

GEICO Players Era Men's Championship

Monday, November 24, 2025

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

MGM Grand Garden Arena

Kansas Jayhawks

Coach Bill Self

Bryson Tiller

Melvin Council, Jr.

Flory Bidunga

Postgame Press Conference

Kansas 71, Notre Dame 61

Q. Flory, you had a lot of things today, but you had five assists. It seemed like the big-to-big passing with you and Bryson was really effective. How did you feel like you did in that aspect of the game?

FLORY BIDUNGA: Bryson is a pretty good cutter. I think when I got double teamed they were in the right spot. Just have to make the right pass.

Q. Melvin, I wanted to ask you about those back-to-back threes you hit. It was a big moment in the game. How did it feel to have those go in?

MELVIN COUNCIL JR: It felt great. During the beginning of the season my shots wasn't falling, but I'm getting more comfortable with the shots and shot selections, and Coach Bland just keeping me uplifted and stuff like that.

Q. Bryson, how is this team different without Darryn out there, and how have you been able to regroup with his injury?

BRYSON TILLER: Yeah, there's no excuses. We definitely have to figure out who we are without him. He will be back soon for sure, but we've just got to be the tougher team each night, and I feel like we did that tonight.

Q. Bryson, you scored twice in a row right after they had a chance to make it really close. How meaningful do you think those two buckets were and what was your mindset in that moment when it was getting down



to the final minutes?

BRYSON TILLER: Just to get a good shot. I trust in my game. I trust in my teammates. They made great passes to me. Those buckets really definitely changed the momentum of the game.

Q. Melvin, at one point Jayden goes out and Tre had to get some attention. How physical did you think this game was?

MELVIN COUNCIL JR: Oh, it was physical, but Coach always preaches next guy up. Every time we get in the huddle, I get to tell the guys, we've got to get a kill, three stops, and we'll be good.

Q. For any of you guys, what did you think of that stretch that Jamari had late in the game?

BRYSON TILLER: That was very big of him. He stepped up any time we needed him a lot, so I'm definitely proud of him for that.

Q. Flory and Bryson, what did you think of Melvin stroking the threes? He had been off to kind of a slow start from three.

FLORY BIDUNGA: You know, he shot a couple times and it didn't fall in, but we got back in the huddle and said keep shooting, we were fighting and then was confident in us to make those threes, so that was pretty good.

Q. Melvin, their coach said KU's bigs dominated. How do you feel about your inside play today, the team?

MELVIN COUNCIL JR: Lovely. Before the game, I was telling the starting five -- should I tell them the sauce or no?

Yeah, I'm not going to tell ya'll what I told Flory and BT, but I just want them to be dominant every game and stuff. We've got to play off Flory. DP is out right now, so Flory is our next option.

Q. Flory, I think early in the game you got taken out. Did Coach challenge you or was it just you came in and then you dominated the whole game?

FLORY BIDUNGA: Yeah, we need to be ready. I feel like



I start pretty cold, I was cold, I wasn't ready. But he got me out, challenged me, and then I got right back to it.

Q. What's your mindset going into a game like this where you know it's going to be a physical battle especially without having someone to the caliber of Darryn Peterson?

FLORY BIDUNGA: I think we're ready. We'll embrace it and then we'll see how that goes. But we'll put up a fight for sure.

Q. What will it take for you to come back tomorrow the same time and play as though you just hadn't played a game the day before?

MELVIN COUNCIL JR: Energy. That's what it's going to take. Tomorrow is going to be a whole different game. Same time, but I'm going to let you guys know that we're bringing a lot of energy in the morning.

Q. What's most impressed you about Flory's growth and kind of development to this point in the season?

BILL SELF: Well, I think he's just become better at everything. I don't think it's that he's that much better shooting the basketball, but I think he's a better one-on-one defender. I think he's a better team defender. I think he's a much better passer. I think even though we haven't really shown it much, I think he's a better screener.

