

Big 12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Saturday, March 9, 2024

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

T-Mobile Center

Texas Longhorns

Coach Vic Schaefer

Shay Holle

Aaliyah Moore

Postgame Press Conference

Texas - 76, Kansas - 60

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Texas Head Coach Vic Schaefer, joined by student-athletes Shay Holle, Aaliyah Moore and Madison Booker.

VIC SCHAEFER: Okay, first I want to congratulate Brandon and Kansas, his kids, they're obviously an NCAA Tournament team. Wish them the very best. They played really well today. It didn't matter. We have been getting ready for them for four days now. Doesn't matter how much you get ready for Kersgieter. She still makes 3's, made 4 out of 6. Doesn't matter how much we got ready for S'mya. She is playing like the First-Team All Big 12 player that she is. Doesn't matter how far you back off of Franklin. She still gets by you and she's left handed and she still gets by you going left. It was frustrating for us defensively just because we felt like we had to do a few things to take away some of the things they are really good at and we struggled doing that at times. We held them to 38% field goal percentage defense, which isn't bad for us. We'll take that every night. The 3-point field goal percentage is just disturbing at 46%. We fouled them so bad the first half. They were 10 for 11 at half and when we put them on there seven times in the second half. So we made a good adjustment there. We have to make free throws. We were 16 for 25. But 28 point fourth quarter was probably difference. As I told Shay Holle, it's a whole lot easier to coach this game when you have a guard that can make a shot. And she made two big 3's for us, made a shot in the lane for us. I think she went on an 8-0 run by herself and, you know, Booker had some really good looks in the first half and they just didn't go, but I don't want her not taking those shots. Like, we were 5 for 19 in the second quarter and every shot we got was really good.



Proud of these kids, you know. They just continue to fight and compete, find a way to win. Kansas is really good. That's probably the hottest team in the country. They've won 9 out of 10, I think.

Some great wins. Again, I think the world of Brandon. I think he's an hell of a coach. That's a really good win for us and to play that well down the stretch in the fourth quarter, again, we feel like that's our time. When it gets hard -- and it was hard today from the get-go, I thought. When it gets hard that's when it's about right for us. So we're going to give God the glory for No. 28 and get ready for whoever wins this next one, is that right? Is that who we play, the winner of the next one? I can't ever tell you who the next one is. I'm just glad we got through this one.

Proud of Aaliyah, having a double-double, played really hard, and Booker, I know she had 7 assists, but she's going to tell me the number I really like is?

MADISON BOOKER: Turnovers.

VIC SCHAEFER: She only had one. Drinks are on me.

She really is getting it, running our team and doing a great job there. So, again, excited about this group and what's in front of them. They continue to compete and amaze me. I couldn't be more proud of a group.

Q. Shay, just talk about your 8-0 run that Coach alluded to. Tight game going to the fourth and you basically put the game away.

SHAY HOLLE: Yeah. I think Coach puts all of us in good positions to score and my teammates found me. I maybe didn't take as many shots as I should have the first half, but we want to be patient, get a good look. So the ball found me at a good time and they went in, so...

Q. Aaliyah, last year you had to watch this tournament from the bench. How did it feel to be out there doing your thing and getting back into tournament time?

AALIYAH MOORE: So good. It feels amazing. To be able to go out there, play with my teammates, see Shay do what

she does but actually be on the floor to witness it, not from the sideline, grateful, blessed, thankful that I'm in this position I am today and it took work. The game took work tonight, but just give God the glory and my teammates and coaches and everyone that supported me through what happened.

Q. When Kansas switched to that zone, what were the adjustments like for y'all on the floor?

SHAY HOLLE: To still be aggressive and be patient. We definitely don't want to settle. We have really good 4 and 5 players. So try to utilize that as much as we can. But yeah, just to be patient and let the ball find the right person at the right time.

AALIYAH MOORE: I would agree. Every time we reverse it we don't realize somebody is going to be open and we have to be patient. I think that's one of the reasons Shay might have got one of her threes, because we reversed it and she was open and ready for the shot. So just be confident in our sets and be patient.

MADISON BOOKER: I think the second half our shots fell. I think we were more patient and we played more our pace of basketball and we settled down, got the ball around and found the right person at the right time.

Q. Their center, Taiyanna Jackson went out early with 4 fouls in the third quarter. How much did you want to take advantage of that going down the stretch?

AALIYAH MOORE: She is an amazing player, a force inside and she alters a lot of shots and we knew that going into this game. But I think we did a great job of attacking. I've been in that position where I've been in foul trouble, but I think we did a great job of attacking. We had a game plan and I think we executed well.

SHAY HOLLE: Yeah, I agree with what Aaliyah said. That was something we wanted to take advantage of once she had to go out. I think we have really strong post players and so she is really good at, like she said, altering shots, defense-wise, blocking shots, everything. So having her out definitely changes their team a little bit so we wanted to utilize that.

MADISON BOOKER: She is 6'6", a force in the paint for sure. When she went out that's when we knew we had to keep getting the ball to Taylor or DeYona, and that worked for us a lot.

Q. Shay is this team focusing at all on the NCAA and the projections and all that stuff or how are y'all keeping your focus on Kansas City and what's

happening this weekend?

SHAY HOLLE: One game at a time. Yep. We're definitely focused on what we're trying to get to right now, the Big 12 Championship. That's what's on our mind. So one game at a time here. Once we get back home we will start prepping. Obviously we all know what's at stake and we know we're in a very blessed position and we just need to put our heads down and work. But we're definitely focused on being in Kansas City right now, Big 12 Championship, as it now says on the table.

Q. Coach, each of the last three seasons you've started the year with Shay on the bench and at then some point she migrates into the starting lineup and things just start to click for your team. What is it about her that makes everything work around her?

VIC SCHAEFER: It doesn't matter where I start with her. She's just a winner. Like, the kid is just a winner. You can try to recruit over her, doesn't matter. The kid stays in the picture. That's what you want kids to do. When they come in as freshmen and they're struggling and there's other people playing and they're way down the bench, Shay has stayed in the picture her whole career. I've called her the glue from day one, this year, even before Rori was hurt and she is still the glue to our team. Those two shots she makes tonight, the two 3's and the one in the lane, I mean, that's really the difference in the fourth quarter and in the game is -- it's just a whole lot easier to coach this game when you've got a guard that can make a shot. Obviously Booker made some in the second half but she's just a winner. Like, you just have to really appreciate somebody like her.

She plays -- like I get -- every day I know what I'm going to get from Shay Holle. She's a happy kid, she's smiling, she works extremely hard, she never has a bad day. I never have to motivate her to play hard. She's just a winner. The kids going to be, I don't know what company she is going to own or start with, but I'm investing in it because she is going to be successful no matter where she -- no matter what she does.

But the kid just has stayed in the picture her whole career and she's a great kid. Every time she is out there and she plays well, like, I just -- there is a thought in my mind that that kid deserves it. She just does. She works hard, she does the intangibles. She's gotten better. Like, you have no idea how much that kid has improved many her career but it's because she has made herself into a Big 12 player. Like, the kid works. She doesn't get down and she's letting me coach her.

So I could sit up here and praise her the whole press

conference, but at the end of the day she is the glue to our team, she is a winner, and she does what it takes to help you win. You can't take kids like that off the floor, I don't care who they are. They help you win.

Q. First of all, Coach, can you share the notes that you wrote down earlier?

VIC SCHAEFER: Right here?

Q. Yes.

VIC SCHAEFER: They asked her what we were focused on and I wrote Big 12 Championship.

Q. On your own?

VIC SCHAEFER: When I come to the press room if there is a box around any of these numbers, that's bad. Unless it's the opponent. Then it's -- if there is a circle, it's good. So I'm boxing and circling up here, that's what I'm doing, yep.

Q. Y'all consistently got some open mid-range jumpers. Was that part of the game plan?

VIC SCHAEFER: Open?

