

March 16, 2008



TEXAS LONGHORNS

CHARLIE FISS: Joined now by Coach Rick Barnes from Texas. Coach your thoughts on tonight's game?

COACH RICK BARNES: Great college game. Both teams really went at it, played really, really hard. Congratulations to Kansas. Really proud of the effort that our guys put forth up here the last three days and we've got certainly nothing to be disappointed about.

We're disappointed. I mean, there is no doubt we're disappointed because we like to think every time we go out, we like to win even though we know that's not going to happen. But I'm really -- I'm proud of our team because they came into a home environment today and hung around. That's what we wanted to do. We wanted to have a chance with 4:00 to go in the game. We had that chance. Couple turnovers hurt us there at the end, but they made free throws when they had to.

Again, congratulations to Kansas. And I'm sure a great game for fans to watch.

Q. How much do you feel like Kansas's back court depth wore you guys out in the second half?

COACH RICK BARNES: I don't think they wore us out. I think two days wore us out.

I mean, we're not set up. D.J. played 40 minutes. I didn't want to do that. But I don't think that -- but, you know, he's a great player. D.J., I can't say enough about him. I mean, I think today he showed why he is what he is and certainly one of the best players in the country.

But they shot the ball well. We shot it well, too. I mean, we were right where we needed to be. I don't think we were worn out. I think we made a couple decisions.

We didn't quite execute what we needed to on that one out-of-bounds play. If we do that, I think things tighten up and I felt all along if we

could keep it close in the last minute, the crowd could work against them.

But, you know, I think these guys are tired but I don't think we were worn out by Kansas' players.

CHARLIE FISS: We're joined by our Texas student athletes, D.J. Augustin and Justin Mason.

Q. Were you surprised at that the officials let you play as much as they did, especially in the first half?

D.J. AUGUSTIN: I mean, you got to be prepared for that. You know, the officials, they're going to call some calls and you just got to play through it no matter what. That's what we did and that's what we got to do throughout the rest of the year.

Q. D.J., can you talk about that second half, what they did to limit you after the explosive first half?

D.J. AUGUSTIN: I think they did a great job playing team defense on our whole team, not just me. We didn't come out with the same intensity we did in the first half, and we just got to play through it next time.

Q. Justin, would you talk about how difficult it is to defend those guys, Rush, Chalmers, Collins, it seems like they all hit big shots again and again today.

JUSTIN MASON: It's hard to guard them. They execute their offense well and all of those guys can score. They're great guards, some of the best guards in the country. It is just we had to -- we didn't execute as good on the defensive end and they made us pay for it.

Q. D.J., they're about as good as it gets as far as turning your missed shots, turnover into a fast-break three-point shot.

D.J. AUGUSTIN: Yeah, we knew that going into the game. We knew not to turn the ball over because they capitalize on turnovers and

that's what they do and that's what they thrive on so we tried to limit our turnovers. And I think we did a pretty good job at that.

Q. Justin, going into the game, was there a plan to get you more involved or did that just kind of happen?

JUSTIN MASON: No, there wasn't a plan to get me involved. I am always a threat on the offensive end. Coach wants me to be more aggressive in this tournament. I decided to be a little bit more aggressive to help my team out. And I would just take my open shots when I had them.

Q. I wonder if you could talk about how much the toll of the last two days played on you guys in the last ten minutes of the game.

D.J. AUGUSTIN: It had been tough, but it's not an excuse. All the teams have been playing a lot lately, and we just came out and tried to play hard every night we played. And that's the main thing. We don't want to make any excuses. We played hard tonight and we left it out on the court.

Q. D.J., would you talk about in general what a great series this has become.

D.J. AUGUSTIN: It has become a great series. Kansas is a great team. Every time we play them, they give us a tough battle and we try to do the same and it is a great game between both teams and they have a great team.

Q. We've talked about the fatigue factor and maybe some of the negative things that come out -- that play into this tournament. Talk about playing a couple of very tough games against some very good teams and how you think that might be a positive in getting y'all prepared for playing very good teams in the tournament in the next couple of weeks.

JUSTIN MASON: I think it will be a positive for us facing different styles of play in back-to-back games against a lot of good teams in the Big 12. It could be good for us because we're going to face a lot of different styles in the NCAA tournament. I don't think the fatigue was a factor too much in the tournament. We just got to get home and get some rest and be ready for the NCAA.

CHARLIE FISS: Thank you for coming. Questions a little bit longer for Coach.

Q. Rick, can you talk about Chalmers and what he meant to them today.

COACH RICK BARNES: Well, I'm listening to y'all's questions, again, understand when you talk about Kansas and Texas, this was a two-possession game today. Inasmuch as I can brag about their guys, I could sit here and talk about how hard we were to guard, too.

But Kansas and Texas, I said going in, I said it back, I thought that Kansas is the best team we've played all year. I believe that. But I also know that when I say that, that we're right there and today's game was no different. I mean, it was -- we were in a position, but they shot the ball really, really well.

I will tell you this. I don't think 15 3s beat us. I think we got beat with not rebounding the ball at crucial times. I think that we gave up too much dribble penetration at times. But Tennessee made 16 3s and I don't -- again, I don't believe 15 beat us today.

I looked at where we were. We made 12. It goes back to we were in a position to win the game and we just didn't quite get it done in those last couple minutes there.

Again, I can't say anything -- I think Kansas is a great basketball team. I think Bill has done a great job with this team. They are very unselfish. They are willing to make the extra pass to get -- turn down a good shot to get a better one. They got an inside presence. That's what we needed today. We had to work a lot harder, it seemed like, to score. But we needed to have some things with back to the basket and we didn't really get any of that today, and we need that.

But I mean -- and I think D.J. said it, they're an excellent defensive team. They've got different parts. Sherron Collins comes in, he is a game-changer. I love their guards, Russell Robinson and the way he guards. I mean, I can sit here and talk about them all day long. I like their team a lot because they're a team.

Q. Coach, you talked about giving up dribble penetration. How effective would you say your guys were at dribble penetration on the offensive end?

COACH RICK BARNES: Well, we needed to do that more at the end. I mean, we needed to get to the free-throw line and we didn't. That's what we needed out of a couple of those possessions at the end because they had

extended their defense and we needed to go in and put more pressure on the basket.

But, you know, we played more zone than we wanted to for a couple reasons. I mean, obviously we were trying to protect a few guys with fouls. And I never once thought we would win this game in the first 20 minutes. We played the whole game even when they were making the 3s in the first half, we said, "hey, let's just hang around right here." We get down to 4:00. With that said, we would have come up with a couple of offensive rebounds. Again, I think it could have changed maybe the way the game was being felt by the players.

But we weren't able to do that, and give them credit for running those down.

Q. What did you feel like they did to D.J. in the second half to kind of slow him down some?

COACH RICK BARNES: Well, they got more aggressive on the ball screens. They definitely started getting out, trying to, you know, get him to give it up. They went out, tried -- again, I'm not sure they were double teaming as much as they were trying to extend out. He is an awfully hard guy to double team.

You know, you look at what he did, I mean, he shot the ball really well in the first half. And look at his line, he had 20 points, 9 assists and 1 turnover. I'm not sure -- you go back and look at it -- they did anything. I am not sure he is going to score as many points in the second half as he did in the first half. He was working hard to get other guys involved.

I mean, he has played 40 minutes the entire time he was up here. There is no doubt in my mind he is the best player in this league for what he means to our team. I do think that he got tired, I do. And I was worried about that coming in. That's why we played zone as much as we could to try to help him through it. We had hoped to try to really get him a rest for a minute or two, but he's played so much, I'm not sure that would be that big a difference to him.

Again, I mean, he had an incredible day today. I don't think any of us thought he was going to come out and continue to score the way he did in the first half. It is hard to do, but that's not what he's looking to do.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports.



visit our archives at asapsports.com