

Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Friday, March 9, 2018

Chris Beard

Justin Gray

Texas Tech Red Raiders

West Virginia - 66, Texas Tech - 63

THE MODERATOR: We are ready to begin with the Red Raiders of Texas Tech and Coach Chris Beard and his student-athlete is Justin Gray. Coach, your thoughts on tonight's game?

CHRIS BEARD: I just want to congratulate West Virginia on a good, hard-fought win. You know, we got a lot of respect for Coach Huggins and their staff. From our standpoint, we felt like it was an ugly game. But West Virginia makes you play ugly with their toughness and physicality and the way they throw the ball inside. So give them the credit.

It's a disappointing loss for us because it's a weird stat sheet. We make more field goals, we outrebound them, we have a low turnover game against their press on a one-day prep, but we don't win the game. So two things come to mind, free throw line got us tonight. But that's basketball. Nobody shoots more free throws in practice or individual workouts than we do. So you win some, you lose some with that.

But certainly disappear pointing. And then letting their best two guards, Dexter Miles and Jevon Carter get loose for that many three shots. There has to be some defensive mistakes there that we have to own. So, again, congratulation West Virginia on a good game. I feel like in a lot of ways we ran out of time. We really didn't get beat, so hopefully we will be on the better end of this in the national tournament.

Q. Justin, you guys feel like there's an opportunity to reset a bit here after the way the season has wound down? Now you're going to stop playing these teams from your conference at least for a couple games?

JUSTIN GRAY: Yeah, definitely a reset, learn from our mistakes, watch film, correct our mistakes, just become better. Obviously, it didn't end the way we wanted it to, made a lot of mistakes throughout the game, but played good enough to win, just didn't execute up with one or two things from the scouting report.



But in the tournament every team is legitimate and every team is wanting to win the National Championship. So it's not like we're going to be like we're going to look down on a team because they're not from the 12, but every team has an opportunity to win and a chance to win on any given day. So we just got to make sure we're locked in and get ready for whoever we face.

THE MODERATOR: Justin, thank you for coming. Good luck next week in the NCAA Tournament. Questions for Coach?

Q. Chris, a lot of great guards in this league. You've got some. The guard match-up tomorrow with Carter and Devonte' and when you have guys like that what that means for this time of year?

CHRIS BEARD: I think in a lot of ways college basketball is a guards game. If you get a big they can play special and consistent you've got a really good team. That's why a lot of teams in the Big 12 separate certainly. Tonight's game I thought we played well enough to win, but you've got to give West Virginia credit, Miles and Carter, they shoot like that they'll walk to the Sweet 16. When you make those 3-point shots with Konate and those guys inside. I think tomorrow's game will be another test to that, Graham versus Carter, two of the best guards in college basketball.

Q. With some of the injuries you had this year, how do you think the selection committee will view your resume?

CHRIS BEARD: I don't know. I try to control what I control. I know this: One year ago we were at this tournament and our

Championship.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you very much.
Good luck next week.

Q. Coach, you know this isn't the outcome you wanted, but what did you see from Zhaire and Culver that they went out and played against some of the toughest competition and did really well?

CHRIS BEARD: Yeah, basically they have played so many minutes this year. They're not freshmen anymore. They're two experienced players with a lot of basketball under them. I've been really impressed with the way they haven't hit a wall. A lot of great freshmen around the country. You play at this kind of level and these kinds of minutes, but these two guys have persevered. You gotta give our strength coach John Reilly a lot of that credit, our coaching staff, those two guys, their high school coaches. These guys came in to play college basketball, but I've been impressed with those guys all year long mostly because of the consistency and they really haven't hit a wall. They're so excited to be playing in March. It's like the first day of practice are for those young guys.

Q. Coach, tough loss, but I guess the two shots that you got with Keenan obviously getting the shot at the end and then often Niem Stevenson with the half-court shot I know it was more difficult. But are those the two things that you were looking at what you were talking about things that could have happened?

CHRIS BEARD: That's what keeps coaches up at night. Do you call timeout? Do you not? Things like that. But what I've always believed in my career it's a players' game and if we've got good players on the court I'm going to let them decide the game. You worry about calling a timeout against a Coach Huggins team? Can you get the ball back in? Will he put different players in? We've won a lot of games letting the players make the plays.

But certainly those are the things that will keep me up tonight. We were trying to call a timeout. It fell out of bounds. I don't know if they didn't hear it or what, but that's just basketball.

Q. Injuries kind of knocked you guys off your stride a little bit. Do you feel like you're back on track at the right time of year?

CHRIS BEARD: Yeah, we're as healthy as we can be. You know, you take the hand that's dealt to you. No excuses or no complaints. It's so great to have Zach Smith out there after all the adversity. Keenan is trying as hard as he possibly can and we look forward to some days rest here. And hopefully we will be as strong as we possibly can in the first round of the tournament. It's a good question. I respect it. I think we're really going to benefit from a few days rest here.

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Bob Huggins Daxter Miles, Jr. Jevon Carter West Virginia Mountaineers

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THE MODERATOR: We are now joined by the Mountaineers of West Virginia, Coach Bob Huggins and his two student-athletes are Jevon Carter and Daxter Miles, Junior.

Q. Jevon, the match-up with Devonte' and you guys going up against each other point guard to point guard?

JEVON CARTER: It ain't about that. It is West Virginia versus Kansas tomorrow. It is five guys on that court at one time. I hate when y'all try to make it a one-on-one match-up. It's never about that. It's 5 guys out there on the floor at a time. It's West Virginia against Kansas.

Q. Since both of you are seniors, this is your third straight title game. What does this mean it for each of you for this to be your last shot at it?

JEVON CARTER: It means a lot. We want to go out with a bang. It's our last year. If we win tomorrow, we can hang a banner. It's everything we dreamed of. We're going to give it our all tomorrow night and we're going to see what happens.

DAXTER MILES, JR.: It means everything at this point. Just gotta be ready to play.

Q. Jevon, having said what you did about it not being a one-on-one match-up, you guys went five-on-five against them in Lawrence a few weeks ago and had a disappointing result. Any motivation from that that carries into tomorrow?

JEVON CARTER: I guess you could say that. It's championship. That's all the motivation we need. It's another game, another win we can get. That's all the motivation we need. It's not about what happened in the past; it's about tomorrow. We're going to do our best. We're going to come to fight and we're going to see what happens.

THE MODERATOR: Guys, thank you. Congratulations



on your victory. Questions for Coach Huggins?

Q. You got another shot at Kansas. What can your team do differently to get a different result?

BOB HUGGINS: Score more points than them. I don't know. We have played pretty well. They have played pretty well. It's been two pretty well-played games. I don't know. Make another shot, maybe, get a free throw, something.

Q. You guys didn't get as many steals as you usually do but were able to get offense going in the second half. Does it seem like the team has been more comfortable being able to get out of half-court and not relying as much on the turnovers that you guys rely on?

BOB HUGGINS: When you play three games in three days it's hard to play the way we play three days like that, but it's also hard for them to play against it. We just backed it off because we wanted to guard in the half-court and try to make 'em run some clock. Not put them at the foul line.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Coach.