotation were much better; her third quarter was really good.

That kid is going to continue to grow and get better, and she is a competitor. She's tough. She has a good driving layup there when we were making our run, but she really provides us a defensive player that can match-up with different sized players.

Whether it's a guard or a four player, she can guard all of 'em. So she can basically guard, one, two, three, and four, which is really neat. It's good to have that player. I'm proud of her.

Again, I told her on the bench, I told her in the locker room I thought she was really very big for us. She was a big reason why we held them to have 4 points in the third quarter. Again, she went 4 for 7 which is great, 5 rebounds, 2 assists, 1 steal. So she was a plus-22. She was the best on the team in efficiency.

Q. I think when you called the timeout, down 16-7, it looked like you extended the defense a little bit and made that run, and then maybe in the second half even started trapping out of it more. Was that kind of the idea to just make it harder for them to catch the ball in the perimeter?

COACH SCHAEFER: Well, I'll be honest with you, I'm not sure I talked anything about X's and O's in that timeout. I think that was a chance to talk about effort and focus and just a lack of execution.

It was kinda one of those timeouts where you're coaching their heart instead of their mind.

So I was really proud of how we responded coming out of that. Were we down 9 or 7? 16-7. Okay. So we responded on the -- we got it tied for halftime; then I thought it carried over from there.

That timeout wasn't a lot about X's and O's. Sometimes as coaches we gotta have those.

Q. Were you coaching their hearts at halftime? Was there fire breathing in there, or did you tell them, we can't play any worse?

COACH SCHAEFER: Both. When I got done, I told them, as bad as we played, y'all, it's a tie ball game. We've got to make some adjustments and do things a little differently, and I thought we did.

I thought we got outside of ourselves, if that makes sense. Tried to do some things we are not capable of doing, shouldn't be doing, people taking crazy shots. It was just one of those halves where you're like, who are we? Who is that?

I thought we were -- we were so outside of the realm of a team concept that it just -- it really bothered me.

Again, you and I both know we can't control so many

distractions, so many things, and yet that's my biggest challenge, because we are no good as individuals with this group. We've got to have a team concept.

I really imparted that to them at halftime, that we had to get out of this mode that we were in that had a lot to do with a bunch of individuals and didn't, in my mind, have anything to do with -- we didn't have any chemistry at all.

Until we made that last little run playing good defensively and sharing the ball and coming down the -- like it was really -- I was looking out there going, who in the world are we?

I thought the second half we were so much better from a team standpoint. Obviously we're pretty good when we play as a team. We scored 42 points, shared the ball, guarded them. But, you know, it's part of it when you're dealing with young people.

Q. The depth to sit Rori or Shay for that long when they are having bad shooting performances, what were your thoughts about them finding other ways to contribute today?

COACH SCHAEFER: Yeah, I thought both of them played really hard defensively for as bad as they shot it at times. I thought they played really hard. Shaylee had eight rebounds. Three offensive, two assists, a steal, and she is plus 20 in efficiency. She went 1 for 11, 3 for 4 at the free throw line, so wasn't her best night offensively.

But I thought both of them -- I thought our whole team, minus one or two, didn't let it affect them.

And then Shay Holle makes two big ones for us. I thought the second half we were much tougher because we were more focused. We executed. We just played within ourselves. We had a concept. We had a team concept.

I just thought the first half we had a lot of individualism going on.

Q. Vic, what stands out about Oklahoma State?

COACH SCHAEFER: I just -- you know, I think Jacie has done a great job with that group. You know, I will be the first to -- I've been the first to say it, I'll be the first to say it: build your team around that point guard position.

In my mind, I got the best one in the country. She probably thinks she's got the best one in the country she brought with her. That kid has been really important for them. That's where it starts in my mind. She has done a great job with them.

They're well coached. All those kids know their role. She has some veterans on that team. It's an old team, you know?

They've played together now a while, and to me they play really hard, also. So we'll have to play well. We're going to have to play better than we played today. We're certainly going to have to start out better.

Like I said, y'all, I saw this probably coming a little bit. It was least guarded against it. You're glad to get it out of the way but now you've got to get ready and go play another NCAA Tournament, so you better be ready when the lights come on tomorrow and it's another early game and my philosophy on that is the sleepy team loses and we were sleepy today.

We woke up at halftime or a little bit before but those early games the sleepy team loses and we've got to be ready to go.

No, they're -- they got kids that can shoot it. They got size inside, physical kids. They always have a good plan. They attack you in certain areas. We're going to have to play well.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, congratulations, thank you.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports.