



MEN'S BASKETBALL POSTGAME CONFERENCE

K-State 83, Kansas 82 | January 17, 2023

HEAD COACH JEROME TANG

Opening statement...

"I'm so proud of our guys, and secondly, our fans were incredible, right? I mean, they say home court advantage gives you a plus 10, it might have been plus 20 tonight. It was incredible. One of the things I said leading up to this is that kind of energy that they brought tonight, I want them to bring that because they love us and not because of the opponent that we're playing. On Saturday, we'll play Texas Tech, if they love us, we're gonna get that same energy, right, not because of the opponent that we're playing against and that was my message and you know, all the credit to Kansas. I mean, Jalen Wilson was incredible. They're an incredible basketball team, program, Coach Self. Tonight, we made one more play than they did and like I told the guys in the locker room, we only got one win tonight. Now we have to prepare, do what we have to do tonight, the next right thing so that we can prepare to win the next one."

On Keyontae Johnson's dunk...

"It is something that we run, yes. It's what we were looking for. I didn't necessarily think he was going to catch it and dunk it but we wanted to isolate him on the side of the floor. We knew that they would be on top of him."

On Markquis Nowell...

"I mean, seven assists, three turnovers. He didn't press, he guarded. Multiple times he was guarding a 6'8, 6'7 guy in the post and just fighting for steals. 'Quis is a winner man. He's growing as a leader. Today he was a really good basketball player out there even though the stat sheets didn't say."

On Keyontae Johnson...

"A guy at Baylor named Bill Peterson, a terrific coach, he would tell me Jerome, you know, a coach is a good coach when he gets his best players the most shots. As you can see, Jalen [Wilson] got 25 shots and Keyontae got 17. That's just, I mean it's not rocket science man and they can hope and we just got to put them in a space where they have a chance and they were both really good tonight."

On big moments for Nowell...

"Yeah, leadership is his leadership. He's getting really good at not allowing things to rattle him, right. I actually thought he's gonna bury that three on the kickout and when he shot it, I was like 'ball game,' and then he missed it. I thought it would bother him and he turned around and made another really good play. There have been times this year where one play where he gets frustrated, so he makes a bad play the next one, and he's getting better at that. He is growing as a point guard and growing as a leader."

SENIOR KEYONTAE JOHNSON

On the matchup against Kansas physically...

"I feel like we did a good job physically. Jalen Wilson got to the line a lot, a great player, and I felt like that took us back a little bit just trying not to foul but still playing aggressive. Down the stretch I think we played aggressive, and then we ended up getting the game winning stop."

On managing emotions with the environment...

"It's a quick turnaround, we play Saturday. So we've just got to know when to celebrate. Coach Gabriel said we've got today to celebrate and tomorrow it's off day to just come in, get treatment, stay focused, and go on to the next one until we play them again."

On what he wants the national stage to know about the team...

"Just that we're definitely one of the toughest teams out here. We all have fun together and we celebrate each other. We don't hate whoever is the leading scorer or whoever's day it is. If it's your day we want you to keep going. We bring out a lot of confidence in each other and that's why I feel like we play well together."

SENIOR MARQUIS NOWELL

On Jerome Tang as a coach...





"There's so much knowledge that he's passed down outside of basketball. He teaches a lot of life lessons. He's a really good man, teaches you about God and love. It's not just about the little things like these wins, it's about the bigger picture and knowing that we're supposed to have success. He emphasizes that we're supposed to win these types of games, we're supposed to win national championships. Just being around him is a joy."

On Desi Sills as a sixth man...

"He's not even a sixth man, he's a starter that just comes off the bench really. He brings so much energy and passion to the game that we need. He brings a spark that we need. He had 24 big points today and he showed up. That's what he does in big time moments, he shows up. You can always count on him to have your back in any situation. We are really glad to have Desi."

SENIOR DESI SILLS

On what was working for him in the first half...

"I'm nothing without God, but my teammates found me early. They told me to believe in my work, trust in my work, and just go out there and be the player that they know I am."

On the feeling of how important the game was to the fans...

"I feel like we have one of the best fans in the country. We feed off them, the energy and enthusiasm that they give us. It goes over onto the court. We really appreciate them coming out, I hope they come out every game like that. It was a big part of the win."

KANSAS HEAD COACH BILL SELF

On the difference in tonight's game...

"I would say there's a lot of things. I thought K-State played great early, we didn't have any answers for them. When we kind of settled down we played a lot better. Then I called a timeout and Jalen [Wilson] made a bomb so that could've been the difference in winning too, but we did enough stuff to put us in the position to win. If you told me before the game that we'd have the ball at the end and a chance to win twice, that's something we'd probably sell out for. I'm proud of our guys, I thought we fought hard. We had a make-shift line-up out there, three guys that never played a game point. But there's still not an excuse. We have to do a little bit better and certainly, I have to do a better job of helping."

On the response to the environment during the game...

"I thought that they were up 14 and we took the lead. I don't think the environment had a lot to do with them winning near as much as it did maybe with them getting the lead. I thought the environment was great, but I also thought we responded pretty well."

On Jerome Tang's start as head coach at Kansas State...

"He's great, it was a great hire. I think he's represented our league and obviously Kansas State as well as you possibly can. He and T.J. [Otzelberger] are the two leading candidates for Coach of the Year in our league and National Coach of the Year. Nobody's done a better job assembling talent in a short amount of time and getting players together that I've seen."

