

Big 12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Saturday, March 9, 2024

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

T-Mobile Center

Kansas Jayhawks

Coach Brandon Schneider

Holly Kersgieter

S'Mya Nichols

Postgame Press Conference



satisfied with kinda our outcome as a team. We hate when we have people in foul trouble, but it's also frustrating because we felt it was externally controlled more than we liked. It's hard to kind of contain that frustration and not let it affect your play. And obviously from an X's and O's and from a game standpoint, it affects our play.

So the fourth quarter showed light of that. It was really hard to fight back, which is something we talk about a lot. So just tough. But we knew -- we kind of got a tough side of the bracket them being our second game and stuff, so we knew what was coming. So, yeah, just build on it for the tournament.

S'MYA NICHOLS: Yeah, it was very tough, like I say, especially when -- I mean, we were fighting, trying to go after all the loose balls. We knew what we were getting ourselves into when we knew we were playing Texas anyways. So, yeah, frustrating.

Q. For both of you, obviously that road game at Texas wasn't your best performance of the year but Coach Schaefer was just talking about guard play in the first half and how you and Zakiyah combined for the majority of those points. How were you able to shake off that loss in Austin, come back in the tournament and have that performance to start out?

HOLLY KERSGIETER: I mean, that was like the first week of January. So besides the physical part of being there, emotionally, I don't remember. I don't remember who we were as a team. It honestly wasn't a big factor going into today. I think when you get to this be point in the season, none of that stuff matters anymore.

I mean, it sucks because it goes on your record and things like that, but like we said, it's March. Nothing matters anymore, and it's a new game, and we knew that, and they knew that and anything can happen. Obviously we knew we needed to change things, so we came in with a new mind-set and obviously we played hard in the first half, fought back after they went on that run and then continued to fight back in the third quarter. We did our best with what we had and obviously we improved from the last time.

Texas - 76, Kansas - 60

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Kansas and Head Coach Brandon Schneider and student-athletes Holly Kersgieter and S'Mya Nichols. Coach?

BRANDON SCHNEIDER: I have seen coaches being fined \$20,000 for comments regarding officiating, and if the fine structure was on a sliding scale relative to your compensation, then I might have a lot more to say, but probably I could give you maybe two 50, 500 worth and that would be about it. I thought the first three minutes of the second half was really tough on us. With some of the foul calls. It dictated our ability to stay in any type of typical rotation. With that being said, I thought, you know, Texas is just relentless, in particular on the glass. I thought that was really the difference, was especially in the fourth quarter, just the second-chance points just really piled up on us and I thought that was the difference.

Q. S'Mya, Coach Schaefer said he's really glad he doesn't have to see you on the floor anymore. How do you think you did today, personally?

S'MYA NICHOLS: I think I did okay. I see I had a few turnovers, but I think I did good. We didn't come out with a win, but I feel like I played for my team, and I feel like we all played for each other.

Q. What are the emotions you are going through after holding on pretty much throughout the third quarter and foul trouble gets y'all down and out during the fourth quarter?

HOLLY KERSGIETER: It's just really frustrating. It's frustrating because we felt obviously, you know, we weren't

S'MYA NICHOLS: Short answer, at the end of the day it's over. We can't dwell on it for that long. I mean, we still have more to play for, you know? So we just need to stick together and keep winning out.

Q. Holly you were 4 for 6 from 3-point range. How important was it for you to keep your team in the game, especially with bigs in foul trouble?

HOLLY KERSGIETER: Playing through the paint and playing through the post was less of an option, obviously, so we had to keep up attacking. We had to keep up our perimeter shooting to help space the lane, because you know by the end of the game my perimeter didn't leave my side.

So it helps. Obviously they had to make an adjustment because, you know, when you play a team like that you've got to have all three levels of scoring. You can't depend on one thing. So, yeah, it was obviously something I didn't do great last game -- last time we played them, which didn't help us, so I knew I needed to step up and do better. Yeah.

Q. S'Mya, when you wake up tomorrow morning the seven-day wait begins for Selection Sunday. So even when you don't know where you're going or how it's bracketed, how do you feel about the potential of this team in the NCAA Tournament?

S'MYA NICHOLS: I feel like we can compete with any team that's in front of us. We're never, like, oh, it sucks I have to play this hard team or this tough team. Like at the end of the day, our coaches got our back. They'll give us the best scouts, and we're going to try our best to execute them scouts.

Q. Coach Schaefer said you guys are one of the hottest teams in the country right now. When you look back at your season how proud are you of your team?

BRANDON SCHNEIDER: I said it yesterday, I think one of the more gratifying things as a coach is when you do go back and reflect on maybe a game film from early January, and you see how much a team has improved.

I give our players all the credit for that. I think, you know, they've grown a lot over the last two months, and I think they have really developed into a team that could be really dangerous in the coming weeks.

Q. Coach, you talked about trying not to get fined and whatnot. When Taiyanna is in foul trouble so early, and other players are, how do you keep yourself in the moment?

BRANDON SCHNEIDER: We talk about poise and composure all the time and trying to control the controllables, and some of that you can and some quite frankly you can't, and you have to recognize it and you just have to move on. There's obviously times in the game where the players are better at that than I am. But, you know, it's high stakes this time of year, and you know I thought -- especially the latter part of the third quarter, we were able to keep our composure after some things not going our way at all and still stay very competitive.

Q. Coach, you went to that zone end of the first quarter. Was that something you were preparing especially for with Texas and planning to go to it at some point?

BRANDON SCHNEIDER: We were prepared to play it. I think we would have liked to have more time to prepare. We had a hotel walk-through last night and then a 30-minute type of practice today, if you will.

So they're just the kind of team that forces you to make adjustments. I think Booker in particular, early in the game, no matter who we had on her was getting to her spots and started off really hot, and the zone, I thought, slowed 'em down a little bit until the fourth quarter, just the waves of the athletes getting on the glass wore us down.

Q. Brandon, what did you think of the resiliency of your squad through the first three quarters?

BRANDON SCHNEIDER: I was proud of 'em, and I said that to 'em after the game. I think they probably did a better job again with poise and composure than the head coach did.

Q. Coach, the super seniors have been the backbone of your team this year but going into the tournament. You have had a tremendous contribution from S'Mya down the stretch. What can she add as this team looks forward?

BRANDON SCHNEIDER: I think today was a pretty good example that when you can't run offense, or your struggle to run offense, there is a great deal of value in having a player that can just go get a bucket. I think Zakiyah can do that and has shown that throughout her career, but S'Mya also has that ability and has just a little bit more size and strength in terms of being able to draw fouls as well.

Q. Coach, you mentioned the first three minutes of the third quarter, Taiyanna goes out, four fouls. Talk about the job that your other bigs did as they stepped in to fill that void?

BRANDON SCHNEIDER: Yeah, Danai came in and was allowed to play 13 minutes and 21 seconds, and I thought did a really great job. Paris Gaines hasn't played for us in forever and is a freshman, and for her to come in and provided some value, and I was proud of her as well. Then we had to go to Ryan Cobbins, who doesn't even practice that position. But then we got pretty small out there, and that was pretty evident in the rebounding margin, which we knew was going to be a key-key stat.

Q. How beneficial is that getting ready to prepare for the tournament?

BRANDON SCHNEIDER: I think anytime a player gets an opportunity to contribute, you know, at this time of year, there is a ton of value in that.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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