

American Athletic Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 10, 2022

Fort Worth, Texas, USA

Dickies Arena

Tulsa Golden Hurricane

Frank Haith

Jeriah Horne

Darien Jackson

Postgame Press Conference

Tulsa 73, Wichita St 63

FRANK HAITH: Obviously I'm very proud of our kids. We fought from the beginning of this ball game. I know we led for about 37 minutes of the game and Wichita State made a tremendous run, which we knew they would. They're a tough team. But our kids competed. And these two guys, two seniors came in here, both from Kansas City. They weren't going to let us lose. And they found a way to continue to encourage and motivate our young people. And it's just a great, great win for us.

Q. Coach, what do you think the difference was this time around, third time playing Wichita State? What did you have more success with on offense this time around?

FRANK HAITH: Well, I think you go back to the first time we played them at their place, the first half we outrebounded them. And that -- from that half on, the next three halves, they out rebounded us. And actually beat us up pretty good on the glass. And I thought we really fought hard this ball game. We outrebounded them.

And we took good shots. We really took care of the ball. We had a couple turnovers there late in the game. I think we had, what, nine turnovers for the game that gave us a chance. We wanted FGAs. But their offensive rebounding really hurt us at our place and it hurt us when we played them up there.

So I thought we did a really good job of keeping those guys off the glass and running good offense and taking good shots.



Q. Wichita State, looks like they have a lot of talented pieces of offense. They've kind of struggled this year. When you've watched them on film, what did you guys do to find success against them and slowing them down?

FRANK HAITH: Well, we go back to -- we just played them not too long ago, so it's fresh in our mind. We thought they really hurt us by getting in the paint. We didn't guard the ball very well. And I thought our guys did a great job of being in the gaps, keeping those guys in front of us. They scored there late when they got in the paint but we wanted to make them work, playing the periphery in our matchup zone.

I thought we got some good minutes out of some guys off the bench and we did change up our defense up a bit to try to keep them off balance. Not having Porter, we thought that helped us too. And being able to change defenses and, you know, our guys, like I said, we -- I thought our first-shot defense was good the last time we played them, but they kicked us on the glass. And that difference was our ability to limit their paint touches but also to rebound the ball

Q. Coach, you just mentioned a pivotal situation in the game. You all being able to control the glass when you needed to, eliminate the turnovers. When did you all as a coaching staff and the players as a unit make a decision after that game we're going to correct this?

FRANK HAITH: I really believe it's something we really want to pride ourselves on is making sure we take care of the ball and we rebound, but it's hurt us all year because we haven't been able to guard dribble penetration as well. I think the other thing for us in terms of taking care of the ball, we're playing without Anthony Pritchard he's a true freshman but he was our point guard from Christmas on, and we lost Keyshawn Embery-Simpson earlier. We're playing with Sam and Curtis in that position that really hadn't played that position. So but those guys have matured and grown in the last couple games.

And, you know, the last time we played these guys, I don't

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think we turned it over three times. But we got kicked on the glass. And the thing with rebounding is all about, you know, the ticker. Your heart and desire and blocking out and first to the floor. We're not a big team, but if we can't get the ball, we try to keep it alive but our guard's got to help us. And DJ, I challenged him before the game, I needed him to defensive rebound and he came up with a double-double and that was good to see. Jeriah has been a good rebounder all year and he had a double-double.

So both these guys here really, really helped that cause.

Q. DJ, just talk about what Coach just mentioned about being challenged and you answering the bell when the bell got tolled?

DARIEN JACKSON: Yeah. He's been challenging me each and every year just to step up and just to play my game and do what makes me great. And that's what going to the glass, being that dog. And he challenged me today, because, like he said, last game, that's what killed us, them crashing the glass. And that's what I wanted to show him. I wanted to show him that I can be that dog that I was always -- he told me to be and, yeah.

Q. Jeriah, did you feel disrespected maybe that you were left off or maybe overlooked off those all-conference teams?

JERIAH HORNE: No. Most important thing for me is I know Whose I am and because of that I know who I am. And nothing else matters. I give all my credit to God for, you know, everything that He's done for me and where I am today. So I continue just to give it my all, continue to go hard and to work to get a win.

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