

Wisconsin routs Baylor 69-52

Written by Administrator
Friday, 28 March 2014 11:25

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP) — Ben Brust and his Wisconsin teammates got oodles of open shots while they sliced and diced Baylor's vaunted zone defense. When the Bears had the ball, 7-foot Frank Kaminsky always seemed to be right in their way.

Brust, Kaminsky and their Badgers realize they dominated Baylor in a 69-52 victory Thursday night because of a coach who always puts them in the right spots.

Bo Ryan has never been to college basketball's final weekend, but the Badgers are thrilled to put him on the brink.

"That would be a very special thing to do, but we also know that he's not going to let us look too far ahead," said Brust, who scored 14 points. "When that time comes, we'll handle it. I'd definitely like to do that for him."

Kaminsky scored 19 points and blocked six shots while Wisconsin romped into the West Regional final, reaching the final eight for the third time in school history.

Brust hit three of the six 3-pointers from the second-seeded Badgers (29-7), who jumped to a 14-point lead in the first half and never let up on the overmatched Bears (26-12).

Kaminsky and his disciplined teammates shredded the Baylor zone that played so well in the first two games. Wisconsin also methodically shut down Baylor's talented offense while moving into its second regional final in 13 years under Ryan, who has seen just about everything except the Final Four in a 700-win coaching career.

"I'd be honored to be a part of that," Kaminsky said.

Wisconsin advanced to the regional final Saturday against top-seeded Arizona, which held off

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San Diego State 70-64 in the late game at Honda Center. The Badgers haven't been to the Final Four since retired coach Dick Bennett got them there in 2000.

The Badgers advanced by countering everything the Bears do well. Wisconsin wrecked Baylor's zone, negated their 3-point shooting acumen with perimeter defense, kept the tempo at the Badgers' preferred speed and even held a 39-33 rebounding edge on Baylor, one of the nation's top rebounding teams.

Ryan put on a bit of a coaching clinic, but that's nothing new. The Wisconsin folk hero has led the Badgers to an NCAA tournament berth in each of his 13 seasons, but only got this close to the Final Four in 2005.

"We get 40 more minutes, and I'm awfully proud of them," Ryan said.

Kaminsky added another remarkable performance to his junior season with the Badgers, racking up 10 points and four blocked shots while Wisconsin took a 29-16 lead into halftime. Wisconsin held Baylor to a season-low in first-half points.

Cory Jefferson scored 15 points for the sixth-seeded Bears in their third Sweet 16 trip in five years.

Isaiah Austin and Kenny Chery scored 12 points apiece for Baylor.

The Bears needed a late rally just to match their lowest-scoring performance of the season in the final seconds.

"Wisconsin really played a great game, and we did a very poor job in making things tough," said Baylor coach Scott Drew, who still led his team to a strong finish after its 2-8 start to Big 12 play. "They're extremely hard to pressure and rattle. ... Once we got behind, we had to do some things we wished we didn't have to do."

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Three lower-bowl sections of the Anaheim Ducks' home arena were packed with red-clad Badgers fans, who usually turn out in droves for their school's trips to Southern California, including three straight recent trips to the Rose Bowl.

They had plenty of time to celebrate while their Badgers quickly sapped all of the drama out of these schools' first meeting.

Baylor's flexible zone defense caused numerous problems for Nebraska and Creighton in the Bears' victories last week. With a few days to prepare, Ryan clearly figured out exactly how to attack it.

The Badgers got multiple open looks on nearly every possession in the first half, moving the ball around the perimeter for open 3-point attempts or getting it down low to Kaminsky, who scored eight of Wisconsin's first 10 points. Brust hit two 3-pointers in the first half, and only a few open misses prevented Wisconsin from blowing it open early.

On the other end, the Bears had little of the poise they showed in their first two games. Baylor missed 12 of its first 15 shots and fell behind by 14 late in the half.

Baylor finally abandoned the zone early in the second half, but Traevon Jackson hit a 3-pointer for Wisconsin on the next possession. The Bears showed their athleticism and skill with several one-man drives to the hoop in the second half, but the Badgers calmly stuck to their plan in a blowout win.