

Big 12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 5, 2025

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

T-Mobile Center

Colorado Buffaloes

Coach JR Payne

Lior Garzon

Jade Masogayo

Postgame Press Conference



Colorado 66, Houston 58

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Colorado Head Coach JR Payne and players Lior Garzon and Jade Masogayo. Coach, if you could open with a statement?

JR PAYNE: Yeah, I mean, the message in the locker room was at this time of the year, you win the game, everybody uses the phrase "survive and advance," and we certainly survived, and we certainly are advancing.

Definitely some areas we want to improve on for tomorrow, but lots of really great things as well: clutch free throws, big stops, defensive stops. I thought we contested really well the three-point line when we needed to.

And we're just going to move on and get ready for Arizona.

Q. Coach, turnovers have been a theme all year. It was a ton today, obviously. In the fourth quarter especially, what did you think was happening to where Houston was able to turn you over so much?

JR PAYNE: I thought initially we were catching and dribbling, which is never great against pressure unless you have a really open seam. I thought we fixed that a little bit, but they were aggressive and athletic and some of our decisions as far as passing across the court instead of maybe somebody closer to me that's open, I thought that that cost us.

And we definitely got rattled. I can't hide the fact that we were pretty rattled. But I also think in some ways maybe that's a blessing because now maybe we can focus on that because we will certainly see pressure tomorrow as well.

Q. We talked earlier this week that one of the things you were worried about is they had nothing to lose, and they came out and certainly played that way in the second half. Was that one of your fears watching that game, this is what I thought would happen here?

JR PAYNE: Yeah, we are an experienced group, and everyone knows anything can happen in March, especially when a team doesn't have postseason necessarily locked in and things like that, there truly is nothing to lose.

Houston is a really talented group. They're athletic, they're long, and they can create. And we were worried about that, and I thought they played really, really hard, too.

Q. I wanted to ask you about Lior. Most of her points in the second half. So I wanted to ask you about the lift she gave you in the second half. But also JoJo, who only played 4 minutes, but maybe the most productive 4 minutes you've seen all year?

JR PAYNE: Yeah, I thought Lior in particular -- Lior is our best free throw shooter, but down the stretch those were really, really important free throws. You have to be able to shed all the frustration of whatever is going on and be able to focus and knock that down. And Lior did a great job of that, was communicating well in huddles. Obviously some big shots and a big defensive box-out at the end.

There are so many little things that, when you really watch the game, you're going to see players doing. So that was great from Lior.

And JoJo is one that comes in and produces. Unfortunately she hasn't had a lot of practice time or on-the-court time yet. But we see glimpses of the special player she is going to be. She just needs more time on the floor. And I was proud of her. I don't know if she expected to go in. To go in and be that poised and productive was incredible.

Q. Lior, first half, only three points. Your shot wasn't falling. What happened in the second half to where you were able to get your offense going?

LIOR GARZON: Obviously this is my fifth year, and halftime I had a little talk with myself, just like the team needs you, it's time to step up take your emotion out of it.

They always tell me they don't care if I miss a shot, just play hard. And in the second half I went out there confident and like this is the time to go, there is no tomorrow. So that was the difference for me.

Q. Jade, this game was so different than when you played them in Boulder where it was an easy win for you guys. What was different this time that you saw out of Houston?

JADE MASOGAYO: I mean, they kind of sped us up at the end. They were pretty aggressive defensively. We have to clean up when it comes to that. And we turned the ball over a lot. So that's something we've got to clean up as well.

Q. For both of you, you guys won, but what's it like in the locker room? Disappointment in how you played, or is it more of like that's fine, we won, let's fix it?

JADE MASOGAYO: Survive and advance, let's get the next one. That's the mentality right now.

Q. Lior, you're the only player on the team that's played in this arena, in this tournament. How has that experience helped and maybe some leadership that you've been able to, like, let -- you know, knowledge for the team?

LIOR GARZON: Obviously it helps a lot to know where you are going to. I think we have a really, really good team, like everybody did their part today. I think all I tried to do is relax everybody and be like it's okay, it's just a basketball game.

But I think everybody just did really, really good. Everybody was confident coming into the game. So I didn't really need to do much but, I think, just to be the calm person on the team.

Q. Real quick. You've coached long enough, you've seen different types of first games in tournaments. Is there a lot of times you see a game like this where it's really just let's get the tournament jitters out of the way in Game 1, and you do it in a win and get those jitters out of the way, and hopefully that can help you settle into Game 2?

JR PAYNE: Definitely. I think most teams, their play in the first round, or whatever their first game is, there's definitely opportunity for jitters, whether it's just new court, new balls,

a lot on the line, wanting to perform well and things like that. So we for sure have that out of our system, and we will be ready to play tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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