

Jimmy V Classic: Clemson vs BYU

Tuesday, December 9, 2025

New York, New York, USA

Madison Square Garden

BYU Cougars

Coach Kevin Young

AJ Dybantsa

Robert Wright III

Postgame Press Conference



PRESENTED BY **Modelo**

BYU - 67, Clemson - 64

Q. BYU obviously didn't get off to the start that they wanted to in the first half, down 21, but then the second half happened, and although you had a ridiculous second half performance, the ball went to Rob with the last shot. What goes into the decision-making and trust to put the ball in his hands?

AJ DYBANTSA: You got to put have trust in your teammates. It don't matter what the play is, don't matter if I had 50 that game. Whoever is open gets ball. That's the kind of trust we have in our team. They decided to double me. He shoot 45 percent from 3. I'll take that.

Q. Kevin, I was just curious what you thought changed in the second half and what the message was to the team at halftime?

KEVIN YOUNG: I thought it was just the look in their eye got different. I thought we were kind of blank and a little lifeless in the first half, honestly. I challenged the guys to come out more with a competitive spirit. I thought it showed its head more on the glass. They hurt us quite a bit.

That's a big, strong physical team. I thought our guys responded, just our trench warfare mentality was much better in the second half.

One thing about AJ that he does a good job of, he really is a very fast processor. In the second half he made the needed adjustments where he could get to his spots a little bit more, and then the game kind of opened up from that standpoint.

Q. Rob, tell us about that last shot. Have you ever had a buzzer beater before?

ROBERT WRIGHT III: Not a three. I never had a buzzer beater that's a three. That was the first one. The play, AJ wasn't open. He was getting double-teamed. That told me I'll be coming back to the ball. He just trusted me, and the shot went in. The real something.

Q. AJ, even in the first half when your shot wasn't falling, you came out really aggressive, and that continued in the second half. What did you see in Clemson's defense that made you so confident you thought you could take over the game?

AJ DYBANTSA: First, they weren't doubling. In the morning at 6:30, I'm working on a lot of dribble pull-ups on one person. So I have trusted my one-on-one ability. They decided not to double me in the second half, so I picked my spot smarter. Not trying to fade as much, just trying to raise above the defense.

Q. You got the ball at half-court, I guess for KY, did those one possession with two plays play out the way you expected? You had 1.3 to go. Did you have to tweak the play you thought you were going to run before you got it to Rob as opposed to having two and a half and change? It was a pretty tight position there.

KEVIN YOUNG: The initial full court play we had drawn up, they had defended it well. At the last minute, I was kind of like, hey, Rob, if you get it, get it across half-court, and we'll call a timeout.

That play that we just ran at the end there is one we worked on in practice several times. Rob made a big-time play. Mihailo, he didn't play in the second half. He comes in, I trust him as a passer, he made a great pass. Then Rob made it happen.

Q. AJ, was there something in you that you were tapping into that brought you back either at some point earlier this season or as a high school player where

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you were entering into a certain kind of zone that maybe felt familiar but you had never experienced as a college player? I want to get in your head in that second half.

AJ DYBANTSA: Just be patient. Don't get too down on yourself if you're missing shots in the first half. You've still got another 20 minutes to go. I'm super confident in my ability and I trust all my the work I put in.

KEVIN YOUNG: If I could chime in. I think in the first half he was doing a lot of stuff towards the baseline. He was falling away. I think he mentioned that. He does a great job when he gets middle. We have a little saying, him and I, just pick a spot. That was something I learned in the NBA with coach and really good players. Just pick a spot, and you're either able to make it or miss it. He was able to pick his spots tonight and made them pay.

Q. For the players, AJ and Rob, speak on the overall experience playing MSG. AJ, you scored 22 of your 28 in the second half. Rob, the big shot, just speak on this overall experience. BYU doesn't come to New York City often. Just speak, reflect on it.

ROBERT WRIGHT III: For me, it was a crazy feeling. We wanted to come here and get the W, and that's what we did. I was just happy to get the win.

AJ DYBANTSA: This is my first time stepping foot in the Garden. I'm from Boston. We have another Garden over there that I'm pretty much used to. This is like the Mecca. It was a surreal feeling to be able to play here.

Q. Coach, what did you say to your team at halftime? They didn't play the way you expected. They came back in the second half and reversed what happened in the first half. What did you say to them at halftime?

KEVIN YOUNG: Unfortunately, we've been in this situation too many times this year. Our second half has been ridiculously efficient and effective. Although I wish that wasn't the case, I think having reference points as you go throughout the season are really important.

I talked about we've been in that situation before, but really I just challenged them honestly. I thought to a man they were playing harder than we were. Then we did make a slight adjustment offensively.

I give Clemson tons of credit. They had a good game plan to put us in mud honestly in the first half. We just couldn't find the home offensively. We went to some really, really simple stuff in the second half. Did some early step-up screens for Rob, got the matchups we wanted.

Offensively, that's what opened the game up. I should have said earlier. Then he got going.

But I thought our ability -- and Rob led it all as the floor general out there -- we got the matchups we wanted, got them spread out, and got the ball movement a little bit more. In the first half, ball wasn't moving and forced our guys to take not good shots.

I didn't coach a good first half. Second half we found a much better rhythm and that had a lot to do with our offensive output. We scored 45 points in the second half. It was pretty impressive.

Q. AJ, what do you think about your guys' big comeback, but then Clemson not giving up. What do you think they showed to stay in the fight even though giving up a 20-plus point lead to you guys?

AJ DYBANTSA: It's Division I basketball. They're playing us for a reason. They're a high level team. I don't think it should have even got to that. I had a foul to give, but I didn't foul. So I guess I gave Rob a highlight.

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