

March 10, 2011



Texas – 74
Oklahoma – 54

An Interview With:

**TEXAS
COACH RICK BARNES
JORDAN HAMILTON
JAI LUCAS
TRISTAN THOMPSON**

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by the Texas Longhorns, Coach Rick Barnes and student-athletes Jordan Hamilton, Jai Lucas and Tristan Thompson. Coach, an opening statement.

COACH BARNES: Thank you. And a really good team win for us. I thought our bench was terrific tonight. I thought those guys really, every one of them, came in and did exactly what we would ask them to do.

And first half was really, really, really good half for us, and bogged down a little bit in the second half, but yet really -- just a really good team win for us.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Jordan, do you feel like you were all the way there, back to where you were up until two weeks ago where you were scoring, rebounding, defending, the whole thing?

JORDAN HAMILTON: I think we had a chance to really get going as far as getting some rest this past week, and I had some days off and we had a chance to go on and practice and execute and listen to what Coach has been saying, and I think we did it tonight.

Q. Tristan and Jai, how important was it when you built the 23-point first half lead to sustain it in the second half and not let the team come back, let OU come back?

TRISTAN THOMPSON: Halftime coming in Coach Barnes let us know we're up by 23 but doesn't mean we stop playing basketball. We come up in the second half and still keep the intensity up and still do what we do because some situations in the past, you know, you guys know the result and whatnot, but we knew today's game we wanted to keep the pressure on and try to extend the lead if possible.

JAI LUCAS: Playing with a lead is always hard, because you have to worry about so much stuff, but we just have to find a way to keep playing as if the score is 0-0 and not worry about the little things that come with having the lead.

Q. Jai, can you talk about first the Baylor game now in this game you're playing some more minutes and your production on the floor?

JAI LUCAS: It's just Coach putting me out there, and I know my role and what I'm supposed to do coming in, coming off the bench, just coming in and run to the team and shoot my shots when they come.

Not trying to do nothing I can't do and just do everything I can to help the team win.

Q. Jordan, other than winning and going to the next game, what do you feel like you all got out of this game?

JORDAN HAMILTON: Oklahoma, I think they're a good team. And they definitely play hard. Cade Davis I think is a great player.

And they came and they played us hard, and I think we executed most definitely in the first half, and then second half we just have to keep our foot on the pedal. And I think once we do that, you know, we can continue to move on.

Q. Jai, have you done some extra work or anything changing your shot? It's a little higher.

JAI LUCAS: No, not really, just finding a way to get my rhythm. More of a rhythm guy than just somebody who can just come off the bench and score. Just getting in the flow of the game quicker has been something that I've really worked on.

And I've always continued to do my work behind the scenes. So I knew sooner or later it would fall.

Q. Jordan, what does Jai add when he comes into the game? Seems like he kind of injects energy.

JORDAN HAMILTON: He's definitely a leader of this team. He's poised. He finds open guys and he runs the offense. And that's what Coach wants him to do. And I think he does the best job as far as being on the team. So that's what he brings.

Q. Tristan, what does Jai add when he comes in?

TRISTAN THOMPSON: He's a leader on the court, one of the veteran guys in big games, been through ups and downs, whatnot. When he comes into the games, he calms everyone down. It's almost like Coach Barnes is on the court playing with us. He brings that whole coaching aspect of the game to us.

Q. Does this remind you of when you guys were really rolling in Big 12 play and ran off with 11 straight wins? Did it feel like the same feeling tonight?

JAI LUCAS: For me, you know, I feel like we just came out -- we wanted to play. It seems like we've been in Kansas City forever locked up in the hotel. So just getting a chance to play basketball was something exciting for us. We know it's a new part of the season being in the postseason with the Big 12 Tournament. I think that just added a whole new aspect and gave us a little more energy than coming down the stretch. So I feel good where we are right now.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Questions for Coach.

Q. Did you lock them up in the hotel this week? And just talk about your team's focus tonight.

COACH BARNES: We really didn't. What we try to do obviously is get on as much of a routine right now that we would be in next week.

But, you know, after the last game Saturday, we did take some time off and let some guys get some rest. We really tried to concentrate the last couple of days that we have worked in terms of execution, really trying to do that.

