



2020-21
KANSAS MEN'S BASKETBALL
POSTGAME QUOTES
(3) KANSAS vs. (14) EASTERN WASHINGTON
INDIANAPOLIS, IND. // INDIANA FARMERS COLISEUM
NCAA TOURNAMENT - FIRST ROUND



HEAD COACH BILL SELF

"Obviously we're just thrilled that we won. Eastern Washington, they outplayed us for the most part the first 30 minutes of the game. We had our little runs, but they had more. Certainly the Groves brothers were the two best players in the game in the first half. We didn't guard 'em. They had us all messed up with ball screen defense. We didn't look very good at all. Somehow or another we kind of hung in there, kind of turned it on the second half. David played really well considering coming off his isolation with COVID. Marcus made shots. Juan was probably the best player we had from start to finish. Ochai and Christian also made some plays. It was a hard game. It was a great game to win in tournament. It's great to advance. We got outplayed for the majority of the game today. They were better than us. Somehow or another we kind of hung in there and made some plays at the right time."

On David McCormack's return:

"I don't know. I guess it's fitting. I don't know. We were playing pretty well as a team there at the end of the season. David was playing his best ball. I really thought, and our doctors thought, that we could get between 15 and 20 minutes out of him today. I certainly, after the way he started the game, didn't think he was going to give us much offensively, or defensively, just give us five fouls. He kind of got his legs under him. He was really, really good the second half. I mean, really good. He didn't get out to the shooters, he didn't get out to Groves a couple times. He played great. It was good to see. Gives me some hope now with Jalen coming back. Maybe he can provide some key minutes for us on Monday because we'll need everybody. But it was good to see. It was pretty impressive how he played, his conditioning, considering all the stuff he's come off of."

On the atmosphere:

"I'm looking at the stats here. I got to put my glasses on to see. Says attendance was 961. 900 people coming to an NCAA tournament game. Granted, I don't think the atmosphere played a role in who won or who didn't win. It just felt different. It was the coldest arena I think I've ever been in to start the game. I didn't feel it that way at the end. I thought it warmed up some. It was literally, 60, 58 degrees when the game started it felt like. We've been a team that's been a hot-starting team or a really cold-starting team. You get down 9 to nothing, now the collar gets a little tighter, all these things. Fortunately for us, we were in real trouble if it wasn't for Dajuan. Dajuan came in, kind of sparked us, made it steady for a while. This had the make of a real pressure game. It's good to get that one out of our system. Hopefully we're going to have a few more of these if we're able to play well."

On the team playing shorthanded:

"I think the guys have handled it well. The guys that contracted COVID, they've handled it well. Their maturity level has been really high. Wasn't a 'woe is me'. We told all our guys we need to play as hard as we can to make sure your teammates get a chance to experience the tournament. Although it didn't really look like that the first half. I think we've handled it pretty well. We kind of got a motto that we say every year: faces change, expectations do not. We didn't talk about what we didn't have, we just talked about what we had in order to play well. What we had was enough. I'm not sure that it is to go deep in the tournament. We need to have our full complement of guys. Certainly it hasn't been great, but it hasn't probably been as disruptive as what you may think it has because those three guys, they were all in Lawrence, they weren't around us, all these things. It hasn't been a glaring distraction at all. Of course, David's attitude coming back was tremendous."

On the anxiety of the tournament:

"Oh, yeah, there's no question there has. The anxiety occurred from October 15th till now. I mean, it's been high anxiety for everybody. My trainer and my staff, as soon as we get our results back from the test, testing three times a week, doing the PCR, it doesn't matter if it's 2:00 in the morning. As soon as we get the text message from the company giving us the results, we all have a group text. Here, I'm getting texts from the doc and trainer at 2 a.m. when the results come back. I'm awake and ready to take the text. It has been a high-anxiety thing. I feel bad for obviously OU. I don't know everybody that has been affected. Obviously for Josh and Georgia Tech. I mean, these kids worked their butts off all year long, and it's something outside of their control. Certainly puts them in a situation where they can't live out their dream. I feel for everybody. We had a situation where it's been negative for so many teams that had pauses, I hate to say this, I don't think pauses are good, they may be blessings in disguise that the pauses occurred to better ensure you having a healthy NCAA tournament. But, yeah, it's been a pretty stressful year. It's one of those things, I don't think that you can dwell on it. Whatever happens happens. You can't change it. You just kind of got to ride with it."

On David McCormack's game:

"I thought he scored over his right shoulder. They took away his left shoulder, they made him score over his right shoulder. He did a great job with that. I don't think he moved great defensively at all. I don't know how many rebounds he ended up with, but I don't think he rebounded the ball. I don't feel like he looked as good moving, but I thought considering all the time off I thought he looked very patient offensively once we got into the second half."



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On scoring 93 points:

"I remember we played Carolina or somebody in the NCAA tournament, it was like 48-48 at halftime or something. Our guys were so confident at halftime because they knew that wasn't us. That's not how we play. We played their game and we still were tied. Now if we play our game, we'd be in good shape. I'm hoping we kind of feel this way now. I'm happy we scored some points. But that's not real. What's real is we got to defend and we got to rebound. If we do those things, we can play with folks. Hopefully this will give some confidence offensively, but also be a reality check. We have to start grinding on the defensive end."

