

Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Saturday, March 16, 2019



Steve Prohm Michael Jacobson Lindell Wigginton Marial Shayok Iowa State Cyclones

Iowa State 78, Kansas 66

THE MODERATOR: We are not joined now by the champions of the Big 12 Conference, the Cyclones of Iowa State, head coach Steve Prohm and three members of the All-Tournament team, Michael Jacobson, Lindell Wigginton and the Most Valuable Player, Marial Shayok. Coach, congratulations.

STEVE PROHM: Thanks. This is a special night. Kansas is obviously a tremendous program and, you know, you can talk about them and Coach Self forever. They were resilient. They kept coming back and making runs, but our guys answered the bell and we came down here and we won each game in different ways. We showed our toughness and we showed our togetherness. For me, personally, it's cool and I said this in the locker room, it's cool to have Lindell up here right now, just through all the ups and downs really me and him have gone through together this year and he's gone through with the injury and two guys that sat out last year and worked and were resilient. Mike to get 16 rebounds in the semifinal and Marial to be a rock all season long. But Nick vowed to never lose a game here in his two years in this conference tournament, and you can go down the line. George stepping in. The one line I heard when I was going through the handshake line last week at home when Texas Tech won the regular season Championship, Davide Moretti told one of the coaches, hey, we're connected for life now. That's the thing I talked to these guys about. When you do something special and you win a championship you've got a connection for the rest of your life.

Hopefully this is just step one. We will enjoy this for a while and then when we figure out where we're going for the tournament we will get to business on that. Proud of the guys and proud of what they've shown in their character this weekend.

Q. Marial, you were voted the Most Outstanding Player. In your words, how would you sum up your play in helping to contribute to this championship?

MARIAL SHAYOK: I thought I played all right. Today I didn't think I played my best, but I think it was our best team win of the year just because it was gritty and everyone stepped up. So it was great to have Lindell play well. Mike, his play has been underrated this tournament, having 16 boards like Coach said and those big rebounds that we needed yesterday and being solid All Tournament. Lindell, accepting his role and coming in and bringing that spark and playing to his capabilities. Everyone played a huge part. MVP could have went to anyone, but I'm just glad we won the Chip.

Q. Lindell, Marial and Michael, Coach called timeout with 2:53 left when Kansas got it within 9. What days do you feel like that timeout energize you all to where you were able to keep the momentum and keep the ball game from swinging?

MICHAEL JACOBSON: Yeah, I think the biggest thing we wanted to focus on was on the defense end. We wanted to keep getting stops. We knew if we could get a couple more stops and some good offense we could have a chance to win the game. We definitely didn't want to let them get any closer than that, because like Coach said, Kansas is a great team and they never gave up tonight and we wanted to keep them at an arm's distance and try and run another minute or so off the clock and we knew we would have a good shot if we could keep it there.

MARIAL SHAYOK: Like Mike said, it wasn't the prettiest win. But it was a collective win. I'm proud of my guys. We gotta ride this wave until the tournament and every time I tell these guys after we leave the locker room I will take us over anybody and a lot of guys playing in the tournament for the first time. Myself getting back to the tournament is going to be a great time.

LINDELL WIGGINTON: We were trying to milk clock and run as much time off the clock as we could. We tried to have a big lead and not get too rushed. Like they both said, it was a great team win. I think it was our best team win. We came in and showed resilience, fight, and everybody gave it their all on the floor.

Q. This is for Michael and Marial, you both have played in conference tournaments in different conferences and we talk a lot about the atmosphere here. Especially when Iowa State plays. I'm just wondering if you can compare, Michael, what you saw here with what you had in the Big Ten; and Marial, in the ACC in terms of the atmosphere of a conference tournament?

MICHAEL JACOBSON: Second to none would be the way I describe it. The atmosphere was awesome for all three games, lots of fans for all teams came and supported. The atmosphere for tonight's championship was unbelievable as well. The Big Ten they have a good tournament as well, but I think what they do here in Kansas City is special. They keep it here and near. They have a ton of success with it, and I just had a lot of fun.

MARIAL SHAYOK: Like Mike said, I think it's the best tournament in the country because of how each fan base represents their school and having the Cyclone fans travel with us all year long and they really showed up for us this week has been special. Definitely something I'll never forget.

Q. For Lindell, the difference between your freshman and sophomore years, it was a short stay here last year, rough year overall. How would you describe the differences between the two years you've had here at the Big 12 tournament?

LINDELL WIGGINTON: My first year it was frustrating because we were losing and everything, and personally I think I was having a decent season, but it was frustrating because we were losing. This season it's been up and down because I came in with an injury, came back, didn't start, come off the bench, had to embrace my role. But I felt like it was all for the good of this team. It all showed tonight with the championship we had. I just fought through everything. Obviously I was frustrated through the season, but I really just fought through everything. My coaches and my teammates kept confidence in me. They kept telling me be confident every time I step on the floor. I'm a big part of this team, and listening to them and them keeping me confident that's what they gave me, what I'm getting right now. I give credit to all my coaches and teammates.

THE MODERATOR: Guys, we will let you go back to the locker room. Great week and good luck next week, guys. Questions for Coach Prohm?