And defensively I thought there were some good things tonight. And they do create some matchup problems, like the small lineup. But I thought Alexis Wangmene really did a good job. First time all year he had to really switch out and guard a perimeter player. And because we wanted to keep somebody obviously close to Cade Davis.

But I do think the focus was good. And I thought the guys -- I told them after the Baylor game I thought it was the best game we played all year in terms of guys playing their roles, and I thought tonight guys did that. I thought they played their role, and we got great play from the bench.

You look down -- you look at J'Covan Brown's 11 points, five assists and one turnover. And 18 assists. That's kind of where we were in the year. We were playing well. We had a couple of turnovers we shouldn't have, some charging fouls. But overall I thought that we were pretty good.

Q. Last two games you put Lucas in earlier. What were you looking for? What do you think --

COACH BARNES: Execution. Execution. I think he does it. And certainly there's games where it's difficult for Dogus how people are going to guard him. But Jai has worked, he stayed with it. He comes in. And, again, we've got to execute. That's what we got away from. We've got to do that obviously.

And if teams choose to back off Dogus a little bit, which they didn't do a lot of that tonight, but Dogus, if you think back to the game, he was dribble, dribble, dribble, and breaks rhythm and we've got to move the ball.

But we've said all year, the strength of our team is in the numbers. And we've got to continue to -- each guy has to play his role and go from there.

Q. You know sports teams like to say they have a swagger about them and that you

guys were crushing people when you won 11 straight. Do you feel like that the Baylor game and this game the team has that same feeling?

COACH BARNES: You know what, I think whatever word you want to put on it, I think the two things that we talked about from the beginning of the year was defense, that we really want to play defense. We really wanted to rebound and get back to the last two games.

39-23 is a pretty good night there. And we got back to getting on the glass to get some extra possessions, and those two things we've talked about, moving the ball, the assists were up, I think.

So it goes back to details. And I do think the effort was there. I thought -- again, I thought we really looked to help each other for the most part tonight. And I think every game is a different game. I mean, you look at this time of year, you've got to be able to win some games some nights when you don't shoot particularly well, which we did at Baylor to close out the regular season.

And tonight we shot 50 percent. And, again, for the most part, defended pretty well.

Q. Would you call that hitting your stride? You were able to still dominate the boards, the offensive boards especially like you did at Baylor, but you also hit over 50 percent.

COACH BARNES: Earlier in the year we were grinding on people. You think about tonight, again, the one stat that jumps at me that we got away from for a while was points in the paint. We had 34, which you would obviously think we would want to go inside.

And if you think about it, Tristan again, his free throws, there could have been more. But those free throws were important in terms of putting fouls on people. And we'll take it. One stat we really want to do is if you look at it, we'd like to make more than they shoot. Tonight we didn't. I mean, they made all theirs but we made 10 of them. We just want to get to the line and really want to grind on people and get inside and play inside out, and the last two games we have done that as opposed to playing the other way.

Q. Last time y'all had such a big lead it was against Colorado that you had in the first half. What did you tell your team to maybe make sure to avoid another let-down like that?

COACH BARNES: We've had big leads this year and let it go. I could say human nature, a lot of things, but Jai said it's difficult to play the lead

sometimes. I say that, but I don't know if I believe it. I think if you play the game, if you execute, you've got to continue to attack.

It's a very fine line with momentum. You have a lead and you come out and you break rhythm, again, you can start missing some shots, and we did miss some shots around the rim the second half of this game where we got the ball where we wanted it, and that's part of the game.

Some nights they hit a couple of 3s, and you could just -- again, I will go back where I thought we weren't just quite as intense on the defensive end. I think that's where you've got to set the tone. And I think we did what we needed to do at the start of the half. But we fought our way back and ran, got out in the open court, got aggressive that way, and fed off that.

But it's a game that sometimes the ebbs and flow of it, and you just hope you can handle those when you're down. And throughout the year there's some we didn't, some we did.

But, again, by this time of year I told the guys, I mean, I wish I could make them understand every possession. But still we won the game tonight against a team that all year long -- this team's worked hard. I think that Jeff's done a great job getting them to execute. So it really was a good win for us tonight. It really was.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.

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