

American Athletic Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Saturday, March 12, 2022

Fort Worth, Texas, USA

Dickies Arena

SMU Mustangs

Tim Jankovich

Kendric Davis

Marcus Weathers

Michael Weathers

Postgame Press Conference



So of course I'm biased, but I promise you I'd be saying this if I was in a whole other league, and you asked me should that team that just got second in the American and won the games -- yes. Of course they should be in, but we won't know that until tomorrow.

Q. Michael and Marcus, you guys both transferred from Miami of Ohio. Talk about what it's like to be here on this stage, playing for a conference championship, and what your relationship is going forward now that you're on your way to your next step?

MARCUS WEATHERS: Just coming here and being a part of Coach Janks' family has been great. He really believed in me and Mike, and he really gave us a platform to really showcase what we could do. Whether to play the 4 to 5 or, you know, do whatever it was out there on the court. But Coach Jank he just really cared about us and he made the transition coming here so easy and really a great one, in my opinion.

MICHAEL WEATHERS: Yeah. Just to piggyback off what Marc said. It's been a beautiful atmosphere coming to SMU. Coach Jank made it so easy to transition and everything like that, and even the players, with KD and Eman, and the former players. It's just been a beautiful thing. It's a beautiful feeling to come out here and play in front of a big crowd, and we almost had it but it was just a tough game for us. But just coming to SMU was the greatest decision we made.

Q. For the players, you have made a habit of rallying from behind and winning a lot of games in the second half. When Memphis got a couple of guys in foul trouble and Duren got hurt as well, did you feel like that was the blueprint to get one more, scratch one back out in the second half?

KENDRIC DAVIS: Regardless of Duren going down or not, our game plan was just to keep in attack mode. Even with their press, they caused a lot of turnovers and havoc and stuff like that. But our level of aggression had to keep the same. And we didn't do that for 40 minutes. So whether it was Duren or somebody else going down, we just had to keep the same level of aggression.

Memphis 70, SMU 63

TIM JANKOVICH: Just proud of our team. All year long, I've been so appreciative of these guys and their efforts, their fight and their togetherness and all the things they've overcome individually and collectively. And I'm proud to coach these guys.

I feel horrible for them. I know how badly they wanted to win this tournament. This game today. And, obviously, painful loss. All losses are painful. Some a little more than others. But I just do appreciate our team very much.

Q. Coach, I know the conference don't get a lot of credit. Why should your team be considered for the 68-team field going next week?

TIM JANKOVICH: I look at it -- how could you not be? How could you possibly not? The American Athletic Conference with the teams that are in this league, and we finish second with the wins that we had and -- I think it's -- it's hard for me to even grasp, you know? And I would be saying this if I was in -- I've coached in, I can't tell you how many leagues. The Big 12, SEC, Big 10, Mountain West, Southland, Missouri Valley, American. I've got a great grasp of this. I do. I've got a really, really good feel for the difference of teams. And I'm here to tell you it's about that far, you know. If you're the 41 on the NET versus the 86 on the NET, well, that game is going to be this close most of the time, (indicating). And I just think that a full season in a great league, I think a team should be rewarded across the country, not just us.



Q. Penny said that their whole game plan this time was to go back to what they did a couple years ago and try to make life difficult to Kendric, obviously that included some pretty intense double teams immediately full-court and right across half-court. How much more difficult did that make to get the offense in a flow early?

TIM JANKOVICH: That's what they did the last -- that's what they've been doing every time. It really wasn't any different. But I guess they might want to say it was. But it's really what they've been doing every single time we play. So that makes me laugh. It's the same. Same first time we played them, second time we played them, third time, played them last year, they basically have done that the whole time and that's the way they play anyway. So I really didn't see a change.

The success we've had over them the last couple years, our guys have just done an amazing job -- because there is a shifting of gears when you play them because they're not going to let you play in your flow. And because of that, your team has to make a pretty big adjustment to play a lot more freelance but with purpose and with certain rules, what we want to do and what we don't want to do. And these guys did a terrific job the first two games.

Today we didn't do as good a job. We probably wanted it too bad. Probably tried a little too hard. Probably forced some things. And give Memphis credit. They played very hard today, of course. And so I'm not taking anything away from them at all. But from an offensive standpoint, it was a little tougher today.

I also think -- I said this before the conference tournament, when you're in league play or you're in an NCAA Tournament, you have always a day or two or three in between to prepare for a team. And that's the rhythm of college basketball. In a conference tournament, you don't. You get back to the hotel, you go to bed and today you're click, click, click remember this, remember this, remember this. So it's not as effective. It's harder on the players and I thought they did a very good job. But we definitely weren't as organized as we were the last two times we played them. And that's conference tournament basketball. And so we didn't adjust as coaches probably. Maybe we could have made it simpler, whatever.

