



MEN'S BASKETBALL POSTGAME CONFERENCE

K-State 65, Oklahoma State 57 | January 10, 2023

HEAD COACH JEROME TANG

Opening statement...

"I'm very thankful. I've been really blessed by God to have this opportunity and so I always want to make sure that I thank him for that. I know this is not about me it's about those three young men and the other 12 that are in there. And I mean, we're just blessed to have terrific guys and unbelievable staff and this one was difficult for other reasons. First of all, Mike [Boynton] has the best defensive field goal percentage team in the Big 12. Can you imagine what would have happened if Chris [Harris] was out there? It was like, what 16 second chance points. I mean, I don't know how many blocks they had, but it felt like they blocked everything and their pace of play is slow. So we didn't get to play free and up and down the floor and so our guys had to adjust. There's always the factor of being the team with the number in front of your name, that until you experience it, you don't understand it. It's easier for an unranked team to prepare for a ranked team because as a coach, you have your kids' full attention. They are locked in on the scouting report. They are motivated in practice. You don't have to do any kind of motivation at all. So now the number is in front of our name and the other team was having that kind of focus in that kind of preparation. The second thing is that there's a certain pressure that goes along with having that number. Then we have a big crowd like this for the first time and the having to adjust to communicate with a big crowd and maybe you expend too much energy earlier. So there's all those emotions because they're 18 to 20 to 23 year olds, right and they have to adjust to all that. So having not played well in the first half and only being down by two was huge. And then I thought we relaxed a little bit in the second half and was able to get some separation but like all of Mike's teams, they made a run and then you know we made some big plays. So blessed, thankful."

On doing the Wabash after the game...

"Man, the introduction tear the thing up and right, like I've been waiting for that. That's the thing I remember and our students that section was just terrific. The fans all around were terrific. This is what I thought of coming here and having the opportunity to coach here. That's what I envisioned. And I knew we had to do our part, to put a product on the floor that would get our fans excited about, to sacrifice a two hour drive or whatever they had to do to be here on a weekday, and so was thankful that we did that and then they responded. So, just very thankful for our fans."

On winning despite a different style of game...

"Well, you have to be able to. And we came off those other two games and people said we couldn't play defense, but I mean, those two teams we played are really good offensively and the pace of the game, the number of possessions dictated that the score was going to be high. When you have good offensive teams, it doesn't mean that you're bad defensively. So in this pace it dictated the score was going to be slower, but just because we didn't score as much doesn't mean that we're bad offensively. In boxing they say style makes fights and this was just a different style."

On Keyontae Johnson doing big things despite the scoring struggles...

"I gotta go watch the film. I thought he struggled in the first half so we sat him a little bit just to let him gain his bearings. And then the second half, you know they're good man. They're really tough. They got quick hands and they get their hands on a lot of balls. But I thought when we needed the big bucket both he and [Markquis] did some great things to help us."

On if the offense was more patient tonight...

"That was the plan. Okay, I'm gonna have to go look at the film and see how well we did with that. What we didn't want to do is take tough two's because they were so good at contesting shots. We really wanted to get more paint touch kick outs for jump shots. And I don't know that we were as efficient at that as we wanted to be. But I thought our toughness on defense, and we turned them over a few times. Cam Carter with that big defensive possession. I thought we did like really gritty things that are not pretty basketball plays that allowed us to win the game."





SENIOR KEYONTAE JOHNSON

On putting more emphasis on defense during his offensive struggles...

"Oh yeah I tried to rebound as much as could, down there trying to helping Baybe [Abayomi Iyiola] or Nae'Qwan [Tomlin] when they are five men. I knew at half I was one for seven and I just know I had to do something. Offense wasn't going so I had to do something productive for the team."

On his confidence in finding his own shots...

"Those shots are what I work on. Just trying different moves. I know different teams are going to have different scouts on me so just trying to find different moves to do and take practice shots as well. Those are shots I usually take."

On interacting with the fans postgame...

"I feel like it's a big thing. Just show how much we're involved with the fans and the more we interact with them, the more they can respect us and come to the game and just show the support. So I feel like that's our way of showing support to them and just thanking them going around. That's the best thing we can do, take pictures and make their day, I mean they came out, pay for us. Just going out and just take a picture with the fans is a blessing and I think for Coach Tang to change that around is big time and just shows how much engagement he has with the fan base."

