

2026 Phillips 66 Big 12 Women's Basketball Tournament

Saturday, March 7, 2026

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

T-Mobile Center

Kansas State Wildcats

Coach Jeff Mittie

Taryn Sides

Jordan Speiser

Postgame Press Conference

TCU 74, Kansas State 62

THE MODERATOR: Coach.

JEFF MITTIE: Yeah, not the way we wanted to come into this. I thought it was a heck of a game. We left too many points on the floor, just missed some shots that normally we make. I liked what we were doing out there.

But TCU, credit to them. They've got a lot of length, so you get a little rushed around the rim. You get a little rushed when you get in the paint, and I think there was some of that to it. But proud of our group.

It's been a good week. If it was a great week, we would be playing tomorrow, but it's been a good week.

Q. Jeff, with kind of you guys were in control defensively for a lot of the first half, what was something that they changed that kind of let them get to the rim more and score a little bit better?

JEFF MITTIE: I don't know that they changed anything. Suarez was just not guardable at times. She had a great run in there. They continued to do some of the same things, but she made a lot of shots. She was a tough match-up. She's been a tough match-up for anybody. We knew coming in that she was a key player. Yeah, I think that she made things tough for us.

They put us at a decision a lot. Do you come double her? Those kind of players make everybody else better, and I thought in that stretch, Suarez was excellent.



Q. Obviously they win the rebounding battle by quite a lot, but to have the same amount of points in the paint as them, does that kind of show the fight and then resilience they had considering their size advantage?

JEFF MITTIE: I give credit to our players because they were really getting in the paint off the dribble and off of a lot of our action. So our players were doing a great job of getting to places on the floor that we talked about getting to.

You've watched us. You can see the development of this group, and that's been something that I've been really happy with this week of just seeing the ability to score differently. You know, obviously we start this tournament with a barrage of threes. But over the course of these four games, we have found a lot of ways to score and so we've really grown in that area.

Q. And then Taryn, obviously you're wanting to be playing tomorrow if you could, but the experiences that you guys have had over the past four days, the seasons of highs and lows and everything, does that kind of validate all the work and all the effort that you guys have put in over the last several months?

TARYN SIDES: Yeah, I mean, obviously we want to be playing tomorrow, but I'm just proud of this group and proud of the growth they've had all year. Just wish we were playing tomorrow.

Q. For the players, You guys obviously showed energy all the way to end. How much did fatigue factor into the game?

TARYN SIDES: I think you could see at the last two minutes we're fighting as hard as we can, but it might have played a factor. But, again, at the end of the day, like, we wanted to win. We were going to do whatever it took and we just came up short.

JORDAN SPEISER: Yeah, what she said. We were trying, playing as hard as we could, just couldn't get it

done.

Q. Coach, what were you telling your players in some of those post defensive battles throughout the game and would you have done anything differently?

JEFF MITTIE: Yeah, it's always a good question of we tried to mix it up. We tried to bring the double-team. We tried to fake the double-team. They came out second half, they were really skipping it early out of there. So they were trying to get rid of the basketball before the double came.

You know, if it hadn't for the turnovers in the first half, I don't know that we would have been in the game, because the rebound margin was double digits. We'd only turned it over twice, but we got them to turn it over 11 or 12.

I don't usually look back a lot in the rear-view mirror and have a lot of regrets as long as I feel like our players were bought into it. This group did everything they could within the game plan to win the game. If I picked the wrong thing and I didn't help them enough, well, then, I'll go back and try to help them better next time.

Q. Jordan, can you just talk about Taryn and Tess's leadership throughout the year and just what you've seen in them?

JORDAN SPEISER: They have a lot of leadership. It's helped our whole team, really. They're just able to say the right things in the right moment, and it's just really encouraged all of us and helped all of us through all the ups and downs that we've gone through.

And it continues, even after that loss. Like Tess is in the locker room saying what we needed to hear and just to keep our heads up, so, yeah.

