

# Big 12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 7, 2024

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

T-Mobile Center

## Texas Tech Lady Raiders

## Coach Krista Gerlich

## Jordyn Merritt

## Jasmine Shavers

### Postgame Press Conference

Texas Tech - 74 Houston - 60

**THE MODERATOR:** We are joined now by Texas Tech head coach Krista Gerlich and student-athletes Jordyn Merritt and Jasmine Shavers. Coach, we will ask you for an opening statement and then take questions.

**KRISTA GERLICH:** Well, first of all, I want to say that I think that was a great opening game to start the Big 12 Tournament out in the T Mobile center. I think it's fantastic we get to play here. Houston gave us a great game, every time we played them this year it's been a tight game. I have huge respect for Coach Hughey and we knew it was going to be a battle. Super, super proud of our kids with all the adversity they've gone through this year and just playing with limited people on our roster and the sicknesses that we've gone through and being shorthanded and the losing streak that we were on, for them to come in and play inspired basketball was fantastic. I know that there are so many people back home that are so proud of 'em, that are glad to see that team back, to be quite honest, because it's been a hard five, six weeks.

We clearly are so glad to have Jordyn Merritt back and, man, did she come with energy and gave us a huge lift, and Jazzy, that's probably the best game I've seen her play since she's had a Lady Raider uniform on, and she's played some great games, but I thought she was super under control, thought she was very confident. I thought she defended and played on the offensive end really, really well. I said this on the radio, she had two turnovers, and I'm pretty sure those two turnovers came in the first four minutes of the game and she didn't turn the ball over again after that. Really, really proud of that effort. All of them, the energy they played with is what we have been missing and I'm just super proud of the togetherness that they



showed today.

**Q. Jordyn, like Coach said, first game back. How did it feel out there today?**

**JORDYN MERRITT:** It felt amazing. I definitely missed playing with my girls. Just being on the sideline, I saw areas I could help out and throughout the practices, I was watching. I was trying my best to encourage my team and being out there, I was able to implement those adjustments that I felt like we could use to just try to get us as far as we could possibly go.

**Q. Jasmine, career high 29 points. What were you feeling out there to get your career high up?**

**JASMINE SHAVERS:** I think, first and foremost, I just wanted to go out there and get a win. And then, I think Coach said it, my first turnover came within the first couple minutes of the game. So I just needed settle down and just play within myself, have confidence and just know like when I see the first shot go in, I can have confidence throughout the whole game. I think it was just confidence. I played with confidence from beginning to end.

**KRISTA GERLICH:** She has had some really good practices too. Some of the last few days have been her best practices, team-oriented and focused. She has been on point. She should be doing this, and in postseason it's fantastic to see her step up like that.

**Q. Ladies, congratulations on your win.**

**KRISTA GERLICH:** Thank you.

**Q. Houston made a run toward the end and got it within 8. What was said in the huddle in the timeout to get everything back to rolling for you all this evening?**

**KRISTA GERLICH:** We told them to keep attacking. We told them the start of the fourth quarter to play to win, not to lose. I felt like when they cut it to 8, we were being hesitant, just lackadaisical on some details like blocking out or guarding our own, not taking great shots, not being super tough and getting to the free throw line. So we really

talked about playing to win, to continue to attack them, go at them and to play confidently. We came out of that timeout when they cut it to 8 and I believe we hit a 3, I think Jazzy hit a 3 that gave us breathing room again.

**Q. Coach, you had a huge advantage in fast break points, was that something you game planned for?**

KRISTA GERLICH: We definitely want to play faster. We knew if we could rebound the basketball we could probably get out and get to some paint touches. I thought the longer we played the more energy we had. I felt like they were getting a little bit winded in the third quarter and I thought our kids put it in another gear and got, obviously, some easy looks. Ashley Chevalier came in and got a steal that led to a 2-point basket and Jordyn got one, as well. Our press was really effective when we got in it in the third quarter and got a couple of easy buckets there and that's where we have been missing, is getting extra opportunities and extra possessions and I thought our press and our offensive rebounding gave us those things tonight.

**Q. Coach, can you talk about the synergy of the team to the end? Talk about what that looks like in practice.**

KRISTA GERLICH: I love that you asked that question, because that's what we've been talking about. You know, this game is meant to be played for fun, and I feel like when you lose and you don't have control over that, it can suck the life out of you. And I felt like it sucked the joy out of our kids for a while. So being able to get our roster back and just to have some moments together the last three or four days, just talking about that and talking about, you know, just the togetherness and that this is the last time that this team with all these players will get to play together and like how can they have the urgency to extend their season?

I think that's what they've done, is they've played with great energy, practiced with great energy. We've had a lot of fun being around one another and they're getting a true March Madness experience. That's what's super exciting about it.

**Q. Coach, first win since January 27th. How does that momentum go into tomorrow's game against Baylor?**

KRISTA GERLICH: Yeah, so winning is the best drug you can be on, right? I mean, it's the highest high. Winning cures a lot of things. I think that that adrenaline that it can muster up is certainly something that we will ride into tomorrow. We talked about this before we even came here, that we have -- us and Houston I felt like had the toughest path to get to the Big 12 championship because we play at 11:00 tomorrow. We don't have an excessive amount of time to rest. But that's where we think that we

have been through hard this year. We have been through every adversity that we could go through, so there is nothing that you can throw at these kids that will be harder than what we've already been through. So, we're read to play at 11. Let's go.

**Q. Coach, playing at 11 a.m. is sometimes rough. How do you bring that energy and make sure you guys have that energy for tomorrow morning?**

KRISTA GERLICH: For me, we're extending our season. We get to play tomorrow. We're excited about that. It's called March Madness for a reason. The fact that we have a game under our belt certainly gives us confidence. We're going to go and game plan and talk about Baylor and, you know, fix some things that we didn't do the last time we played 'em.

More than anything, if our kids play with that energy and that determination, anything can happen.

JORDYN MERRITT: For us playerwise, we talked about it in practice leading up to being here, getting that first taste of winning and being successful and seeing everything we worked on actually working in the game and just trusting the coaches.

So I think that since we have had a taste of that, it will for sure carry over into the morning game we play tomorrow against Baylor, because we're playing for each other at this point.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Good luck.

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