One thing that we can do, we can switch five, which is a big advantage over some teams that play a traditional 5 man. I just think he's just a better player. He didn't get off to a great start today, but he's pretty good midway through the first half.

Q. The Notre Dame coach was just in here and talked about how Bryson Tiller is so dominant in the paint. What did you like that you saw from him today?

BILL SELF: Well, I'm glad that he said that because he's also 0 of 5 from three, so maybe Bryson will listen to Micah more than he'll listen to me.

I did think he played well. Notre Dame can put the big guy on you and body you up and knock you off balance, but they're not big at the other big spot, and Flory was able to use his body and take advantage of that.

Q. How is Jayden doing, and what exactly did he hurt?

BILL SELF: X-rays are still pending. Apparently he hurt it dunking in warmups, so he's right wrist. I bet he's doubtful for the tournament, but I do not know that for a fact. But he

went in today and then obviously said he couldn't go. That was disappointing because we're kind of shorthanded right now to begin with.

Q. What's your message to the team today after a big win and knowing you have multiple games to play in these back to back days?

BILL SELF: Well, just to get back and get off your feet and rest. We'll have a game plan for Syracuse tonight when we meet at 8:30 or 9:00, but up until then I want them just to chill and stay off their feet totally.

Q. What if any updates do you have about Darryn Peterson and when he might return?

BILL SELF: Well, I'm hopeful soon. He's doing more every day. He's working out here. He's running. He's cutting. He's doing some things that he's just got to test out of some things, which we'll test him again when we get back. You know, it's -- week-to-week may be too long. It's more of an every three or four days we'll reevaluate and see where he's at.

Q. McDowell came in and had the big block and then he had a three-pointer. What did you think of his play today and how he's been ready when called upon?

BILL SELF: I actually think that Jamari has labored so far, and to see him come in and play that way for us when he hasn't really got significant -- I think he played 52 seconds against Duke. Of course we need it; I love to see it. He's a good shooter, and the ball hadn't gone down -- he had one go all the way down and come out, as well.

But I was happy for 'Mari. I was happy for Marko. It's not that they did unbelievable things, but they did things to help our team win. I think that they'll obviously both be very important in the next two days.

Q. How big were Melvin's threes?

BILL SELF: Big. You know, you guys may not know this, but he hasn't shot it great from beyond the arc up until today. Yeah, those were both big, and then he was feeling himself a little bit and shot a 21-footer 25 feet right after that. But I thought Melvin to play 38 minutes, he did a good job on Burton, but there were so many switches and he could go around us.

But I think Melvin is doing really well considering he really doesn't have a sidekick back there to make the pressure off him.

Q. When Flory came out early did he challenge him in

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

any way?

BILL SELF: I wasn't very happy with him. I thought his first three or four possessions was bad energy. I don't know that I did anything to challenge him, but hopefully he gave himself a do-better talk, and he was pretty effective when he got back in there.

Q. Players Era announced a new partnership with the Big 12; field is going to expand. How will that affect scheduling going forward in November?

BILL SELF: You know what, I haven't given it that much thought. But the reality of it is, for us, you've got champions, you've got a good home, home and home, you've got a good away, home and home, you've got Missouri on a neutral site. To me after that, this is plenty.

Have you studied our schedule this year? I mean, wow. Then we're not full strength to play that. That may be too much in one semester when you have so many new guys in November and December. Really an advantage to some older teams.

Even last year if you looked at our team, and we played Duke early out here, our team had the advantage over Duke because they were playing with all freshmen and we were playing with older guys, and we played lights-out great, and then they kept growing, and we hit the wall and didn't.

But I think anything more than that is over-scheduling at this point in time.

Q. With Tre exiting the game in the first half, were you ever concerned that he wasn't going to come back?

BILL SELF: No, there was only like a minute or two left before halftime, so no, I was never concerned.

The one thing that I was probably thinking about, I hope it's not a concussion. That would have been the one thing. But anybody that's been hit on the bridge of their nose knows that it bleeds, and his really did. But that didn't bother me as much.

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