

# Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 14, 2019

## Bruce Weber

## Barry Brown, Jr.

## Kamau Stokes

Kansas State Wildcats

Kansas State 70, TCU 61

THE MODERATOR: We are joined on stage by the Kansas State Wildcats, our head coach Bruce Weber and student-athletes Kamau Stokes and Barry Brown, Jr. Coach, congratulations. Your thoughts?

BRUCE WEBER: Just proud of the continuing to be resilient and fight. It's human nature after Saturday night to win a championship, to celebrate like that. To come back, I didn't think we had great emotion to start the game, not very good energy. I warned them, I kind of talked to them about it. But I thought the bench was really key, other people. Obviously Cartier coming in, getting us going. Levi did a nice job. Mike McGuirl, we got some stops, turned them over, got a lot of transition points.

That with the fast break points were really key and Xavier in the second half really stepped up. I thought a big offensive rebound after Kam missed the free throw, got it back to Kam, hit the three, broke their spirit a little bit and got to 10 and then we had to find a way to finish it out. So proud of these guys, the whole team. They've continued to fight and be resilient and get 25 not wins and move closer to getting a Big 12 Championship.

**Q. Kam and Barry, Levi lost minutes in the last month or two and gets put on the spot today and has a big game. How important was he in the win?**

KAMAU STOKES: He was very important. Coach talks about guys stepping up and Levi stepped up today and he gave us post presence, and defensively he did a pretty good job.

**Q. Kamau, you guys have been trailing all game and you hit one free throw and then you had the 3-pointer. It seemed like you guys just took over. Can you describe that run of taking the lead and just what you guys were able to do down the stretch to maintain that lead?**

KAMAU STOKES: Like Coach said, the plays we made



toward the end of game pretty much broke their spirit and those were momentum plays as well and we kept going for the rest of the game and got stops like we did and fast break points were a big thing, too.

**Q. And Barry, you guys have had tight games in the past. Does this team have championship DNA?**

BARRY BROWN, JR.: I think we do. We've shown that time and time again. We've shown that no matter what the score is we're down late, up late, down early, doesn't matter we're going to continue to compete, continue to fight and just try to find a way to win.

**Q. Kamau, that run we were talking about where you guys took the lead started with you going down pretty hard. What did you hurt there? How many things do you have going on right now with injuries? Is it true Coach Weber might have been yelling at you to make your free throws while you were lying down?**

KAMAU STOKES: I don't know if he was yelling at me to make my free throws, but Coach Weber always talks about toughness and I'm pretty sure he wanted me to get up. Everybody wanted me to get up. So just had to let the pain wear off a little bit. Fell on my side. Other than that I feel fine.

**Q. When you are going through that, how hard is it to lock in on, I gotta shoot a free throw now? You got a few things going on, you're wiggling your hand and limping.**

KAMAU STOKES: It's not hard. You gotta focus on the things that are important and those free throws are important, and I missed the second one. He did a great job kicking it out to me and I was opening for the 3.

**Q. Barry, about halfway through the first half you guys are in single digits scoring and I can hear Coach imploring you guys to play with more energy. What were your thoughts at that time? TCU was slowly pulling away. Did you think you were getting in trouble there?**

BARRY BROWN, JR.: We came out draw and lethargic, didn't have the right energy and mindset to compete for forty minutes. I feel like the first maybe 10, 12 minutes of the first half we kinda just coasted and thought that we just won a Big 12 championship maybe

are we were going to come in and win a game. I tried to express to the guys that it wasn't going to be easy. I had never swept TCU throughout my entire career. Last year we went 2-1, sophomore year went 1-1, and did we sweep my freshman year?

BRUCE WEBER: No, they beat us at home. Then we came back and beat 'em there.

BARRY BROWN, JR.: There you go. So I knew it wasn't to be an easy game. They're trying to get that bid into the NCAA Tournament, and they're playing with a chip on their shoulder. So they came out and punched us in the mouth. We needed to be the aggressor and we weren't. But I feel like, I don't know, we got the wet feet from out of us and just played with confidence down the stretch and end of the first half.