SENIOR MARQUIS NOWELL

On his lob to Keyontae...

"Yeah I'd seen that they put two on the ball and the way that Nae'Qwan's or Keyontae's man was helping, he was little bit above him. So I just figured throw it up to Key because I know he'll catch it."

On the team not scoring as many points tonight...

"You gotta give a lot of credit to them. You know, they defend well. They blocked, I don't even know how many shots, a lot of shots and we know they are number one team defensively in conference. So you got to give a lot of credit to them. They play hard. They got a lot of second chance points, which led them to stay in the game. But you know, we adjusted in the second half. We tried to not take too many tough two's and look for the open man. And once we did that things started rolling."

On Desi Sills...

"Man he was big time tonight and just, he's a confident player. He plays with energy and we need that Desi every day. He's starting to get clicking now, but when he's rolling and he's out there having fun, that's when he's at his best. He's a big spark off our bench but he's not a bench player and he plays like a starter and he accepts his role very well. I'm just so happy to see his production on the court. He's like a brother to me, we just love him and we just need that more every game."

SENIOR DESI SILLS

On Oklahoma State's defense...

"They are a very good team but also the number one in the Big 12 in defense so we tried to move the ball and tried to space the floor and tried to get paint touches and try to get open pass. So that's what we worked on all we can practice."

On the crowd...

"I feel like that's one of the best crowds I've ever been in, even though I played at Arkansas. But we've got some of the best fans in the nation and without them I don't feel like we would've came out with the win like we did. They came out with the energy and we played off of it. We played together and we stuck together and came out with the win."

OKLAHOMA STATE HEAD COACH MIKE BOYTON

Opening statement...

"Obviously disappointed in the result, but I was proud of our guys' effort. Thought we came into another difficult environment, which is to expect when the hottest team in the country is playing at home. And I thought the guys competed to give ourselves a chance during the last four minutes. We didn't make enough plays down the stretch. That's what it came down to. Credit to K-State they did, they're a good team. We have a long way to go with this group. We don't have time to feel sorry for ourselves because it doesn't get easier."





On Kalib Boone...

"Yes, great sign for us that he's becoming a guy we can count on. And if we're going to have success in this league, ultimately, we're going to need that production. And I'm proud of the kid. He's come a long way in his career from a guy who was literally once every three or four games to being every other game and now we're starting to see it on a consistent basis. So we need it to continue, not get complacent or comfortable. Because if he continues that and we get a couple of other guys going, we'll be a team that can close out some of these games."

On Keyontae Johnson and his alley oop dunk...

"Phenomenal play. His phenomenal story. Obviously he's a wonderful human being and he's doing something that I think people are starting to understand, but it probably can't go talked about enough. Talk about a kid who's literally taking the ultimate risk and playing this game because he loves it so much. And to play with the amount of joy and confidence that he has is a testament to his character, to his family, whatever support system he has there. And then obviously to the coaching staff here who you know in spite of whatever was thought to be the case with him, felt confident enough to take the chance on the kid. And he's obviously paying great dividends now for them but I've watched Keyontae Johnson since he was at Oak Hill Academy, I recruited a couple of his teammates. So I've watched his story here pretty closely and even as a coach on the other side it brings me great joy to watch him have success because you know what it took for him to get to this moment. And so I wish he hadn't played as well. I wish that ball was maybe three inches higher, maybe he still would have caught it. But it is a phenomenal testament to human commitment, to what's possible when you don't give up, when you really believe in yourself and you're willing to sell out for your dreams."

SENIOR CALEB ASBERRY

On his takeaway from four games into conference play...

"It's way more difficult, More physical, faster pace. It's something to adjust to for sure. And I know going down it's going to get even harder, because it's just getting started."

SENIOR KALIB BOONE

On keeping good spirits after multiple losses...

"It's reality we play in the toughest conference in college basketball. If anybody says anything else, I mean, look at the score sheet, we have literally no off night in this conference. But I mean, the reason I don't get like doubt about it, and I tried to tell them because me and him [Caleb] and Avery [Anderson] have seen darker days than this. But we also know how it's like when you get that one how it can keep rolling, but we just got to stay positive. We got to keep pushing. And we all know Coach is going to push it in practice. He's gonna make us better and everything like that. We got to trust it as of right now. Like we're all trusting it. We just like down the stretch, we'll do something that shoots ourselves in the foot."

