

2022 NCAA Women's Volleyball Championship

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Omaha, Nebraska, USA

CHI Health Center Arena

Louisville Cardinals

Coach Dani Busboom Kelly

Claire Chaussee

Anna DeBeer

Press Conference



Louisville d. Pitt

25-18, 23-25, 25-22, 22-25, 15-2

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Louisville head coach Dani Busboom Kelly and student-athletes Claire Chaussee and Anna DeBeer.

COACH BUSBOOM KELLY: Clearly, very proud of this team. An historic moment for our program. But, man, going into this match, we knew we were going to have to work really hard. Pitt is an incredibly hard team to beat. And even when you feel like you have them beat, they will always find a way back in the match.

I'm just proud of how we came out in game five and finally we didn't let them back in that set. So just really gritty performance by our players.

Q. Anna, you're at the service line to start that fifth set. What's going through your mind? And as you keep serving and serving how is it feeling back there?

ANNA DEBEER: Always think start strong, first one's in and then getting my rhythm and just trusting my training. We serve every day. It's all mental. I knew if I could be aggressive and get them out of system at the beginning of that match it would help us a lot defensively and offensively.

I wanted get a nice serve going and ended up being more than I expected but I'm okay with that.

Q. Claire, you competed with the Collegiate National Team this summer. How did that experience prepare you for this moment and for this season?

CLAIRE CHAUSSEE: Well, while I was there in California I learned a lot, especially on the passing aspect. But the coaches that were there just -- I don't know, they just taught me so much. With my passing, I do, like, a three-step shuffle now. I learned that. And to just go after it. Like big moments, you've just got to go for it.

Q. A very emotional moment for everybody after this one. What does it mean to you to take this team to the final?

COACH BUSBOOM KELLY: It's something you hope you have the opportunity to do as a coach. So it's like we want to make a difference in young women's lives and we want to compete to win. And you hope that you're on this stage. And just to be able to capitalize on the opportunity and to be able to take advantage of the moment is just incredibly special.

We talk about out-teaming, outworking everybody. And in that game five, I just heard them say we will not lose, we will out-team Pitt. And it was definitely a special moment.

Q. After that fourth set, was anything you said -- I mean, it's sort of incredible to go on the run you guys did in the fifth set. Have you seen anything quite like that at a match at this level?

COACH BUSBOOM KELLY: It wasn't anything that I said. Honestly, we have some inside jokes on this team that will remain inside. And we talked about that after game four. And I just felt them all loosen up. And I knew they were ready for the moment.

I haven't seen it in a match like this. Felt we could have done that. But Pitt is so good, and we could have gone on runs in that match, and thank God, we finally we did it in game five.

Q. Anna, after falling in this exact round last year, what was this whole year like? And what's the feeling now after going through that for one year?

ASAP . . . when all is said, we're done.®
sports

ANNA DEBEER: We've been there before, last year. We know that feeling. We know how hard it is to get there and how much it hurts after that loss. So I think this whole year that's been our goal. And the team has been on the same page since the very beginning and made it known that we want to win a national championship.

And it's going to take a lot of effort and a lot of hard work to get there. Seeing the team come out tonight, it's one game at a time. It's taken so many hard matches. We've had some adversity. We've had a lot this whole tournament. And just to be able to take it one step further and be the first ACC school in the final, I mean, I literally don't even know what to say. It's a dream.

Q. Dani, talk about the block, is it PK, No. 10 put up early on in that fifth set?

COACH BUSBOOM KELLY: Yeah, we were teasing her in the locker room. When she tipped that ball behind herself, I was a little worried how she would come out in game five. But she just got her hands over.

She just trusted it and followed the scout perfectly. And she executed. So it was a pretty incredible comeback after a couple of really bonehead plays in game four.

That's what a great player does. And somebody who is really confident in themselves. And it was a great moment for her.

Q. Coach, just want you to talk to the state of the ACC. Obviously two consecutive years where two teams make it to the Final Four. Now first team ever going to a national championship. What does it say about the quality of the conference? And do you think it's here to stay?

COACH BUSBOOM KELLY: Yeah, the ACC keeps getting better and better and is attracting really great athletes and keeping really great coaches in the conference. And I think last year, we hear all the noise that, oh, the ACC isn't as good and that was a fluke.

For us and Pitt to make it back again is really impressive. And of course I think it's here to stay. And hopefully some other teams will keep getting better.

Q. I wanted to know, what does this rivalry mean to you as a head coach? And what's your relationship like with Dan Fisher? He told me before it's a friendly rivalry. Would you agree with that?

COACH BUSBOOM KELLY: I would. I like Dan off the

court, but I don't like coaching against him, though. I think that's pretty friendly.

But we were texting a little bit after Pitt beat Wisconsin and we just said congrats on the ACC. And I said, you know what we call it? We call it the Absolutely Crush Conference because us and Pitt, we go at it. We know both of us are going to be swinging away.

But this rivalry means a lot. And I think it's made both of our programs so much stronger. And there's just a lot of respect between our programs. And that's what makes it fun. It's fun to know that we're going to play them twice a year and it's going to be a battle and we're going to get pushed every time.

Q. Claire, talk about the end of the third set. What happened there to allow y'all to come back and kind of close that out and put you in a position to eventually win the match?

CLAIRE CHAUSSEE: In the third set, I feel like something that we don't talk about a lot but is much appreciated and respected on our team is the depth in our lineup. We can put anyone out there. And I think having Ayden come in in big moments and Ceci Rush, without them, we wouldn't be in this position.

And also Elena and DeBeer going on their runs with aces and stuff like that, I think that's what pushed us to win.

Q. Dani, as expected, you guys had a lot of the crowd behind your team tonight. What does it mean to you, all the love that was expressed toward you and your players tonight, especially in a match that went five?

COACH BUSBOOM KELLY: It means a lot. And I saw a quote from somebody, probably on Twitter, said, Nebraska doesn't forget their own. And I was hoping they'd be behind us.

And it just feels good to know that it's not just the people of Louisville that love this team. And we can go out of state and still gain a lot of love. I'm pretty excited because I will be really surprised if any Nebraskans are cheering for Texas on Sunday.

Q. Coach, I know that you have the potential to be the first woman to win, a coach to win a national championship. Talk about what that means to get that milestone and be able to have a run at that, obviously that extra added motivation for Saturday?

COACH BUSBOOM KELLY: I'm going to repeat a little bit what I said when I've been asked this question a lot. I got



asked it a lot last year. Just last year, I didn't really want to talk about it -- I just wanted to be a coach -- why are we talking about a female coach?

Then this year, I think my mindset has switched and it's, like, yeah, why are we talking about a female coach being the first one to win it? And that's got to change.

And I think having a kid and just doing this again and being able to be successful with a child, it just means a lot to me. And what's really special is to see how supportive this team is. So if I need to leave earlier than usual or if I have to give. More load to my assistants, they understand. And they are supportive of that.

And I don't know, I've said it, too -- there's plenty of love and time for these teams and my family. So it means a lot.

Q. Anna, on that same note, what does that mean to you and your team that you're playing for a female coach who has a chance to make history?

ANNA DEBEER: I mean, Dani has done so much for this program. When I first committed to Louisville, under her, I trusted in her and knew that she could take this program to new heights.

And just to see the growth that she's done in all she's done for us, she's a badass. I've said it before, and I'll say it again, she knows what she wants. She makes us work hard. We want to work hard for her. And just to see how well we're doing, and we give credit to the coaches and her, and it's going to be special in that final. And we want to do it for the coaches, do it for Dani, and do it for each other.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports.