

Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Saturday, March 11, 2017



Bob Huggins

Esa Ahmad

Jevon Carter

West Virginia

Iowa State - 80, West Virginia - 74

THE MODERATOR: We are now joined by West Virginia, head coach, Bob Huggins, student-athletes this evening, Jevon Carter and Esa Ahmad. We will go straight to questions for our student-athletes and come back for Coach Huggins.

Q. Jevon, you guys came out better offensively. When Iowa State took the lead you guys never got it back. What was going well early and what changed?

JEVON CARTER: Early we were moving the ball, getting easy baskets and open shots, and later on we stopped swinging it. We started playing individually and we wasn't rebounding it tonight.

Q. Second year in a row you've lost in the final. What can you learn from this and take into the NCAA Tournament?

ESA AHMAD: We've just got to get better. Get back in the gym, work. We missed a lot of free throws tonight, just gotta get back in the gym.

Q. Jevon, what's the specific challenge guarding Monté Morris?

JEVON CARTER: He's a good player, one of the best point guards in the country and he hit some tough shots tonight. I feel like I did a good job on him, but he just hit some tough shots.

Q. Jevon, if you get a roll going in the NCAA Tournament your paths may cross with a Big 12 team somewhere down the road, but when you look back on this Big 12 season what will you remember the most about competing against these Big 12 teams?

JEVON CARTER: You've got to come to play every night. No game is ever given no matter who you are playing, the top seed or the bottom seed. You've just gotta come to play every night.

Q. It's been a long conference season. Do you look forward to playing someone who isn't as familiar with you, especially as it relates to your advantages on defense?

ESA AHMAD: I just feel like, you know, we stick to doing us. If we play against somebody that we haven't played before, of course it's going to affect 'em. But if we're not going as hard as we can, you know, any team can beat us and that showed tonight.

THE MODERATOR: Okay, guys. We will let you go back to the locker room. Thank you for coming. Good luck next week. Let's go to questions for Coach Huggins.

Q. Bob, could you break it down for us. What was Iowa State able to -- especially late in the first half that was so effective against you guys?

BOB HUGGINS: We turned 'em loose, fast break points 15-4. We turned 'em loose. They're good. They've got a bunch of guys that can handle the ball and a bunch of guys that can shoot the ball. I think everybody says it's hard to play against us with one day's prep, but I think it's really hard to play against them with one day prep as well because they shoot the ball so well. They spread you out so much. We missed some shots, and you can't go 8 for 17 from the foul line and beat a good team. That kinda started it, kinda snowballed.

Q. Are you ready to see some other teams?

BOB HUGGINS: Well, I think Esa said it best. I'm kinda ready to get in the gym and try to fix some things. We have gotten to the point -- 2010, all we talked about was do what you do, you know? Do what you do. You don't need to do any more. Don't do any less, but do what you do. Do what you're good at doing. We had a bunch of guys that bought into doing what they do. We were like that for a while. Then it kinda creeps in to where guys who can't dribble want to dribble and guys who can't shoot want to shoot, and guys that ought to be playing off the ball and cutting and doing those things that they're really good at doing, getting their shoulders turned where they can score the ball. They just constantly want to do the things that they can't do, and then that's -- then we turn it over 13 times, 10 times the first half.

You asked me before, what happened? We turned it

over 10 times in the first half. That's what happened. Then you turn it over and you look at the categories that generally we're very good at. They got 14 second-chance points to our 10. That's usually in our favor by a bunch. Points off turnovers. They got 15 -- we got 15, they got 14.

You know, we hang our hat on turning people over and rebounding the ball, and we got outrebounded. We gotta get more shots. You've seen us three days. We don't shoot the ball very well. Some of them think they do, but they really don't. So we've got to get more shots. And you get more shots by rebounding the ball and you get more shots by turning people over, and we didn't do either one of those.

Q. I was looking at the sheet here and Teyvon got the technical. Did you get an explanation on that?

BOB HUGGINS: Teyvon is always talking. There's a lot of things I could say about what went on out there, but I probably shouldn't. I don't know. I have absolutely no idea what happened. He said he was -- he talks all the time. You know? But let's be honest. He's played, what, 21 games in this league. They don't know he talks?

Q. Five minutes is all you need, right?

BOB HUGGINS: Actually, he's played more than that because he played last year, too.

Q. Listening to you talk, I'm curious how you feel about present versus potential, and can you get there, and how fast do you need to get there?

BOB HUGGINS: We've got to turn people over and rebound the ball and when we do those things we're pretty good. But we can't follow that up by going 8 for 17 from the foul line. It's ridiculous, and you know we've had games where we shot in the 80s. We're shooting -- the last time I looked we're shooting close to 70 for the year. We were before this tournament. It's a game of reputation. It's a game of neuromuscular reputation is what it is. When you get guys you have to fight with every day to come in and get free throws in and foul shots in, stuff like that, they're not going to make 'em in a game either.

Q. Do you have any feel for seed, or is it impossible to predict?

BOB HUGGINS: I don't have any -- I don't know. I would think a 3 or a 4, I would think. Three or four, and we'll play somebody second round, somebody like Cincinnati or Kentucky or somebody like that. I don't know how the numbers always work out that way, but somehow they find a way for the numbers to work out where Cal and I end up in the same region all the time. I don't think they could stand both of us at the Final Four. Cal always calls me and tells me, now you know

we're playing? And most of the time he's right.

Q. You win 2 out of 3 here, get to the Finals, lose in what is basically a road game, a lot of teams would take away some positives, but I feel like you guys didn't think you approached the level of basketball that you wanted to play and didn't get the end result that you wanted. Is that fair?

BOB HUGGINS: Yeah, yeah. We haven't played well all weekend or week, whatever it is, really, in all honesty. We didn't play well against Texas. We didn't play well against Kansas State, and we sure didn't play well today.

That's not the way we were playing. We had a stretch where we played pretty good. Ball movement was really good. We really rebounded the ball. Pressure was so much better. You know, I've always thought if you go miss two free throws, I'd just as soon they punt it up in the bleachers. It's demoralizing. You know, you work like crazy to get to the free throw line and then you go miss two of 'em. It's disheartening, but I've always felt. That's not because of today, I've always felt that way.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you very much.