

# 2026 Phillips 66 Big 12 Women's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 5, 2026  
Kansas City, Missouri, USA  
T-Mobile Center

**Colorado Buffaloes**  
**Coach JR Payne**

**Desiree Wooten**

**Zyanna Walker**

Postgame Press Conference



Colorado 62, Baylor 53

THE MODERATOR: Coach, get us started, please.

JR PAYNE: Oh, man, yeah. Really proud of how we played tonight. I thought we were very prepared and very excited for this opportunity. Sometimes in the Big 12 when you only get to play someone once, and in that one time, you don't perform the way you wish you had, sometimes you don't get to play that game again for an entire year.

So this was a really great opportunity for us because we were frustrated with the way we finished the one game we did play with Baylor this year. We were just really excited for the opportunity to play them again.

Yeah, just overall great team effort. It wasn't, you know, perfect in any sense of the word, but I thought we did exactly what we needed to do to be successful, so proud of our effort for sure.

**Q. This is for Desiree Wooten. 50 percent from the field in your first Big 12 Tournament appearance. You gave your coach 32 minutes off the bench. Talk about what this lady brings to you to help this team. Because I've watched y'all numerous times and y'all click. Y'all have a chemistry unlike other.**

DESIREE WOOTEN: She just helps me thrive, man. She pushes me to be the best defender, offensive player I can be. Along with my team, they're always hyping me up, telling me to stay in it. Like when I'm in my head or hard on myself, they're always there to pick me up, so I just think I like that about her.

**Q. For Zyanna, can you talk about -- I'm sure you guys got a refresher course of the first Baylor match-up since last night. What was different this time in your mind this time that you felt that you could exploit some things?**

ZYANNA WALKER: I just think the first time we played them, we just beat ourselves. We were just missing easy layups, just turning the ball over and just unforced turnovers. This time we were really locked in and, yeah, we just knew we had to do the little things, and do the simple basketball things to win the game.

**Q. And a quick follow-up. You had a big lead most of the game, and then all of a sudden, they started coming back in the fourth, the fourth quarter, the first five minutes were not good. So what was going through your minds there to try to settle down, not let that lead get below seven?**

ZYANNA WALKER: It was expected. They're a great team. We knew they were going to hit a run eventually, but it's important for us to be able to stop that run, and we did that, so, yeah.

**Q. This is for Zy. I'm sure from within the locker room, you had to believe, but outside the locker room, two surprise teams in the semifinals: Colorado and your former team, Kansas State.**

Can you share your thoughts on each of those surprises for the semifinals?

ZYANNA WALKER: Oh, man, it's March. Anything can happen. It's March. The great teams are going to be great and teams are going to fight. Everybody's fighting for a chance at something special. We are. I'm sure they are, too. Anything can happen.

**Q. Coach, you've mentioned how close this team is all season. How important is that as you get to the Big 12 Tournament?**

JR: Yeah, I think it becomes critical. Like Zy is saying, everyone is fighting for their lives at this point, and so really, really good basketball is going to happen no matter what. For us, chemistry is a big part of our success. And so I think we really lean into that chemistry. Like Des mentioned, if she hangs her head, her teammates are the first ones to pick her up and breathe life back into each other. I think that's what makes this team so special.

**Q. What do the next 20 hours look for you tip-off tomorrow?**

JR PAYNE: Well, you see I'm drinking an energy drink at 11:00 at night, so lots of film. These guys will rest and sleep and sleep in a little bit. For coaches, yeah, just lots of film and preparation and game planning and just getting excited to go again tomorrow.

**Q. Coach, you guys have had this knack in your tenure here. Having a stumble in the last week of the regular season and you come out in the conference tournament and play really well.**

What is it about the makeup of your team, your staff, whatever that gets this team going when it's post-season?

JR PAYNE: I don't know. I guess you would have to ask them. I was just telling someone earlier, someone asked Jaylen Sherod that a month or so ago in an interview or something, and just said what is it about Colorado? How do you guys beat all these ranked teams and do all this? Her statement was something to the effect of, "My coaches have a knack for making us believe that we can beat anyone."

I don't know if you guys feel the same way that we go into games feeling that, but I thought that was an interesting perspective.

**Q. The two of you combined for 40 points and that was most of the scoring. Did you feel like this was going to be a guard game that you two needed to carry the load scoring-wise or did it just turn out that way?**

DESIREE WOOTEN: I think it just turned out that way. I think we have great chemistry together. I think we play well together. I mean, people have been calling us the dynamic duo. I guess we've just been living up to it.

**Q. First for coach, you helped Baylor just 2 for 21 from behind the arc. What worked defensively for you guys?**

JR PAYNE: Going into the game, we knew we had to

guard the three-point line. When you look at the games that they have had a lot of offensive success, a lot of it has come from the three-point line and, of course, offensive rebounding. It was important for us to guard the three, and I think our team -- we're built on the defensive side of the ball. We like to defend. We believe in our ability to defend. And so, I think that was a challenge they took personally, and said we're going to guard the three.

**Q. For Desiree, you mentioned after last game, you wanted to lock up to Taliah. 5 for 21 was the number.**

What comments do you have for that?

DESIREE WOOTEN: She's a great player. It wasn't easy. I mean, she played her butt off. She made it hard.

**Q. One each for the players, but Des, you hit a bunch of threes early. The team hit all five very early and then didn't hit anymore, but, like, how key was that start for you guys to get off to a big lead and kind of set the tone?**

DESIREE WOOTEN: I think that's our goal every game, just start the game with the first punch, to be honest. I mean, you see we get those first five threes and they don't want us to shoot again, so it's crucial.

**Q. And then Zy for you, West Virginia was another one of those games where you guys probably were kicking yourselves afterwards, and you and I were talking the other day about it seems like every time you lose, it's something you guys did.**

And so how glad are you to have this one again too, where you get another shot at West Virginia?

ZYANNA WALKER: Super happy. I think that's the good thing about the Big 12 Tournament, is like Teams you might have slipped up on during the season, you get another shot at them. They're a great team, so we'll be having good game plan and we'll be ready for them.

**Q. Hey, Coach. How important is it at this stage in the season and in a tournament like this to have this kind of production from your bench especially?**

JR PAYNE: Yeah, that's been a strength of ours all year long. I mean clearly, Des is one of the best players on our team and one of the most prolific scorers, as well as Logyn Greer is one of our most talented players. So to have those two coming off the bench is awesome for us.

We always say you're not going to win or lose a game in the first two minutes of the game. But we have a great

starting lineup that provides stability, some offensive weapons, some defensive weapons, but absolutely no drop-off from our bench, and that's something we've really come to rely on. Everyone just trusts that whoever is in is going to have that impact.

THE MODERATOR: We have time for one more.

**Q. Coach, what did you think of the Buff fans that showed out today?**

JR PAYNE: Oh, yeah, we've had a great group of Buff fans. We have family, fans, our band, our cheer, our athletic director. And so, we're really excited to get to continue to play in front of them. Go Buffs!

FastScripts by ASAP Sports...