But they played hard. They didn't do anything different than they've done. What hurt us is they really out rebounded us. We're not a big team. I mean, that's our 5 man most -- we're 6'5", 6'3", 6'3", 6' and that would be the smallest team in a lot of high school leagues, which is another reason I'm so proud of them. You talk about

having to play hard when you're giving up those kind of inches and pounds. Amazing. And amazing that we've rebounded the ball the way we have all year long. Every now and then -- we've had two games in the last two months where we got dominated on the boards. That's amazing to me.

And so that's, again, why I'm so proud of these guys because their heart and effort and will allowed us to play a way that was difficult to match up with us. That was -- I mean, you'd ask I'm sure any coach who'd come up here, SMU is hard to play against. But if they can dominate us on the boards, that's pretty tough for us. And it's only happened twice in the last -- I don't know how long. And tonight really that was the case. And it was certainly not lack of effort. A lot of factors go into that. But we didn't negate the boards enough to win the game.

Q. Kendric, how tough was this one to swallow? And how confident are you that you'll get an NCAA Tournament chance?

KENDRIC DAVIS: It was tough. They're a good team. And we beat them twice. So we knew the third time it was going to be even harder. I think the way we beat them the second time, we knew it was going to be harder.

And we had it. I mean, the last four minutes, they wanted it more than we did. But, I mean, I'm confident. We finished second in the league and whether Houston or Memphis wins the tournament, we got a win with them. So, I mean, we finished right behind a top 20 team in the country. So, I mean, we just leave it. If we get in the tournament, I know we can be dangerous.

Q. Coach, kind of during those last few minutes, how do you kind of try to decide whether to use a timeout to maybe try to slow that run down, but then that also gets the crowd going and gives them a chance to also regroup a little bit versus trusting your guys and not taking a timeout?

TIM JANKOVICH: At what point? Where exactly are you talking about? Like 6 minutes? 4 minutes? 4 1/2 minutes? There was one on the four minute -- you know, you've got the media timeouts. So you always factor that. And you wonder, okay, should we let it go. One time -- I think it was at the 7 minute mark, right over 8, we probably -- we thought about one. But it was like, you know what, the next dead ball it's going to -- and it certainly paid off not to take the timeout because there was a dead ball. And then soon after, we did really well. We stopped the run.

It's just a hard choice. It's -- I don't know. There's no book. There's no book that's right. And you just -- do we feel like

we can get through that run or not? Our guys -- I have a lot of confidence.

And another thing, you know, that I always kind of get a kick out of is a timeout is definitely -- what you know you're going to get is rest, okay. You know you can rest. But there's no magic in it.

It doesn't, like -- so we call a timeout. And a lot of times, we'll come out of a timeout and execute and get a basket. But a lot of times, well, they didn't do what we thought they were going to do. A lot of time timeouts backfire. A lot of time timeouts -- I know what they're doing right now, whereas if I call a timeout they may decide right now where they have a -- so I think those are all the tough decisions that you make as a coach.

That's why I don't like to use them -- like I'll not use them late in a half even though it's a use it or lose it. It's like, well, why are we going to use it just to use it when our guys know exactly what we're going to do at the other end. And all a timeout might do is get them to change their defense.

So those things all factor in and. It's -- you know, there's really no right answer. It's all -- hindsight is 20/20 is the way I look at it.

Q. KD, it's your third time playing Memphis how fun or challenging going against those guards? I know you had some success. How fun or challenging going against those guards?

KENDRIC DAVIS: I like beating Penny. It's more fun to beat him. But, I mean, I like playing basketball, whether it's Memphis, Houston, whatever. But, I mean, playing against them, you know, is always fun. A legendary coach. I done took more wins than losses, so I'm glad of that

Q. Tim, you've talked about since the season started about how much you liked this group, how much you want them to get to the NCAA tournament. I guess just how hard is it now knowing in the next 24 hours the uncertainty of that it's not in your hands anymore?

TIM JANKOVICH: It's really, really tough. I've coached a long time. I've been in a lot of situations where we were guaranteed to be in. I've been in a lot of situations where we were definitely not going to be in. And I've been in too many situations like this one where, you know, where you're right there. And I -- it's not fun. I don't wish it on anyone.

But I'm not -- really, I'm not worried about for me. Gosh, I've done it forever. Of course, I would like to go again.

But these guys, I just -- I want this team to go. I want this team to experience -- as a group, they deserve it. If they didn't deserve it, I wouldn't be talking that way. But I really -- I mean, every finger crossed, everything -- every prayer, every whatever that the committee sees fit and sees it as I do. So, yeah, it's bothersome. But maybe we'll get some great news tomorrow.

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