



MEN'S BASKETBALL POSTGAME CONFERENCE

K-State 85, Oklahoma 69 | March 1, 2023

HEAD COACH JEROME TANG

Opening statement...

"First of all, I'm blessed to be able to do what I do. And I'm so thankful to God for this opportunity that He has given me. The young man I get to impact every day, I mean, they probably impact me more than I impact them. The terrific staff we had have. I mean, I get to live life for really great men and man that environment out there. Our fans, how they showed up today and tonight and, just to honor our seniors. I might have been more nervous than the seniors just because we've had a really good year so far, and you just want them to be able to leave the court with a really good feeling, their last time out there. Whether we won or lost this last this game, I had something planned for us to do at the end because we're going to honor these guys because this game didn't like determine what kind of season we had. But I was very thankful that we were able to win so that we could celebrate fully at the end."

On turning Bramlage into a great atmosphere again...

"It's a huge blessing. Before the game I just was looking around and just, what God has been able to do here and with the hard work of our staff and our players, you know, it's just incredible man. I kind of thought I knew what it would be like but it's just surpassed anything that I would have imagined."

On Nae'Qwan Tomlin...

"I think the first thing is when Nae'Qwan doesn't foul, he gets to play more. And when he plays more, we're better. And then when he runs the floor, it opens everything up. Because usually the guy who's guarding him is a big fella who has to worry about chasing him down to court and then he gets these open looks. When he gets open looks I think he's gonna make them, he's been working, he's been working at it. We've been showing him film, we've been encouraging him when he turns stuff down that we want you to shoot it. And so yeah it helps him but I think the other parts of it helped him be able to hit some threes because he wasn't in foul trouble so he wasn't sitting on a bench and then when he was on the bench it was because he wasn't running the floor. We need you to run and when he decided to run hard in the second half, he gets 19 points."

On Desi Sills...

"Incredible. Almost had a triple double. I mean, he's locked in. I mean, Des is a winner man. You could try to find other words, but that's what it boils down to. Whatever you need that game to win, Desi is willing to provide. I'll just tell you the other day, Oklahoma State, Desi is at the scorers table ready to check in, it's late in the second half. Cam [Carter] hits a three in transition and that's who Desi is going to. He looks at me, he gets up, he runs back to the bench and goes 'Cams in his groove.' That's a winner, right, like forget what the numbers he puts up on the floor when a young man can see that and be that kind of a teammate. Those are the kind of dudes in tough situations you can get some stuff done with. Desi does whatever it takes for us to win."

SENIOR GUARD MARKQUIS NOWELL

On his emotions during senior day...

"I was just so thankful and grateful that you know, I decided to finish my career here at K-State. I've been on both sides, I've been on the losing side and now I'm on the winning side. So I'm just thankful for it all. Thankful for Gene Taylor, Coach Tang and everybody for believing in me in day one. Tom [Gilbert], I'm thankful for everybody, D. Scott [Fritchen], all you guys that have been a part of my journey. It's been a good ride."

On the team's expect to win mentality...

"It's the habits that we created from day one. Just going 1-0, winning each day, doing everything possible to get better. And Coach Tang embodied that in us from the first time he stepped foot on campus. We just live by that each and every day. So now it's a habit, we try to win everything that we do, win each game, win each media, win each day. So this is just the results of what we've been doing."

SENIOR FORWARD KEYONTAE JOHNSON

On how hitting threes can help his game...





"I feel like that helps more my teammates get more shots and just make another team press up on me and then I can kick out to them. Or just giving me, the coaches and my teammates make me more comfortable out there. It just opens the floor and it gives me confidence. They tell me to keep shooting, I've been in the gym on the off days just trying to get extra reps and it's showcasing throughout the games I've been playing."

On his emotions during senior day...

"I'm just thankful. Last year I had senior night but I didn't play in my senior night so just want to thank God for giving me the opportunity to feel this feeling on senior night and play in front of the best fans out there. Thank my parents and my coaches for giving me the opportunity to fulfill my dream that I wanted to do."

On the fans...

"Yeah for sure. It's the most loudest fans. Best feeling to play in. They brought a different side to me, I never used to showboat during games so it was just fun. It feels like you're playing back at home with your friends and just relieved the coaches tell you to go out there with freedom. Definitely going to miss it."

SENIOR GUARD NATE AWBREY

On the fans chanting his name...

"Yeah, it was really cool. I mean, I just wanted to get the win tonight but obviously these guys did their job. So we got in the position where I got to go in the game and so that was a really cool experience, something I'll never forget."

On if there was any pressure during his free throws...

"Not really. I felt like there was more pressure against Florida. Tonight I already had them cheering for me, I just had to make it but they were going to cheer for me no matter what I did."

SENIOR GUARD DESI SILLS

On being shy of a triple double...

"Just coming out, I just want to leave a legacy, you know me, my dog mentality, all on the floor. If this is my last game at Bram I just want to give my all, I just appreciate the fans. So I was shy of a triple double but that don't matter, I'm just happy that we got the dub."

On his ability to rebound the ball...

"I just feel like Coach said when I get the rebound, I'm like a point guard as well, when 'Quis don't got the ball I'm the backup point guard. Beside Key [Keyontae] said you push it, you know how to make plays, you're a playmaker, so just do your job to try to find it open guys. We got Nae'Qwan and Key, you know, and Markquis, everybody gonna key in on them guys so other guys got to step up. So just trying to stay consistent these last two games and try to give them all you know."

JUNIOR FORWARD NAE'QWAN TOMLIN

On finding consistency the past few games...

"It helps in a very big way, you know, like they key onto Markquis and Keyontae. And so we have other guys like me and Desi that can help open the floor more and create more plays."

On being able to make three pointers...

"I think it opens it up a lot because I started making threes and you know people adjust and try to like fly out and give me opportunities to get to the basket or make the play."

OKLAHOMA HEAD COACH PORTER MOSER

On Tanner Groves intentional foul...

"Yeah, he's not that type of kid. It definitely wasn't intentional. That's why I went up to Desi [Sills] and asked if he was alright. I think it was an unfortunate play. I don't think it was malicious, it was a high elbow play. But I know him, it wasn't malicious, but it was an unfortunate play. I'm glad he was alright when I went up to him."

On how impressive K-State's turnaround is...

"The pieces they brought in. Keyontae Johnson is an All-American. They had [Markquis] Nowell, who in their system is doing great. [Nae'Qwan] Tomlin, with a guy like Nowell, Tomlin is really good because he can cut, he's a big target,





he's a quick cutter, he's a bouncy cutter and now he's knocking down threes. He's a great piece to go along. Desi Sills is an older veteran guard. What strikes me is they had Nowell and what they brought next to him or around him is elite. I think they've got two All-Americans. I really believe that."

On how difficult it is to win this much in year one like Jerome Tang has done...

"For us it's been tough, we've got to continue to build our roster. But he got Keyontae late and then have Nowell and the pieces they have around him. It's very tough so it makes it that much more impressive."