On Marcus Garrett's game:

"That's what I want from anybody. But, yeah, Marc was really good today. 20-8. Three assists, one turnover. He played out of foul trouble. I thought he was great. He and Juan in the backcourt today was probably about as good a twosome we had all year long handling the ball, passing it. Everybody else did fine, too, everybody else did well. It was nice to see Marcus and Juan shoot the ball like that because we needed them to shoot the ball like that to win. Sometimes this year we've been playing three against five, so to speak, offensively because people dare us to shoot, we don't shoot it. It's a good shot when their shoulders are squared. It was good that they took those."

On the team's toughness:

"Well, I didn't think we played tough, but I thought we were pretty mentally tough, if that makes sense. I didn't think we played tough. We don't beat 'em on the glass like I thought we could. Obviously we didn't guard our man. They shoot 50%. I don't think we did within the arc great. I don't think we played tough, but I thought our mental toughness was pretty good considering you get behind like that. That's when panic could set in, and it didn't. I thought that was a good sign of toughness."

On playing first NCAA tournament game in two years:

"Well, it's really been two years because we played I guess two years ago. No, it wasn't worth the wait. I don't want to have to do this again. Certainly. There's always a chance it could happen. We've been so fortunate and blessed around here to be in a lot of tournaments in a row. You should never take it for granted. It's a reward for your kids."

On playing mentally tough:

"I think the staff was probably more panicked than the players were. Actually, these guys, they play at Kansas. They play a lot of big games. We've been behind a lot. We've been ahead a lot. We know it's a long game. We know no lead is safe, no deficit is too big, until you get to at least a certain point in the game. That's something we always dwell on. When we practice, I love to practice when we don't make shots. That way we can learn how to continue to grind, those sorts of things. I think that's as much as anything, is the fact that these guys are used to it. It's not anything that I don't think we do specifically to make them confident in those situations. It's just been there, done it type of attitude with most of these guys."

On the Groves brothers:

"I thought they were fabulous. I actually thought watching the game that -- you guys have followed us, you know that if our big guy has to guard on the perimeter, it's hard for us. They played Tanner on the perimeter far more than what we thought they would. He's made 17 threes on the season, and he makes five in one game. If I'm not mistaken, three of them were in the first half pretty early. That was a strategy by them, I'm sure, to try to play to that when we had two bigs in the game. I thought he was great. I actually think his little brother, if you can call him that, to me he's about as good looking a prospect around. 6'8", 9, whatever. He can shoot, post, whatever. He handles, has vision. Those guys were very impressive to me. Both really good players. They've done a great job recruiting. I don't remember if they're local kids or not. Pretty impressive what they've done."

On Marcus Garrett's shooting:

"Marcus, he's not pure by any stretch, but he's become streaky. If you're streaky, that means you're capable of making a few or several in a row. He's done that. He's had games where he didn't, but he's had multiple games I think in the -- in our winning streak, if I'm not mistaken, where he's made a minimum of two a game. Those were all big today. You could tell he was feeling it because they didn't guard him, they didn't guard he and Juan. They dared them to shoot. Those guys made them pay today."



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SENIOR GUARD MARCUS GARRETT

On the atmosphere of the game:

"It was a great atmosphere out there. I felt like the game kind of turned, I would probably say, when the clock was messing up. When the clock was messing up, the game would just pause for a second, I feel like we locked in and that's when the game kind of turned around."

On having David McCormack back:

"His presence means a lot to us. I think he's been our leading scorer down the stretch in conference. He's really picked it up offensively. Getting our big man back was definitely huge for us. Yesterday definitely trying to get his ribs back and get his legs back under him."

On Dajuan Harris stepping up:

"He played great. He came out there, he did what Dajuan does. He took the shots that was open and knocked them down. I feel like he played a great game. He gave us the boost we needed and he was plus 22, which was great. I felt like he played great."

On Dajuan Harris's shooting ability:

"I feel like he has confidence in shooting the ball. I mean, he just doesn't take them all the time because that's kind of not what he does for our team. I feel like whenever he does take them, he has a chance to knock them down."

On his own confidence in his shot:

"The atmosphere had me kind of like feeling good. I feel like I was open, I had to take those shots. I was just able to knock them down."

On David McCormack's energy:

"From the time he arrived yesterday, we felt his energy, we felt his presence. He was just happy to be with us, he was happy to be back on the court."

On Eastern Washington:

Definitely a tough matchup. That's a great team. The way they move the ball, the way they shot the ball, the way they spread the floor was great. It was a hard matchup."

On David McCormack's ability to come back:

"That was definitely incredible. Knowing that he hadn't practiced or did anything in the last 10, 11 days, for him to come out and just be so productive on the offensive end, that was definitely something great to see."

On his own shooting confidence:

"It's March. I know it's winning time. I know I have to knock down shots. Stepping up and having confidence in shooting the ball more."

On the team's confidence:

"Coach Self, he tells us every timeout it's a long game, just stay with it. Just keep chipping away at the lead and we'll get it where we want it."

On looking ahead to USC or Drake:

"Kind of don't have a preference. I watched film on both teams already. Whichever team wins, I feel like Coach Self will have us ready for them."

On the focus at halftime:

MARCUS GARRETT: Stay calm, chip away at the lead, it's a long game. We know what type of team we are. We know if we lock in and defend, we can cut the lead, come back, get it exactly where we want. I feel like when we locked in defensively, we were able to do that. I feel like we always calm at halftime. We knew exactly what we had to do to go out there and win that game. I feel like that's what we went out there and did."

On the team's toughness:

"I definitely feel like we're a tough team. We've been through a lot of adversity this year. I feel like every time adversity hits us, I feel like we're able to bounce back. That's something that we showed today with the rough first half, we were able to bounce back in the second half and come out with a win."