

Atlantic Coast Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Friday, March 7, 2025

Greensboro, North Carolina, USA

Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets

Coach Nell Fortner

Kara Dunn

Postgame Press Conference



NC State 73, Georgia Tech 72.

NELL FORTNER: Really, I really thought our kids played extremely hard today. I thought we fought to the end. I thought we did some nice things today.

But you know what, there were some really interesting calls during this game that really were interesting. I don't really quite know how to say that. I'm not trying to take anything away from NC State at all. They played good.

Boy, he's got some really good players, some really good high-level players that we're going to be watching play professionally here over the years.

I think we have some of those, too. I thought we played really hard. I thought we did some good things.

But I thought there were some really interesting calls during that game that just were disappointing.

But we'll move on. We feel like we'll be playing in the next 10 days, and that's exciting for us. We're looking forward to that.

Q. Yesterday you described that the game in Atlanta just came down to them getting hot at the end and hitting three, and today ironically they hit the one there, but did you feel like you had that more under control than you did in the previous game?

NELL FORTNER: Yeah, look, I was pleased with what we did today. Do I always want to shoot better? Of course. But I thought all in all, our team played really hard. I thought we've -- we're coming back into our own a little bit from what we experienced earlier in the season, and I feel really good about that.

I'm just sorry we couldn't take it to the finish line today. But that's okay. We'll be ready for the next -- we'll move on with it and feel the pain of it, and it'll motivate us as we continue to play.

Q. Can you just walk us through those final 20 seconds where NC State calls a time-out, they're down one, and you guys had seven seconds left, no time-outs?

NELL FORTNER: You want me to walk you through the part where we fouled supposedly? What are you talking about? Oh, the final seven seconds when we were bringing the ball down the floor to score?

Well, we've got one of the most dynamic point guards in the country in Tonie Morgan, and putting the ball in her hand usually works out pretty good for us. So to get the ball down the floor, I didn't have anymore time-outs, so we just had to go.

Yeah, if I look back on it, I wish, oh, I should have brought the 5 player up there to set a ball screen, all that kind of stuff. Normally she can get past somebody. But I'll tell you what, NC State is a good team. They defended that pretty well, and we just didn't get a good look.

Q. For both of you, what do you feel like your team proved today? Nell, you talked about the fact that you do believe you'll be playing in 10 days. What do you feel like you guys proved in this tournament?

NELL FORTNER: Look, back when we were on our 15-0 run, I felt like we were a team that could potentially get to a Final Four.

We were playing really, really physical. I feel like we're getting back in that vein. I really do. NC State is a team that could get back to the Final Four. They are so talented. We had our opportunity today to -- we took them to the wire. Just didn't finish it out.

Yeah, I feel really good about that part. There's a lot I don't feel good about. But I'm really proud of how hard we



played and competed today and found ourselves a little bit more.

KARA DUNN: Yeah, I agree with Coach Nell, from the way we started we could see how far we could make it in the NCAA Tournament. I'm grateful to even be there, considering the past two years, and I know that with the people that we have and if we play the way we have been the past two games, we're going to make it far in the tournament.

Q. Coach, could you situate some of the things you guys did better against NC State than when you played them in Atlanta?

NELL FORTNER: Look, when you go back and watch the film against NC State when they came to us, we did nothing to disrupt them. We didn't play with great energy. We were just in a place that just -- we weren't playing our best basketball at that point in time.

That gets looked at again and talked about and corrected. At this point in time of the year, you're on -- everybody is on go and everybody's attention is a little bit -- their ears are a little bit bigger. Their attention span is a little bit longer right now.

I thought they listened. We scouted them well. I thought we were prepared. Again, we just didn't finish it out.

Q. For both of you, can you point to this and say when you do get to the NCAA, look, this is a top-tier team competing at that level, this is what we can do against them? Is there something you can pull from that at least?

KARA DUNN: Yeah, absolutely. Taking what we did in this tournament, I know for sure -- like I said in the question before, I know that we can make it far in the tournament. That's all we can take from this.

We know that this is probably a game that we should have won, and we can't be down about it. We just have to keep looking forward.

NELL FORTNER: There are no moral victories. I never understood that question, really. But yeah, you learn something from every game, whether you win or lose. You learn something, and you learn the most from the losses. So we'll learn what we need to learn from this one.

Q. With the interesting calls, what type of message do you send to your players to battle through this, and then also can you speak to the play of the freshman scorer Carnegie and her game today?

NELL FORTNER: Yeah, in regards to the calls, the players can't worry about that. That is not their worry. They've got to play basketball. They've got enough on their plate. That's for coaches to do what they can do when it comes to that. Hopefully it doesn't bother the players. They need to move on. We talk about that. That's not their concern.

Dani Carnegie is finding her way back into her form of what she was early in the season, and she's getting there, and it's nice to see that happening. She is quite the player, and she brings a lot to the table.

It's nice to see her getting back into what we saw earlier in the season.

Q. Coach, Chit-Chat Wright didn't hit career highs or anything today, but she had a really good game; beat some taller players. Can you talk about her effort today slipping in and out of a couple screens?

NELL FORTNER: Yeah, she's a heck of a player, isn't she? She's fun to watch. She's got the best name in women's college basketball. She's got a really high basketball IQ. There's not a lot she can't do on the floor. Her size really doesn't prohibit her, outside of just posting up, I guess.

She really brings a calmness to us, also. I think a sense of confidence along with Carnegie. I think those two freshmen really bring a lot to the table in that regard, too. But Chit-Chat is just going to consistently get better and better running the show, as far as our team is concerned.

Q. Obviously you wanted the best look available at the end --

NELL FORTNER: Wasn't a good one, was it.

Q. Was it not there at all or what happened from your perspective?

NELL FORTNER: Ran out of time. Well, I was really hoping Tonie could just get downhill, really hoping she could get past the defenders and get downhill and get a look. She didn't get that, she passes the ball off and they covered up Carnegie pretty hard.

It was not good. If I had it to do over again, I didn't have any time-outs and that was unfortunate. But again, lesson learned. So a lot to be learned in that scenario.

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