

2026 Phillips 66 Big 12 Women's Basketball Tournament

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Kansas City, Missouri, USA
T-Mobile Center

Oklahoma State Cowgirls Coach Jacie Hoyt Amari Whiting Postgame Press Conference



Kansas State 74, Oklahoma State 73

JACIE HOYT: Well, I'll start just by congratulating Kansas State. They are having a very magical thing going on right now, and they played a great game. They're playing really well. Want to give credit to them.

But I am incredibly disappointed and embarrassed for the way that that game ended. To make that call in a game like that, you don't do that. It should not have come down to that call. It wasn't called the entire game until that last play, and I've got a locker room full of kids that are really, really hurting right now because they didn't get to decide the outcome of that game, someone else did. And that is not right.

Q. Jacie, have you been able to see a replay of the foul on Stailee?

JACIE HOYT: I have seen a replay, and there was no foul. If anything, I think that it was a travel after we reached in and got all ball. But regardless you don't blow the whistle in that case. That call wasn't made the entire game, and you just don't make that call.

So no, I don't believe it was a foul. I think anyone who watches the replay can see that.

Q. What do you say to her for her not to take this one -- all the blame on her shoulders after this?

JACIE HOYT: Yeah, that's hard on a kid. Like I said, I've got a locker room full of heartbroken kids. No one is harder on themselves than Stailee, so I know this is going to hurt for a really long time.

However, the thing that I've probably loved the most about coaching this year's team is their response and their bounce-back is incredible. They have so much grit. They have so much resilience. Stailee is a resilient kid.

We're a team that is really centered around faith, and we do believe that all things work for good. I don't understand it. This is going to hurt a lot of us for a really long time. But I do believe good things are going to come out of this, somehow, some way. But it cost us a seed line. The outcome of this game probably cost us a seed line, and that is really hard for all of us.

I know Stailee will be fine because she's a tough kid, but she's definitely taking it really hard.

Q. What did you think, the way you were able to get back in that game late, forcing the jump ball, Haleigh hitting the three?

JACIE HOYT: We did everything we were supposed to do, and that's why I'm so disappointed. Because from a defensive execution standpoint, from an offensive execution standpoint, we did what we were supposed to do. Again, that's why it's just so disappointing that someone else decided the outcome, and the kids didn't get to decide it.

Q. Jacie, even though Kansas State played -- this was their third game in three days, but they've played, they've been on this floor. Is there an advantage to that, do you think, for them?

JACIE HOYT: This is my second year in a row having the double bye, and that is such a great position to be in. But I do think that there's an advantage to playing, as well.

I did feel that a little bit with K-State. They're shooting the lights out right now. They're playing really well. But little things -- to end the half, Jacy Wooten slips, that was a momentum play that could have gone our way that did not. It went the opposite way. Just those little things that take some time to adjust to. That's no excuse at all, but it is a

reality that I think it takes a little bit of time to settle in.

You have pros and cons no matter when you play, what day. So I fully understand that.

Q. Building on that, Amari, what were your perspectives of the court? Do you think it was a good day? What did you think?

AMARI WHITING: I mean, just to kind of echo what Coach said, sometimes like when we're slipping and you're not used to it, that kind of sucks. But at the same time, both teams have to play on it. But I mean, we all thought it was kind of cool. Nice to see the Big 12 try and bring some uniqueness. But at the same time, it would be nice to play on a court.

Q. I know it's no consolation right now, but that was probably one of the most high-level shot-making games. Felt like a Sweet 16 matchup in my opinion. Can you just talk about the level of the play on the court, not just today but what we've seen through this tournament and largely the league? Amari, you know this league as well as anybody; maybe just talk about the league and the absolute grind that this is and the strength of it.

AMARI WHITING: Yeah, I mean, obviously this is my third year, and I just think Big 12 is a tough conference. I think that we don't get enough respect for how hard this conference is. I think it just shows any given night, anyone can beat anyone.

I really think that this conference is the best of the best, and so it's really cool to play in it.

JACIE HOYT: Yeah, undoubtedly. I've been really (audio interruption). This is by far more parity than ever. Even Kansas State, I know that maybe their record doesn't look great on paper, but they've had some really big wins this season. They've knocked off Ole Miss in the non-con and beat a really good Texas Tech team there. Even the lower seeds in this tournament have proven that there is really high-level basketball going on in the Big 12 right now, and I think you see that night in and night out.

We've all kind of beat up on each other, and I just hope that people can really take the time to watch and see the high level that's going on and not just look at records.

Q. I think most people who follow this league and followed your team in particular realize it's such an explosive offense at times. We know that aspect of it. In league play, you've won 10 of your 12 wins by double digits, an average of 18 points per game.

You've been dominant at home, 33-2, five of those coming against AP top-25 teams the past two years. You being a tournament team -- this is not done yet for you. How do you prepare for that and turn the page and maybe have a chip on your shoulder going into the tournament? And also, how have you established such a dominant, successful brand?

JACIE HOYT: Culture. We've been able to do it with culture. It's people like Amari. It's the kids that were a part of a really great season last year that decided they wanted to stay and continue to build.

We just have an incredibly strong culture, in the sense of people who just want to win, they're willing to put all things aside for the sake of winning. And I think that's really hard to do now in the era of portal and NIL. But these kids love Oklahoma State. They love each other, and they love winning. We've been fortunate to experience that a lot the last couple years.

I think that, like I said earlier, in a sense of the response to this loss, we have not lost a game back to back this year. We always bounce back with a win. I think that speaks, again, to our culture and our character of we're just resilient.

We learn and we grow, and then we move on, and we pick ourselves back up. This hurts really, really bad. Really bad.

But the bounce-back has always been so elite from this group, and I fully anticipate that. I know it's going to make us more hungry going into March. These kids love each other. They fight like hell for each other. So I think I'm excited to see that response of them coming together because hardship like this brings people closer, at least in our program.

I fully anticipate that. But I love the trajectory our program is on. To be in this position even with a double bye, I think it's really cool. I think that it's just a testament to what we're building. The awesome thing for me as a coach is looking forward. I had a lot of people who still have eligibility that can come back and have another taste of this and continue to build. So that's really promising for our future.

Q. Jacie, Jadyn Wooten once again gave you a huge boost off the bench. What did you think of her game, especially in the first half today?

JACIE HOYT: Jadyn has been that all season long for us. I think that you could have made a really strong case that she could have been Sixth Man of the Year in this

conference. The energy, the pace that we play at when she's in, that's who she's been all season long for us. Our kids get a lot of confidence from her. And I think it's so great for Amari because then it frees her up to focus on the things that we need her to be great at, which she's just an incredible defender for us, Amari is.

So it just kind of takes a little bit off of her shoulders. But Jady, what you saw today is who she's been all season long for us. She's a special player.

Q. You mentioned this team hasn't lost back-to-back games all season long. Seven of those eight games coming off a loss, you've won by double digits. How do you use the energy and emotion from today and carry it over to the tournament?

JACIE HOYT: Yeah, like I said, I think it's going to bring us closer together. I know that it will. Our kids know that. We take pride in not losing back-to-back games. I think it's going to make us more hungry. It's going to bring us closer together. Now we've just got to wait and see what our final stop is.

But in the meantime, we've just got to continue to get better and grow as a team.

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