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TEXAS A&M AGGIES

THE MODERATOR: We're ready for Texas A&M. Coach Mark Turgeon and his three student athletes, Bryan Davis, Donald Sloan and Dominique Kirk. Coach, congratulations on tonight's victory. Your thoughts on tonight's game?

COACH MARK TURGEON: Well, we have had a tough 24 hours. I was really worried about our team. DeAndre -- just so I handle this now -- is at the hospital. We think he is going to be all right. They are making sure it is not his appendix.

And then we had Sloan who played great tonight, lost his mom this morning and he flew in just for the game. So sometimes when things like this happen, they inspire you or they put a cloud over and I thought we had a little cloud over us at the start of the game. And then we fought through it.

So I was really worried. I didn't want to come up here after the game after a loss and make excuses but I was really nervous about what happened in the last 24 hours for our team but our guys came through.

I am really proud. It wasn't pretty. Junior gave us a big lift. B.J. had a great couple minutes right before half, that was really the game. We built it up right before half. We did a great job on our execution. We guarded all night. They missed some open ones. Our transition defense wasn't good early but I thought in the second half we guarded much better and just did a tremendous job. It was just a gutted-out win.

And definitely it wasn't pretty and we missed way too many free throws down the stretch but they have been doing that to me all year. We'll take it. We're looking forward for another day.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for student athletes?

Q. Donald, can you talk about playing under these conditions for you; how tough was it?

DONALD SLOAN: First time I ever experienced anything like this, you know. I don't think I've had to deal with something like this my whole life. For it to be somebody as close to me as it was, you know, kind of debating whether to come up or not. Family asking me what I'm going to do. Teammates asking me what I'm going to do. I think I made the right decision. I think she would have wanted me to come up and play in this game for her.

Q. Bryan, I was wondering if you can talk a little bit it seemed every time Iowa State put together the run, you would jump in and really stop it. How were you able to do that?

BRYAN DAVIS: I think today as a team we really grew up. The guys came off the bench and really helped us. We just kind of played great team D.

Q. Donald, was it difficult to concentrate tonight with everything that's happened? If you don't mind me asking, was your mother ill? What were the circumstances?

COACH MARK TURGEON: He really don't want to talk about it. She passed. She was ill. She passed. He just asked me to handle that for him. He really don't want to talk about it if that's okay with everybody. She passed away early this morning.

DONALD SLOAN: It was kind of tough. As you can see in the beginning of the game, I felt like I was kind of out of tune, out of rhythm, out of sync a little bit. I think it showed. The coaches pulled me to the side and told me basically if I wanted to still do this. And I was like, yeah, you know. We are in it together until the end.

They patted me on the back and put me back in. The teammates embraced me really well when I came back and I felt like if I needed anything, they were there. They're there for me, I

got to be there for them.

Q. Dominique, can you talk about how important this win was? A lot of talk about you guys needing one to get to NCAA. Was there some pressure there? Do you feel like tomorrow there will be a little less?

DOMINIQUE KIRK: Every game is important. We came up here to win. You know, we came up here to win, try to win the whole tournament. We knew this game was very important. I mean, it was always in the back of our mind but we never try to let it affect us. You can see at the beginning of the game, it started to affect us a little bit.

We just got in a rhythm and started playing as a team and just went out there and played hard.

Q. Are you guys looking forward to playing K-State tomorrow for a shot of redemption?

DONALD SLOAN: I am. I'm pretty sure they are, too, and our coaches. I am really looking forward to that game.

DOMINIQUE KIRK: I mean, it is going to be a big game. K-State is a talented team. They got a great coach over there. We just try to go out there and play our best. It is going to be a great game. I think it is going to be a battle to the end and they got great players on their team, and we got to go out there and just fight.

THE MODERATOR: Okay, guys, we'll let you go back to the locker room. Congratulations on the victory tonight.

We will now take questions for Coach.

Q. Status on DeAndre. Was it stomach flu before and when are you expecting to hear something?

COACH MARK TURGEON: He is at the hospital right now. He was running a fever. Originally we thought it was some food poisoning. It happened -- what's today? Tuesday night, came down Tuesday night about 9:00, 10 o'clock. Didn't do anything yesterday. Actually was able to eat for the first time at pregame meal today and wanted to give it a shot but just couldn't give it a shot.

And he's at the hospital right now with his mom. He has a fever. They are going to do a CT scan to see if it's not his appendix. If it's not, then he's just got a bad virus. So we're hoping it is just a bad virus. Status, probably not good for tomorrow if it's a bad virus. But you never know

with young kids. We're just hoping it is not the appendix but we don't think it is.

Q. I think just talk about the 12-0 run in the first half, how much momentum that built and can you talk about the impact Bryan Davis had down low for you.

COACH MARK TURGEON: Well, the 12-0 run, we had a strange line-up in there, one that we don't practice a lot.

When I took the job at A&M I wanted to be a motion team. We're not a motion team. We wanted motion before half, and then we just made plays. We were able to spread them because we had some little guys out there and we made shots and made plays right before half and it was huge.

And then our transition defense hurt us most the first half, and they came back and hit a 3. That was a big 3 to cut it to eight right before half for them. But, no, I was really proud of that run and our execution because I looked at the clock and we had Joe with 2, Bryan Davis with 2. I think Junior had 2. You know B.J. came in and gave us great minutes.

And then Bryan Davis was really good. We couldn't guard Brackins. He was really hurting us. Actually, he did a great job on him and I thought Beau Muhlbach did a great job on him. We helped Beau, we doubled a little bit on Brackins when Beau was guarding him. I thought he did a great job of just playing hard and playing with intensity and thought both those guys really helped us a lot.

I thought Junior, Chinemelu Elonu gave us some huge minutes for a guy that hadn't played a lot lately, to go in there; he had a couple nice moves and some nice rebounds and played smart tonight.

So we did it by committee. It wasn't a routine game for us, by any stretch of the imagination. But Bryan Davis was really good. I thought he had some big-time blocks and did a good job.

And then late in the game when we couldn't make free throws, he did a good job defensively, switching out, guarding the guard and getting big rebounds for us.

Q. Can you talk about the matchup tomorrow with Kansas State? Sounds like your guys are excited about this rematch.

COACH MARK TURGEON: Well, I think

we're just excited for another day. K-State whipped us pretty good at their place. It was a good game for about 30 minutes, and then they whipped us. It seemed like they made every shot the last 10 minutes of the game or a free throw.

So we're looking forward to that. We realize we will probably be going into another road crowd tomorrow night. K-State will probably have half the arena tomorrow night. KU will probably have the other half. So we're looking forward to it. Playing against a great player like Beasley. Walker took it to us last game. Pullen had a heck of a year, Young had a good year. Very athletic.

They did some things that gave us trouble. Hopefully we will be a better team tomorrow than we were tonight.

If DeAndre is back, we'll be deeper. But it will be a heck of a tough game for us, one we're looking forward to. We're disappointed a little bit the way we finished in the league because we lost a lot of home games, too many home games this year. We're trying to make up for it here in this tournament.

Q. Did you feel like there was a certain sense urgency tonight because of the NCAA ramifications?

COACH MARK TURGEON: Well, I didn't feel at the start. I thought our guys were sleepwalking and really concerned me. We jumped them pretty good that first time out and they woke out.

But, yeah, long nerve-wracking day, you know, long nerve-wracking day.

I don't know. I will not sit up here and politic for where we were, I thought we were pretty into the tournament because the league did so well but tonight helped.

I don't know if our guys were nervous about that or not. I'm sure they were because every time you turned around, they were talking about bubble and teams trying to get in. So a lot of pressure on these kids. We try to get them to play hard and not think about those things and just go out and get the victory and I think we did that.

Q. Can you talk about the courage of Donald Sloan to come back and play a game like this under those circumstances.

COACH MARK TURGEON: What a tough kid. The first play of the game he ran the play wrong and I was like, oh, no. And up until game time, we thought DeAndre was going to play. I will

get back to Sloan. All of a sudden we are looking around, DeAndre was not going to play. I think that kind of blindsided us, too, because he was warming up.

But Sloan to do what he did, he got himself going right before halftime. He almost had a triple-double tonight, nine assists, nine rebounds and 12 points. You could tell he was fatigued. Two nights ago he didn't sleep at all because the call came and his mom wanted to see him one last time and his blood-shot eyes the next morning from crying and everything else.

Last night he didn't get any sleep either and had he to get up here and catch a flight here. To do what he did, you know, we know how tough he is because we're around him every day and you see him. But I couldn't have done what that kid did today. It was pretty special. You know -- I know his mom was really proud of him before she passed, and obviously if she is looking down tonight, she's really proud of him. Not only the way he plays but he is just a great kid, too.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you. Congratulations. Good luck tomorrow.

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