Q. Coach, going back to something Michael said about the teams being with supported. Could you talk about how Iowa State's fans traveled well and turned what has often been just another home game for KU into what actually felt like more of a

neutral site game?

STEVE PROHM: Yeah, our fan base, you know, I've been coaching for 20 years at the different levels and went to college in the SEC and this is just different, man. I've never seen anything like it. I've watched a ton of games on TV. You look at the fan bases. Our fans support us from November 6th to whenever we finish and hopefully it's late March, early April.

That's the one thing. You come here, you don't want a short stay because even my secretary, Julie, she doesn't like coming here for just one day. They're planning on coming here for three or four. That's the pressure comes from there a little bit, so you can keep all them on vacation a little bit. The fan base, the way they travel is incredible.

Tonight it was, I don't know if it was 50/50, 60/40. Two years ago against West Virginia it was probably 90/10. They make a point of being here, but it's not just for the Big 12 tournament. It's in Maui. If you saw our AD tweet about we sold the most packages for the Battle for Atlantis next year. It's when we're in Orlando for the ESPN Old Spice. It's in all the tournaments. I've never seen people travel like the way we do, but it's not just for men's basketball either. You saw it when Coach Campbell took his team to San Antonio for the Alamo Bowl. You will see it when our women's basketball team hosts first and second rounds next week. You see it with gymnastics, wrestling, volleyball. They support everything at our school and it's really cool to be a part of.

Q. Steve, the Big 12 is probably not going to have a one or two or three seed in the tournament like most years. How would you describe the preparation? I know there is typically not a lot of bottom feeding programs in this league, but how would you describe the preparation that this league has given you going into the NCAA Tournament?

STEVE PROHM: I think a ton. You can't read too much into the challenges because of the match-ups. Then you've got some teams didn't play, but you look at the SEC challenge, what we did. You look at our league and how it's rated. It's 1 or 2 rated league. It's been like that for the last five or six years. Half our league has been to the Final Four. Three or four coaches in the league are current Hall of Famers or future Hall of Famers. The venue is great. The support is great. You look at this, the way the people care about it, I think I heard Coach Weber say, we may not have the top five team in the country. But when you go through our league home and road, 18 times, that's tough. You gotta play everybody. You gotta play everybody at home. They're going to know your tendencies. You play people for a third time down here. That's why the game can get muddled up a little bit, but I think that

helps. Hopefully we get eight teams, TCU, Texas, they get in and give us eight teams as well, and we can all go and do well in the tournament. This is as good of a league as there is in the country. When you are in there as a younger coach and you listen to the Hall of Famer guys talk about how good this league is when I first got here, that's when it really resonates.

Q. Steve, you guys come here losing 5 of 6 in the regular season. Is this the best stretch of ball you've had this week? Are you playing as well as you guys can play?

STEVE PROHM: We're playing good. We're getting back to who we are and what we want to be about. We had a stretch, you know, when we got to 18-5. We had won 6 out of 7, 7 out of 9, where, you know, we got up to, you know, with the first NCAA poll we were 13th. Then for whatever reason, three weeks, we struggled, defensively and sharing the ball. We will never know for sure why we turned. We just didn't play great, especially at West Virginia and Texas. Baylor came in outtoughed us at our place. We played well at home against Oklahoma, but it was a tough three-week stretch. We got back. We had better practices coming in here. Then it's a new season. You have a championship to play for and there are only so many opportunities you get to play for a championship. These guys responded, and now we've got to be able to handle success, tonight, we've got to not handle success once we figure out who we play in our preparation and be ready to play Thursday or Friday because whoever you play, a 4 seed or 7 seed, it's going to be somebody really good.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, we will let you go celebrate. Thank you. Congratulations.

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Bill Self

Quentin Grimes

Devon Dotson

Kansas Jayhawks

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THE MODERATOR: We are now joined by the Kansas Jayhawks, Coach Self, and his two student-athletes, Quentin Grimes and Devon Dotson. Coach, we will call on you first for your thoughts, opening statement?

BILL SELF: Well, it was a strange game. Iowa State controlled it basically from the jump, but I thought our guys played their butts off. That's about as hard as we played in a long time and competed hard and we just didn't have much to show for it, couldn't buy a basket. But we got the ball where we wanted to and didn't finish and they made a lot of baskets at the end of the clock especially down the stretch in the second half. Give them credit. They were better than us today, but by no means am I leaving here disappointed at all. I thought we had a good weekend. We competed hard today, and I saw a lot of positive things that hopefully we can take into the NCAA Tournament.

Q. Quentin and Devon, today the shooting, especially from three was off after being pretty good in the other games. What was the difference tonight?

QUENTIN GRIMES: Like Coach said, one of those nights. I felt like every shot we put up was a good shot. I don't think anybody took questionable shots. It just didn't fall tonight. Och put up some good shots. Devon got us some good shots. It was just one of those the nights we just couldn't get a basket.

Q. Quentin and Devon, going back to what Coach said about positives, what positives do you take from this?

DEVON DOTSON: I would say just the way we competed. We showed some signs where, you know, where we really wanted, you know, to win this game. But they hit some tough shots, and we were missing some of our easy shots that we usually make. It's a bad feeling, but, you know, we're on to the next game.

QUENTIN GRIMES: Like Devon said, felt like we



competed to the last second of the game. We tried coming in making that last three, nobody quit on the game, they kept playing on defense even the last 20 seconds of the game. So I felt like throughout the whole game we competed the whole entire time.

Q. Devon, could you discuss the challenges with so many freshmen playing such a big role on this team, the challenges you guys face and coming back from this kind of loss and navigating your way into the NCAA, since none of you guys have been there yet?

DEVON DOTSON: I would say there are some challenges, but in the big scheme of things, I feel like we're ready for it. And, you know, the four freshmen, we really have been prepared by the coaching staff and, you know, our teammates. So there is going to be some challenges, but I feel like we're ready are for it.

THE MODERATOR: Okay, Quentin and Devon, we will let you go back to the locker room. Thank you for coming. Great week and good luck next week. Questions now for Coach Self?

Q. Bill, you guys coming into today were tied for second in quadrant 1 wins and you scheduled a difficult non-conference. I just want to know how you think the Committee should factor that in?

BILL SELF: I don't know. We're going to be happy whatever happens. I think we could have probably helped ourselves if we won the tournament, but we didn't. So I don't think we hurt ourselves at all by playing in the final. If we were a 4 seed before, we probably are a 4 seed. I thought we had a chance to get to a 3, and hopefully we still do. It's about matchups rather than seeds once you get into the tournament anyway.

Q. Bill, you've been coaching in this league a long time. I think this will be the second time the league hasn't had a one or two seed. Talk about the challenges. Do you think the league will do as good as it usually has in the tournament, not as good?

BILL SELF: I think our league is plenty good enough to have teams in the tournament that have multiple wins. Our league is not as top heavy as what it has been in the past. To me, Texas Tech has had the best year, nothing against K-State. But I think if you include

nonconference and ranking, and I think they probably had the best year, but obviously K-State can make a run and go deep. Iowa State is the best offensive team in our league. They can go deep and Texas Tech can. There are others that are capable of doing it, too. I don't think when you look across America you look and say, there are teams that had a chance to go the Final Four out of those respective leagues. ACC is different, obviously, because they're top heavy. But most of the leagues have two or three, you know. If they get hot at the right time they can make a run, and I think that's the case with this league. Last year we had the most wins in the tournament, if I'm not mistaken, and whether that happens or not, who knows? But this league has prepared by beating up on each other and we should be ready to go have some success next week.

Q. Going back to what you said last night, Bill, you said you were expecting about 70% of the fans to be Iowa State supporters. Did it seem like it was an away game?

BILL SELF: Not at all, but they had the majority of the fans, but I don't think it was 70/30. I don't think it was that. I thought our fans hung in there and fought pretty hard. We just didn't give 'em enough to get excited about. We get it to the 9 and foul a 3-point shooter, get it to 9 and have a wide open look to cut it to 6. We just didn't make those plays that you need to make in order to put some real game pressure on 'em. I thought their crowd was great and certainly I thought our crowd tried and did their job. We just didn't give 'em enough to get excited about.

Q. Obviously, you didn't stick with David too long tonight. Was there a turning point when you realized you had to go a different direction?

BILL SELF: Well, you know, if you you're going to play big, with that team, you've got to score inside. Because they put you at such a disadvantage if you're going to play man-to-man. We knew that going in, and we didn't score inside. I thought the best way and it was the best way to play was spread it and drive it. You can say David, and David understands. If David is in the game Dedric has to drive a guard and when Horton-Tucker went out of the game that's not good match-ups for us. I made a decision we're going to play small and try it on drive it. We scored the ball so much better the second half and had a chance to score it even better if we could have converted some open looks from three.

But nothing has changed. David is still a starter, all that stuff. But they're a hard team for us to match-up with if Dedric has to guard a little guard.

Q. Coach, you talked about last week being a little

down, you know, not coming out of the league without a championship. How excited are your kids going to be pumped up. They've seen it all their lives, the tournament, now they get to play in it.

BILL SELF: I think we will be excited. I'll be honest. I'm more excited about my team after watching them play today than I have all year long. We had nothing go well, nothing, and they battled their asses off for forty minutes. Even it though it wasn't pretty, I thought we did a lot of good things. When the ball leaves your hand, if it's a good or bad shot when it leaves your hand, for both teams we both did pretty well. Their players were better than our players at making shots. That's just what it is. I don't think we defended them perfectly by any stretch, but I thought we got some good looks, too. They were better than us, make no mistake. They were better than us. But I loved how we competed for forty minutes, but there is a difference in competing and trying real hard, still, and what the young kids learned today, trying harder and harder and harder doesn't necessarily mean you're competing better, because we got tighter, the rim shrunk. You gotta be able to relax and play through those things and know if we're not making shots, hey, we gotta get inside touch here, we gotta do this. We haven't quite got that yet, but I thought there were some things that we could move forward that will help the young kids later on without question.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you so much, good luck next week.