

NOTES & QUOTES

BYU 85 ABILENE CHRISTIAN 67

DECEMBER 19, 2025

MARRIOTT CENTER

PROVO, UTAH

TEAM NOTES

CARELESS COUGARS

BYU entered Friday's contest ranked first in the Big 12 and 15th nationally in turnovers per game with 9.5 giveaways but turned the ball over 12 times in the first half.

HELP NEEDED

The Big 3 of AJ Dybantsa, Robert Wright III and Richie Saunders scored the first 27 points of the game for the Cougars before a Tyler Mrus corner 3-pointer with 5:29 remaining in the first half.

EXTENDING THE STREAK(S)

BYU extended its non-conference home win streak to 25 games with its win on Friday. It was also the eighth straight overall win for the Cougars and ninth straight home win.

SHOOTING THE LIGHTS OUT

The Cougars have now won 35 straight games when shooting 50.0 percent or better from the field as they were 25-of-42 from the field in their first-ever meeting against the Wildcats.

THRIVING FROM THE LINE

BYU went 29-of-40 from the free throw line, both of them being season-highs.

PLAYER NOTES

FIRST TIMER

With Keba Keita out, Khadim Mboup made his first career start finishing with six points, 10 rebounds and a career-high three blocks. .

DOESN'T CEASE TO AMAZING

With 35 points, AJ Dybantsa became the first Cougar to score 20 or more points in five straight games since Jimmer Fredette did it in the final games of his career. The freshman's 35-point night ranks as the second-most by a freshman in BYU history, trailing only Danny Ainge's 36-point performance against Idaho State in 1977. Dybantsa also went 16-of-20 from the free throw line, setting a BYU freshman record for both makes and attempts.

TEACH 'EM HOW TO AJ

With his performance, Dybantsa became the first Cougar to score 20 points in five straight games since Jimmer in 2011.

MAKING HIS WAY TO THE TOP

With 21 points on the night, Richie Saunders moved into 27th on BYU's all-time scoring list with 1,313 career points, passing Alex Barcello and Dick Nemelka. The senior also moved up to 17th on the steals with 117, three of those coming tonight.

MAKING THE MOST OF IT

Mihailo Boskovic made the most of his minutes, finishing with five points on a perfect 2-of-2 shooting from the field, including 1-of-1 from three, in BYU's win over Abilene Christian.

SEASON HIGHS

Assists: Kennard Davis Jr. (4)

3-Pointers: Mihailo Boskovic (1)

Blocks: Mihailo Boskovic (3), Khadim Mboup (3)

CAREER HIGHS

Points: AJ Dybansta (35)

Rebounds: Aleksej Kostic (1), Khadim Mboup (10)

Steals: Aleksej Kostic (1), Mihailo Boskovic (1), Khadim Mboup (1)

Blocks: Mihailo Boskovic (3), Khadim Mboup (3)

Minutes: AJ Dybansta (36)

NOTES & QUOTES

HEAD COACH KEVIN YOUNG

On AJ's dunk

"I mean, I'll be honest, I'm pretty stoic over there when cool stuff happens, just because I'm thinking about the next play, and I feel like I've seen a lot of plays in my life, but I did react to that one. That was insane. I can't wait to watch it on film. What a gifted player, that was unbelievable."

On AJ getting 35 on 12 shots

"That's how that team plays, you know, super aggressive. They foul a lot and they're a hard team to play against because of it. AJ is a smart player. He understood what they were doing and he was doing a good job of using that against them, and that was impressive."

On what led to the turnovers

"They're the sixth-best in the country on free throw turnover rates. I was disappointed, because everything that we said they were going to do, they did, and we took the bait in the first 10 minutes of the game. In the second 10 minutes of the game, I thought we had better ball toughness, but it was good. Iowa State's going to do the same thing, Houston is going to do the same thing, so our guys got to get used to playing against that type of pressure. You have to give them all the credit, they were good with that."

On Mboup's start

"He did what he did. The moment of starting wasn't too big for him, he came in and played with a great motor. The thing I was most proud of was his three blocks. I was extremely disappointed in some of our rim protection last game, and that was the point of emphasis coming into this game, so I like that specifically."

On his experience playing non-conference games

"It's probably a bit more impressive this year than last. These games are great because they get us ready for conference games. I'm glad we scheduled that team, because they're a hard team to play against."

AJ DYBANTSA

On first-half putback dunk

Richie: "That was amazing."

AJ: "That's probably the best putback I've had, other than one I had last year at Utah Prep... it was kind of similar, but this one is probably top seven all-time for me."

On drawing 20 free throw attempts

"I feel like they were being kind of handsy, so I wasn't able to get wherever I wanted. I tried to take advantage of them putting their hand in the cookie jar and drawing fouls."

On the team's identity late in conference play

"Obviously, I think we've come out slow numerous times. I think today we came out slow again, but our identity is bouncing back, fighting back and being able to respond."

On facing a physical opponent as preparation for Big 12 play

"Definitely a good test. Obviously, I'm a freshman, so I haven't seen Big 12 play yet, but coming to games last year, I saw how physical it was. This was definitely a good game to play to get used to it."

On LeBron James approaching him courtside at the Delta Center

"It was surreal. I've met him before and worked out with him, so I don't really get starstruck. He just came over and said he's been watching from a distance and that he's excited to see where I'm headed."

On playing with other gravity attracting teammates

"Growing up, I didn't play with a lot of guys who could attract that much gravity like him (Richie) and Rob do. We're getting used to it in practice and learning on the fly, but I think it's working."

On Richie's dunk

"He doesn't dunk in practice. I've said the same thing before, some guys don't dunk in practice, but when they get in the game, they drive, act like it's a layup and then go in with two hands. I'm like, 'I know you've got that.' It's cool to see."

RICHIE SAUNDERS

On the team's overall performance

"We had to grit it out. My energy was a little lower than I think it needed to be, but every game has its own life. We had to figure it out, and I'm glad we came out with the win."

On the huddle message when the game was cut to two points

"Ball toughness, primarily. They did a really good job of mucking everything up and being super physical. It was all about ball toughness and just playing our game and playing fast."

On team chemistry and playing alongside high-gravity players

"We're figuring it out. It's a process, but it's really fun. It's fun to play with people who create so much gravity, and we're learning how to use that to our advantage as a team."

On Keba being out

"It's clear that his impact on the game is everywhere. Proud of the guys for stepping up, Khadim and Mihalo did really well stepping up, but Keita can't replace Keita."