**Q. Both of you, what are your thoughts on playing Iowa State on Friday?**

KAMAU STOKES: You know, they're a good team. We gotta prepare for them the same way we prepare for anybody else. They gonna come out, play hard. They're fighting for a tournament championship as well, so we know they're going to come out and we gotta be ready to compete.

BARRY BROWN, JR.: I mean, like he said, they're a good team. We're really going to have to lock it into what they do and their personnel, they came into, last time and got a win. So we kinda got that sick taste in our mouth and we have to do everything possible and everything necessary in order for us to come out with a victory.

**Q. Barry, I was wondering if you could walk me through that 3-point shot by X-man when the clock was running down, gave you guys a 6 lead? What did he say? Talk about that setup?**

BARRY BROWN, JR.: Top of the key? I don't know what happened, honestly, from my point of view I was on the right wing and I saw the clock dwindling down, and I was yelling at him to shoot and I didn't know if he saw the shot clock. He pumped fake and stayed with his fundamentals and principles in his shot and he was able to make it.

**Q. For both you guys, you guys scored 22 points off turnovers. What were you able to do to make TCU make poor decisions offensively?**

BARRY BROWN, JR.: I thought we had hand pressure, being in the gap trying to make them make the extra pass. It worked for the most part. I feel like early we win the have that hand pressure and that toughness, but for about 30 minutes of the game I felt like we came out and played Kansas State defense. We pressured the ball, deflected passes, got rebounds also and got

out in transition.

KAMAU STOKES: Like Barry said, I feel like our defense intensity picked up. We were lethargic in the beginning of the game, and second half Coach Weber challenged us to defend those guys. You know, wanted to hold them under what we held them before which I think was fifty five. Fifty two. We didn't do that today because of the early start they had, but second half I felt like we were locked in defensively.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, guys. Congratulations. Questions for Coach?

**Q. Bruce, obviously toughness means a lot to you and when Kamau is down, you're assuming he's going to get up. How much does all the stuff he's been going through speak to what you're looking for and I hope I wasn't unfair?**

BRUCE WEBER: I kinda did it in jest trying to get him to smile and laugh, I got the official to laugh. He begins to laugh probably more than anybody, but I just said get your butt up and make your free throws. He's been unbelievable, the last six games, all season, his whole career. That little guy that keeps getting knocked down and keeps getting up and you gotta give him a lot of credit for sticking with it, and I don't think he had a great start. But he had that little stretch there, got fouled made the free throw, made the three, made some plays. Again, he's just doing a lot of little things. His defense is better. But he is truly played inspired basketball and he showed a lot, a lot of toughness.

**Q. Bruce, how impressive was Xavier's second half and can you walk me through the 3-pointer at the buzzer?**

BRUCE WEBER: Well, you know, we all got after Xavier. He struggled early and he didn't have great body language. One time he said he wanted to come out and I said heck with you, stay in there. I ended up taking him out; but, you know, I got after him a couple of times and the coaches got after him and he responded.

You know, the shot clock is going down. We wanted the ball in Barry's hands. I don't know what happened, but somehow it didn't get there. Xavier got it, and, you know, the thing we all say if you're going to shoot it, shoot it to make it and follow through. Barry talked about it. He stuck with it and it looked like he shoots those all the time. Really good effort. I thought his offensive rebound was huge, 19-7, 5 assists. Good game for anybody and a lot of that was in the second half, and he had the big 3 at the end of the half after we gave up the layup. The other unsung hero is Mak, 10-8 offensive rebounds, defending energy, you gotta run every time. They put you in so many binds, and I

thought him and Levi, you get 18 points from those two guys and 10 rebounds, that's pretty efficient for a big guy. We gotta find ways to make up for Dean and that means a little from different people you get Carti, Mak, Levi, and Xavier steps up and that's allowed us to win the game.

**Q. You're down 13, 10 minutes into the game, you go to that lineup at the end of the game last time, Barry, Kam, X, Carti and Mak, and how big of an impact did Carti have?**

BRUCE WEBER: He gave us energy and he is fresh. He hasn't played. He got tired. You could see him huffing and puffing. He didn't want to come out. The only thing I screwed up, they told him to not dunk and I ran that lob play. Luckily he caught it because we didn't want to take a chance. He definitely gave us a great boost of energy, 8 points, 5 rebounds, 3 assists, just got to the hoop, made some plays that helped us kinda penetrate their defense which was really key.

**Q. Coach, that same segment, you guys were down quite a bit, I think it was 12 points or 13 points and you were imploring your team to play with energy. How concerned were you that this was one of those games where you just couldn't wake 'em up at that point?**

BRUCE WEBER: I was concerned. I sat down a couple of times and you know I don't like to sit down. But I was frustrated, not only, I didn't think we had energy. We took some tough shots, some quick shots, and, you know, you gotta give 'em credit. They have been resilient. They fought back today. We talked about wearing TCU down, and I know TCU had a lot to play for. But they did play last night at 6:00 and they didn't get back to their hotel room until 9:30. I thought they played with great energy and right before half we remember able to take advantage and wear them down, made some plays, shut them down. I didn't know what the score was, but they only got 27 second half, they were up 27. You think about 54 the rest of the game. We did a much better job defensively, turned 'em over 18 times. We did that at home, the same thing, active hands, like Barry talked about, that has allowed us to get is some transition, get some easy baskets and probably got us going more than anything.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you so much. Congratulations.

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## Jamie Dixon

## Desmond Bane

## Alex Robinson

TCU Horned Frogs

Kansas State 70, TCU 61

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by the TCU Horned Frogs, head coach, Jamie Dixon, student-athletes today are Desmond Bane and Alex Robinson. Coach, we will call on you first for an opening statement.

JAMIE DIXON: Well, obviously a disappointing result for us. I mean, obviously we had the lead, played well early. Just seemed to be the more physical team, Kansas State. We weren't able to get it done, so congratulate them. We've been playing good basketball. Played well for the first half and did some good things, but eventually the turnovers got to us. Certainly proud of our guys. Proud of how we responded, how we played good basketball down the stretch, proud of 20 wins in a really tough conference, the toughest in the country. We've proved that we're a very good team. However, we've come up short against the top-10 teams, top-12 teams in the country in our league, Kansas State specifically and Texas Tech and Kansas. But otherwise we have played well. Disappointed to lose this game because I thought we had the opportunity to win it.

**Q. For both of you, Coach mentioned the turnovers. What was K-State able to do defensively to get you guys out of rhythm?**

ALEX ROBINSON: They do a really good job of rotating and playing the passing lane. I felt like they did a pretty good job of that.

**Q. Do you have anything to add?**

DESMOND BANE: Pretty much that's it.

**Q. For both you guys, what allowed you to get back after I think they pushed it back out to 9, but you cut it back down to 5 or 3 with a couple minutes left to go?**

DESMOND BANE: Just our resilience and fight. We got a lot of fight in us. I knew there was nobody quitting when they went on that run. We have been preaching stick together and stay together and that's



what we did. We were able to get some stops and make a few plays on the offensive end to cut down on the lead.

**Q. How stressful is the next three days going to be, whether or not you guys make the NCAA Tournament, and do you guys feel like you've done enough?**

DESMOND BANE: I mean, it is what it is. But I feel like we've definitely done enough. We got 20 wins in the best league in the country. That's really hard to do. Like Coach said, 7 of our 11 losses came to top-12 teams in the country, others on the road. So I feel like we have no real bad losses. So playing in this league and winning 20 games I feel like we should be, we're deserving of a tournament bid.

ALEX ROBINSON: Just going off what Desmond said, we have 20 wins. We're playing in the best conference in the country. We don't have any bad losses. I definitely think we deserve to be in the Big Dance.

THE MODERATOR: Okay, guys, we will let you go back to the locker room. Thank you. We will go to questions for Coach Dixon now.

**Q. Coach, when they were making that 17-2 run in the second half to take the lead and you know, the free throw bounces their way, they kick it out for a three. At that point, how do you try and slow down their momentum?**

JAMIE DIXON: We were trying to slow it down before, we played well, did some good things. Eventually the turnovers got to us and they got some transition baskets, but we were emphasizing the rebounding and the numbers were gradually going back their way. Those two things were the obvious statistics that stood out.

They just seemed to get more physical, more aggressive on our drives, on our penetration, and, you know, they were able to keep us from getting direct line to the basket. Then they hit a couple of shots and obviously that can kill you. A 3 after a missed free throw can really hurt. So, you know, but the turnovers by and large are eventually going to catch up to you and that's where we got a lot of their baskets. In the half-court I thought we defended well, but live ball turnovers can be baskets the other way in most

situations. They certainly got us in that area.

**Q. Coach, you, Desmond and Alex all mentioned this is the toughest league in the conference. Is it the double Round Robin. What is it about this Big 12, you obviously used to coach in the Big East. What makes this conference tough?**

JAMIE DIXON: I think the bottom teams are as tough as the other bottom teams, top to bottom and that's what it gets down to when you talk about the NCAA Tournament, you get no easy wins. And then you play everybody twice. We have seven losses versus Kansas State, Texas Tech and Kansas, games we were in and had chances and opportunities. You don't get the unbalanced schedule. You get maybe one of those teams once and maybe get 'em four total and we've got seven losses against those teams and this is a neutral game. You lose on the road to them, you feel like you could get a home win out of it. But we didn't.

That's the challenge. Those are very good teams and we had some situations where we weren't playing with obviously some number situations. But you've got to find the way. But we did a lot of other good things too, obviously Iowa State is highly ranked and we got two wins against them. But those seven losses, pretty much everybody in the country is going to lose to those teams.

**Q. Coach, how much does the fatigue in a seven-man rotation factor into this second half decline?**

JAMIE DIXON: Again, you knew they were going to make a run. They got more physical and more aggressive. I don't know that fatigue was it. Desmond not playing a lot in the first half, but then playing with three in the second half. You don't want those things to happen and against them we've been in foul trouble pretty much every game, and it amazes me. But, you know, we've got to figure that out. They're a physical team, but yet they play very good defense at the same time. Very good at guarding the dribble. Very strong at the end of finishes, but I felt like we were fine with that.

We were able to play guys 20 minutes or so, everybody. I thought that would balance it out, but again, I don't think it was a fatigue thing. I just think they just got more physical at the end and we get Desmond with three right away in the second half and it changes a lot of things.

**Q. Jamie, you guys have won 2 of your last 3. If you get in, do you feel like you can make some noise?**

JAMIE DIXON: I do feel like we've been playing well. I went through the game last night and watched it and I thought we played, and I told our players that we played really 74 minutes, I said 70 after the game, of

really good basketball. Then I switched it to about 74 because we had a 6-minute spell against Oklahoma State where they seemed to be getting some second shots and that was a turning point. I guess you could say we played 20 good minutes here. They made the big plays. At Texas, seemed like we made those shots at the end of the clock, you know. They get et three at the end of the half after we score. That's momentum even though we've got the lead. Obviously they get the three at the end and it's a 3-point game, shot fake shot. So they kinda made some big shots. They got the guys scramble play at the end of the first of half. The guy steps out-of-bounds, gets a layup, you know what I mean? They made some plays at the end of the clock. But give 'em credit. The guys that made it, the shots, were Sneed and he's an experienced guy along with those other seniors. I know he's a junior, but he's been playing all the way through, and to me he's a big factor of the team. He seems to be the toughest, most physical guy they have among a bunch of tough, physical guys. He made those big shots. I thought those two threes were the ones that got us, down a 3-point game. He shot fake shots and gets a three on it, and the end of the half was a devastating three. You know, those are plays where you think you're playing pretty good defense and you end up giving those up for 6 points. That's really the difference when you can get it, get down to it.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, we'll let you go. Thank you for coming.