Q. Jeff, you came into the week knowing you needed to have success to continue to play beyond this week, but what do you feel about that now? Is there a season beyond this?

JEFF MITTIE: Yeah, I think so. I don't know all the details but I mean I think so. I haven't spent any time analyzing what's going on across the country. We've been right into scouting and everything else, so there haven't been many moments for me to go to look at anything else.

My whole focus was to play one more day. Before the tournament started, I felt like that if we could play good basketball, get a couple wins, it would put us in position.

Well, let me put it this way. We've had such an interesting

season in terms of we have knocked off some really good teams, but then we've stubbed our toe.

Some of that we've missed players. When Nas went back to Belgium, she missed three games. When Tess was out for three games with the NCAA stuff. It felt like every time we were starting to play really good, we would have some of that stuff.

We're an interesting case study for anybody taking a look at our resume. I hope we're playing in the post-season. I've seen it be valuable for teams. I've seen it catapult them into the next season. You're seeing that across the country.

If you go back and look at the WBIT a year ago and look at some of the teams that are competing to host, competing in the top 15 in the country, there's some value in it.

Q. Jordan, you gained a lot of experience as a player this weekend. How could that help catapult you into the future?

JORDAN SPEISER: I think it helped a lot. I think I've gained a lot of confidence this week and just learning to let the game come to me more. I think that's really helped. And, yeah, I think that I'm going to try to carry my confidence into whatever happened next.

Q. And, Coach, Jordan gave you a spark off the bench. What are your thoughts on that?

JEFF MITTIE: I thought she had a great week. One of the things, she's improved so much defensively. She mentioned a little bit in terms of letting the game come to her offensively. She's such an aggressive player, but you saw her score in a variety of ways. But really, she's a competitor, so she competes. And her defense has been something that if you watch her since the start of the year, she's really improved in that area of the floor. She's going to be a complete player and a lot of people saw that this week.

Q. We talked a lot about the younger players like Jordan who have grown so much throughout the season, but this tournament also felt like a coming-out party for Nastja in a way. Can you talk about just the steps that she's taken even recently and confidence and how she's kind of been your guys' main...

JEFF MITTIE: Yeah, I think consistency with Nas has been key. She's found the right aggressiveness. I think early in the year she would have one big game and one game where she wasn't very aggressive with the basketball. What I have liked about her all year long is

being able to move her around to different roles. But offensively, we needed her to be more aggressive.

And you've really seen her grow in that area probably in the last six, seven, eight games. We've seen a higher level of consistency there.

Q. Coach, when you look back to the start of the season with this year's group, what are you most proud of reflecting where you're sitting now?

JEFF MITTIE: I think that when you're coaching an extremely young team -- and this is the youngest team I've coached probably in my career -- and you're in today's environment of instant gratification -- and that's way different than it was 20 years ago -- it really -- 20 years ago players understood better the process.

I've got one of my former players on my staff, Ebony Gilliam. And Ebony won four championships and she'll be glad to show you her rings because she's not shy about it. But she played 15 minutes a game as a freshman for me and then started the last three and then went on and played professionally overseas.

What I'm most proud of this group for is -- it's hard when you're a freshman and you're going through all those hills and valleys and everything else out there in social media land only shows the highlight film of everybody's lives -- you're dealing with the day-to-day stuff. And this group has grown so much in that area from just competing better basketball-wise, becoming better teammates, becoming better leaders, becoming tougher players in bad stretches.

I think all of those things for a coach to watch, it's why I got into the business. I liked players that grew that way. So I'm proud of that. I'm proud of that. I think that it's harder to do now. It's harder to do now in today's environment, but this group has really, really grown in the locker room.

You guys all see. Everybody goes well -- no. This group has gone through tough things where they didn't like each other as much as they needed to or they weren't working together as hard as they needed to or they weren't connected to together as good as they needed to be.

So, anyway, that would be my long-winded answer of this season. All right. Thanks.

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