

Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 9, 2017

Bill Self

Landen Lucas

Devonte Graham

Kansas

TCU - 85, Kansas - 82

THE MODERATOR: We are now joined by Kansas. Coach?

BILL SELF: Obviously we are disappointed that we weren't able to advance, but give TCU credit. I thought they played well, especially after getting behind 12 or so relatively early and they battled back and finished the half right. That was where they won the game, was the last three and a half minutes of the first half and played very well. We tried, but we just didn't quite have it today. But tip the cap to them because I thought they played very well.

Q. Guys, you've played without key players before but not to have Josh in this game, what difference was that for you guys and do you feel TCU took advantage of that?

LANDEN LUCAS: I think we always had the expectation to step up and replace guys when we aren't our full team, but with Josh, in his case, I think, he's helpful because he's so versatile and the way we have been playing with four guards, having somebody who is capable of having some size and stuff inside has helped. But, you know, I think guys for the most part stepped up a little bit. TCU did a good job reading some things and going inside some, but, you know, we are disappointed that we didn't step up better in the absence of Josh.

Q. Devonté, we know about the battle-tested games you have won of late. At any point in your mind did you think you were about to turn it on and step it up another gear and pull it out?

DEVONTÉ GRAHAM: Definitely thought we were going to make a little run, and come back and take the lead and stuff like that, but I think we kind of waited too late to kind of wake up and get aggressive and stuff like that.

Q. Do you feel like TCU offensively was maybe



more aggressive in terms of taking the basket because Josh wasn't there to get rebounds for you?

DEVONTÉ GRAHAM: I felt like they were aggressive, coming off ball screens and trying to get the ball inside to the big fella, but they did a good job of making shots and making clutch plays down the stretch.

LANDEN LUCAS: I think that's the nature of their team going after offensive rebounds like they were, and that's something that we knew they were going to try to do and that's just something that they're very good at and took advantage of.

Q. You guys as players have dealt with an abnormally high amount of off-the-court distractions this year. What has been your level of frustration with that?

LANDEN LUCAS: It's frustrating in a way, but we also know that when we step on to the court and we are in practice, when we are together as a team we can get away from that and we have been doing a pretty good job of handling that. I'm not sure it was a huge factor in this. Distractions happen and we understand that we have to eliminate them going forward especially in the postseason, and it can be frustrating and I think we've responded pretty well. Today we just came up a little short.

Q. Devonté, how did you feel you came back off that injury in the first half, and what do you think from tonight? You have a different lineup next week with Josh in the lineup, but what do you feel like you may have learned tonight that can be applied to next week and beyond?

DEVONTÉ GRAHAM: I feel fine and we just gotta come out and play from the jump, you know. We've got to start taking teams hard, you know. Just trying to put our foot on their throat and not give them momentum, especially if we feel like we're the better team. Everybody just got to get aggressive.

THE MODERATOR: Okay, guys. Thank you for coming and good luck next week.

Q. What was the biggest difference in the last three minutes of the first half and beginning of the second half?

BILL SELF: You know, I think when Lagerald got two

fouls, when we subbed. Our bench wasn't very good today and we go from up 12 at the under-four timeout to down 1, and then they stretched that to 9 or 11. So that's 13 and 10. That's a 23-point swing in a matter of nine minutes, let's say. That's where they won the game. We were very poor there.

But, you know, the bottom line is we had the ball up 4 with under two. We throw a lob to no one, or we didn't jump. I don't know if it was a good pass, bad pass. They score. We're up 2. Svi throws it to them for a layup, tie game, get a great shot and Landen misses it and then they score and we foul on the last play obviously so they just played such a better last two minutes. We had a chance to win the game late and didn't take advantage of it, but the middle eight minutes of the game is where it really hurt us the most.

Q. Coach, what are the challenges now facing you and your coaches and the players moving into the tournament off of an early and disappointing loss like this?

BILL SELF: Well, you know, I think we could get a little healthier. We can certainly get rested. We wouldn't have much left for tomorrow, I don't believe, considering five guys played above 35 minutes. But I think the reality of it is -- and Devonté hit it on the head. I think we've got to do things to make people play poorly. TCU shot a lot of layups today. A lot and their ball screen offense was good and we didn't handle it very well, much like we did the first time we played 'em down there.

So certainly we gotta tighten up some stuff and, you know, a lot of that just falls on me. Getting our guys more prepared. I don't think it's the end of the earth by any stretch, but it is very disappointing that, you know, you work your ass off all year long and you get to postseason where it's championship week and everybody is excited to be a part of it and you go home early. Hopefully that will be a good motivator for us moving forward. Doesn't mean anything is broken, but certainly we've got to tighten some things up.

Q. Following up on that last question, do you give yourself and the guys a couple of days to kind of decompress from this before you start looking toward the big tournament?

BILL SELF: We'll take tomorrow off. But we'll practice hard on Saturday, and we will practice on Sunday now. I haven't thought it through on what our practice schedule is going to be like this week. If we go to Tulsa I'm pretty sure that's a Friday game if I'm not mistaken, so, you know, you could go Saturday, Sunday, Monday off and then practice -- start practicing again on Tuesday. We will get a couple of days off, but we do need to practice even if not long we need to be in the

gym.

Q. Playing without Josh, what was the biggest void for the team today?

BILL SELF: I would say depth. That to me more than anything. Today was a day where our bench needed to be good and obviously we didn't get much out of 'em, out of our bench. That was disappointing because it forced guys to play too many minutes and you shouldn't be playing -- when you play TCU and they played last night we should be the fresher team and they were the fresher team late because they were able to sub more.

Q. Bill, you brought up five guys playing 35 minutes or more and Frank in the locker room used the term "energy" a lot. Is it going to be nice for you to have a break here considering the lack of depth you have had to deal with all year?

BILL SELF: Today was a different deal. If you have another guy that plays 32 minutes it changes your whole depth situation. But, yeah, it will be nice. I wasn't hopeful it would be a one and out type deal at all. But it's be not the worst thing that we can get our legs back under us. But the reality of it is, we played on Saturday. We didn't practice Sunday or Monday. We were sharp, really sharp on Tuesday.

So I don't think it's that. I just think when you're asking Frank and those guys to do so much. They need to be able to get a minute or two break a couple of times a half if at all possible and of course today we couldn't go there.

Q. Bill, you're not going to lose your No. 1 seed you may be No. 1 overall. You get a couple of days rest. How you should Josh feel about today, he basically took himself out of the game with what he did?

BILL SELF: He feels bad. He feels bad. I'm not trying to minimize anything, but he did, you know, with the mistake, he went and took care of his business and did that stuff. But it was a culmination of things because we had an incident -- one other incident before. So certainly he feels bad and he could have handled it better. Certainly that's -- it's a teaching moment not only for me, but also for our guys to learn and hopefully be better from it. So I'm disappointed that he didn't get a chance to play. He's disappointed, but I think he will respond favorably to it.

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