

2026 Phillips 66 Big 12 Women's Basketball Tournament

Friday, March 6, 2026
Kansas City, Missouri, USA
T-Mobile Center

Kansas State Wildcats
Coach Jeff Mittie
Nastja Claessens
Jordan Speiser

Postgame Press Conference

Kansas State 74, Oklahoma State 73

JEFF MITTIE: Great game. Finish was hectic, to say the least. Proud of my group for really fighting and hanging in there. We got down, I think, nine or ten, and thought we had a good response to that.

Fought through game fatigue. The pace at one point at the end of the third period was really, really high level, both teams. High-level pace, high-level game, people making shots all over the place. Proud of our group for hanging in there and making big plays down the stretch.

Q. This is now back-to-back games where you guys have kind of made your move in the fourth quarter to take the lead after trailing for most of the game. What has this team started to develop in late games that has turned into them being so clutch now?

JEFF MITTIE: Well, I think execution is better than it was. I said this a month ago. I think also the belief. You've got a belief in the huddle that we can get it done. We've done it before. We've done it in different environments. We've either gone on the road or we've played tough competition on neutral sites. So we've had those experiences.

I think the belief in the huddle is better than it was when they were young players. The ability to wipe away a bad stretch and start fresh coming out of a huddle is much better.

Those things have allowed us to have positive possessions.



Q. Jordan, is that also something that you've noticed that you've developed as the year has gone on? Is confidence getting higher and firmer and self-belief as the season has gone on?

JORDAN SPEISER: Yes, 100 percent. I feel like naturally as you get more comfortable, you're going to get confidence, but I think as the year has gone on, I think that is true for me.

Q. Jordan, I saw you with the tongue out, feeling yourself, running up and down the court. As a freshman on this stage, where does that confidence come from and how did you approach this game with so much -- literally no fear?

JORDAN SPEISER: I honestly feel like confidence is probably just coming from all the shots that I know I do put up, and just out there having fun. I feel like when I get into that zone, whatever happens happens, and that's when I play my best.

That's probably why you saw the tongue out again. I feel like that's happening quite a bit. Yeah, just out there having fun with my teammates.

Q. Nastja, as one of the more overall experienced players on this roster, maybe not necessarily here in the States, but what would you say about your team that you've seen from the start of the season until this point and just the level of composure late game, fourth quarter, not being rattled whatsoever?

NASTJA CLAESSENS: Yeah, I think we really believe in ourselves and our team and what we can do. We showed it a bunch of times. Like yesterday, we came back after we were down 14 points.

Today we had the same; we were like, we're going to do this. We're going to win this. We came so far. We fought so hard. So we weren't going to give it away.

Q. Jordan, Nastja, can you talk to us about what the

next 24 hours look like? It's been adrenaline for the last 48. What do the next 24 hours look like?

NASTJA CLAESSENS: A long ice bath for me.

JORDAN SPEISER: I'd say the same, getting our rest, mentally preparing for whoever we're going to face tomorrow. Obviously I assume some of us are going to watch that game. But yeah, just keep it going and doing the same thing we are doing.

JEFF MITTIE: We have not given an itinerary for the tournament. We've given one day, so I don't even know what's next. I have a good idea because I help with the itinerary.

Q. Jeff, for you, I know there was a lot of time left. Is that why you guys didn't foul with a three-point lead late?

JEFF MITTIE: Well, we kind of messed it up the play before, you know. We weren't supposed to foul around the arc. We wanted if they threw it inside the arc, to foul; if they threw it away from the basket, to foul. And Tess got a little aggressive on that screen.

Yeah, it's one of the things that we've got to do better. We've spent pretty good time on that in the game situation, but we've spent more time on it, quite frankly, from the side out of bounds play than the full.

Hopefully we'll handle it better next time.

Q. Jordan, towards the end of the game there was a lot of subbing in and out. What do you say to yourself when you're sitting on the bench to get in the right spot to hit a big shot like that?

JORDAN SPEISER: Just stay ready and just stay in the game even if you're not physically in the game. Mentally be there for your teammates and just be ready to go back in whenever.

Q. Coach, how do you trust your players in that situation, when there's a lot of subbing in and out?

JEFF MITTIE: Yeah, well, we tried to get Brandie in there on the defensive end. There's a switchability. Plus if we want Brandie on a guard, we can move Brandie around on any of the five players out there. She gives us an ability -- it's not just about Brandie. She gives us the ability to move Nas on a player. We had some action that we wanted Garcia out there for because she's the one that has it a lot of the times.

But certainly Tess and Taryn have run the point for us. It's been a strength of our team that we can run a lot of things with different players on the floor.

I think they did a great job of being ready. They knew they were going back in when it went to offense. They knew they were going in when it went to defense. So that made it pretty easy.

Q. This is the second game in a row the execution down the stretch on both ends of the court has been pretty flawless. How do you account for that?

JEFF MITTIE: Well, this team has really done a nice job. I think that they've -- we haven't complicated things with the short turnaround. We made a couple of adjustments. I said coming into this tournament we were going to go one game at a time, there was going to be a path to win each game. We're going to work on the scout. We're going to give you guys the path for us to play the best.

They've done a great job of just getting their rest, getting their recovery, and then when it's time to work and get that information, they've done a good job with it.

Q. To go into it a little bit more, you'll have four games in four days. What is the biggest thing that you want them focusing on between now and tomorrow at 3:00?

JEFF MITTIE: You know, I know it makes for a great story, and certainly you guys are all here for that, so I'm glad that we can help you write it, or they could.

But they would tell you that we've practiced seven, eight days in a row and some days the seventh or eighth day is the hardest day, and it also might be the best day. Their bodies are tired right now, their adrenaline. But they're young. I don't think it's any different.

We'll get our preparation -- I would say this: The one thing about playing early in the day is the day is pretty normal for us in terms of our recovery. We practice at home kind of at that 10:00, 11:00 a.m. spot, so the day is pretty normal. So I'm sure they've got a nap scheduled later at some point later today, but our preparation will be the same. And the fact that we've played early, I do think it helps because it's a pretty normal day for us.

Q. For the players, you've had three games in three days on the new LED court. Do you feel a little more conditioned to it than Oklahoma State?

NASTJA CLAESSENS: Well, yeah, we played three times on the court. I think Oklahoma State maybe practiced on it. I don't even know. But we're in rhythm. We've had that

game rhythm. We've been here three days.

So I think that also plays a little bit to our advantage.
Yeah, I would say a little bit, yeah.

JORDAN SPEISER: I would also say that. We're in a flow on that court, in that gym, and I don't know, I think it is helping us shoot very good. So yeah.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports.