

March 16, 2008



KANSAS JAYHAWKS

CHARLIE FISS: We're joined now by the Kansas Jayhawks, Coach Bill Self and his two student athletes, Mario Chalmers and Brandon Rush.

Coach, we will come to you first with your assessment of today's victory.

COACH BILL SELF: Very briefly -- because you could talk a long time about that game -- that was one of the best games I have ever been a part of. I thought we played great. I thought Texas played great. It was a game of runs and there were some players out there making plays and these two guys to my right were absolutely fabulous.

Q. Do you feel like Sherron is kind of the unsung hero this game? He makes a couple of big plays in about the last minute and a half that help you to seal this.

BRANDON RUSH: Yeah, I think so. I think Sherron was a big key to our win tonight. He made plays for himself and for us by dishing out for open 3s. Yeah, I think he was our unsung hero.

Q. Can you just talk about just the way you both were shooting. This was a hard-fought physical game, a game of runs, an opponent you knew all too well and, yet, you were on fire from the three-point line and, Brandon, you were making great plays. Can you just talk about, was this a game that brought another level out of you?

MARIO CHALMERS: Yeah, I think so. Yesterday Brandon stepped up big for us. I mean, tonight everybody stepped up. We were talking about it yesterday, that we were going to need a big game from everybody and I think everybody continued to step up today.

BRANDON RUSH: Yeah, I think the shooting tonight was pretty amazing. He went 8-12 and I went 6-9. And everybody stepped up and played pretty good.

Q. First half was very much an up-pace, uptempo again, second half much more of a defensive struggle. What was different?

BRANDON RUSH: We wanted to slow them down and not let them get the open looks and make them work for their points. We beat them on rebounding and that was a key for our win (smiling).

Q. Just wondering about the competition of this game today. It seemed like one -- it was highly competitive games you have played, the one in Texas was right there. Just the competition with you and Texas two of the best teams obviously in the country.

MARIO CHALMERS: Yeah, I mean, we faced Texas a lot at these times. We face them three in the row for the Big 12 championship. We knew how they played, they knew how we played, we were both two fast-paced teams. We just wanted to slow them down a little bit and we were able to do that.

Q. Brandon, you have taken some heat for not staying aggressively notably from that guy on your left and some other people. Was it particularly satisfying to come up so big and stay so aggressive?

BRANDON RUSH: Yes, my main goal tonight was to stay aggressive, look for my shot and look for other people to get open and it was about winning. That's about it, staying aggressive.

CHARLIE FISS: We'll let you return to the locker room.

Q. Coach Self, there was a lot of discussion when the Texas guys were in here about fatigue and the disadvantage of playing three tough games over three days. I wanted to ask you about maybe the advantages as you are getting ready to go into the NCAA of having played some really good games against some really tough teams three days in a row like you

have.

COACH BILL SELF: Well, I think it is good for us. We desperately needed this tournament because, you know, we really haven't played that many close games in the league. We won one game in the league that wasn't double figures so we needed this. The Nebraska game was perfect for us. They whipped us the first half and made us play from behind. A&M took us to the last minute obviously, two-point game with a minute left and we had to play great to win. And then tonight, that's as good a team -- we can play -- I don't know. I know there is other great teams out there, but the way Texas played today, I don't know if there is any teams better than Texas.

All we did was just match each other. It wasn't a 10-point game. That game -- if we played three more minutes they may have gone on another 11-0 run because it was a game of runs. They go on runs, they go on a 18-3 run, a 11-0 run. We were up eight. And the players were just making plays. We have great respect for their players and their staff and I thought it was just a well-played classic game with guys making some unbelievable plays.

Q. I will ask you about the difference in the two halves and specifically did you address anything specifically about that at halftime?

COACH BILL SELF: It is pretty corny but at halftime I told the team in front of Danny, I said that's probably about as good a half of basketball played in Kansas City since the '88 championship basketball game. I said, "What happened the second game?" He said the game slowed down and we guarded.

I told the team we got to make a conscious effort to guard better because in a horse contest, I don't know if you want to get in one of those with Abrams and Augustin the way they shot it the first half and the way that obviously James and Mason played.

I mean, Mario and Brandon carried us but you just wonder, can you keep doing it?

We defended and rebounded the ball much better the second half and played about as complete a game as we played to be honest with you.

Second half last night against A&M and today was about as well as we've played over a long stretch.

Q. Brandon talked about Sherron's ability to distribute the ball. Could you talk about Sherron's rebounding and his foul shooting, especially there within the last couple of minutes.

COACH BILL SELF: Well, I tell you this, you are the only one that has ever asked me about his rebounding. So I guess he got five tonight, so I guess that's five more than he usually gets.

You know, he's tough. He's tough and he has been a big difference in our team. He adds a different element to our team. We're going to play those four guards about the same amount of minutes, but it was hard to take Mario and Brandon out today. They were on a roll. To be honest with you, Mario -- I mean, Sherron got off to a rough start, didn't play that well early. But really made some key plays down the stretch.

Q. Quite a few people talked about that first half, comparing it to the '88 game. What does it mean to have Danny there to present that to those guys?

COACH BILL SELF: I told Danny before tip-off, I said, good, gosh, you get bigger ovations than the players do still around here when they introduced him. (Smiling).

But, you know, I don't think there was one performer in the game, maybe D.J., the first half and maybe Mario, that would rival what Danny did individually in that game. You know, I think back to that game, that was as well-played as a game could be. And here we shoot lights out, they only have two turnovers the first half. That he just had four turnovers for the game. It wasn't because we weren't trying, they just do a good job taking care of the ball.

It was a very well-played game that obviously lost some pace the second half which always happens or usually happens. And then we just had some guys step up and make unbelievable plays when we were down four. If I am not mistaken we were down four under 7 time out -- or under 8 time out, and then from that point forward, guys kept making play after play.

CHARLIE FISS: Thank you, Coach. Congratulations.

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