Q. Mid-range.

VIC SCHAEFER: Yeah. Our team has lived off it. My media makes a big deal about our inability to make 3's. We're 28-4 and our average margin of victory in the Big 12 is double digits. So it doesn't matter, as long as we can make shots that's what matters. Shay made a couple of 3's tonight. I think we went, 2 for 8. That's about par, isn't it Danny? About par for us. We led the league in offense most of the year. We might have lost it right at the last but we work hard with our guards on getting to the mid-range and it's part of our game. But I have kids that can make mid-range. Shay Holle and Madison Booker are mid-range, they're good players from there. So why not play to their strengths? We got there tonight and I thought our kids -- we were 5 for 19 in the second quarter and there wasn't a shot we took other than Booker losing hers at the end of the quarter. There wasn't a shot that I thought wasn't a good shot.

Q. Coach, this game featured two of the best freshmen in the conference. We know already what you think of your own. Can you expand on your thoughts on S'Mya?

VIC SCHAEFER: She's really good. Glad I don't have to look at her for three more years. She is really special.

Kind of struggled at our place a little bit, but the whole team did. It's just one of those road games, that's what I attributed it to. It kind of got sideways early with them and it kind of got away. They have played so well since then. They're hot, playing well, and S'Mya has been a big part of that. She's hard to deal with now. She is just a big, physical guard, gets you down there, backs you down there and it's hard to deal with her once she gets you deep in the lane. I don't know what -- I don't know where they're going to be in the NCAA Tournament, but ain't anybody going to be going goody, goody, goody when we get Kansas, because they're tough. They got size. They got great guard play. I challenged my guards at halftime because I thought our guards were getting beat. And I knew that the key to the game was going to be guard play. I know they have a big, we have bigs, but at the end of the day you win with guard play. And I think they had 27 points at half of their 29. 27 were by Kersgieter, S'Mya and Zakiyah. That was it. So I challenged my guards at halftime and I thought they answered the bell.

Q. Vic how do you handle the day off tomorrow and do you like the format where there is a break between the quarter-finals and the semi-finals?

VIC SCHAEFER: Yeah, it's okay. I think for us, it will be good. I think we get an hour in here and so we'll utilize it, and whoever we have to play, we'll -- we're pretty familiar with both of them. It's been a long time since we played West Virginia. Is that who is playing next? It's West Virginia and K-State? It's been a while since we played West Virginia. That was like the third game of the year, third conference game. K-State we played twice and had two really tough ball games. So I feel like I've got a pretty good handle on both of 'em, but we'll see how it all shakes out and then tomorrow we will be careful. But we got -- we'll have to go through some things, and I really want to get in here and get some shots. They gave us 45 minutes the day before yesterday, I think. It might have been yesterday, I can't remember. What is today, Saturday? Was it yesterday? Huh? Okay, we were in here yesterday, 45 minutes. So that's not a lot for your shooters to get comfortable. So we'll spend some time getting shots but I got to be careful, my kids gotta get in a cold tub right now which they absolutely love, and then we'll be careful with them tomorrow. It's a great format. I like it. I don't mind taking the day as long as I'm not having to go home. So it will be good. We'll get to practice and have a day -- our kids are really good. They're real intentional on their preparation. They're going to be locked in on film. They'll be locked in on what we're going to do tomorrow, with whoever we've gotta guard. Pretty much two different teams completely. So the turn-around will be pretty quick, but our kids have been so intentional all year.

It's a typical, older team in that regard. They're chasing the championship. Things happen, we didn't win the regular season. Now we got a chance to win the tournament championship. That's our focus. When that one is done, whenever it is, then we'll focus on the next one and they've been pretty good about that. Again, this group is -- they're just special, y'all. I've been doing this a long time. I've not been around a group like this who shouldn't -- back on December 27th, we could have won, you know -- there wasn't a whole lot of people probably gave this group a snowball's chance, as my dad would have said, to be where they are today.

All they've done is done it. And the answer to that y'all is you never question what's inside somebody's breastplate, and these kids have got a big ol heart and they're having fun so it's fun to coach 'em.

MODERATOR: Thanks.

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