

2022 NCAA Women's Volleyball Championship

Saturday, December 17, 2022

Omaha, Nebraska, USA

CHI Health Center Arena

Louisville Cardinals

Coach Dani Busboom Kelly

Anna DeBeer

Aiko Jones

Press Conference

Texas d. Louisville

25-22, 25-14, 26-24

COACH BUSBOOM KELLY: I told the team in the locker room, it's hard -- there's so many words to say about this match and this season -- it's hard to know what to say first, especially when you feel disappointed in the way you played, but you feel, like, so incredibly proud of the body of work that this team did this season.

Texas is great. They pass great. They defended great. We really couldn't do anything to stop them. And it felt like anytime we felt like we got a little momentum, they took it away so quickly.

But I'm really proud of this team. Our senior class is unbelievable what they accomplished. And it's tough. It's tough being in this moment and not taking advantage of it. But, again, just really proud of this team and especially our seniors.

Q. Dani, just the emotions of tonight with everything that happened, the set-point opportunity, what did it feel like after Anna got that kill and could have send it to four there?

COACH BUSBOOM KELLY: It felt like if we could get to game four we had a great chance to win. We couldn't quite get to game four. I kept thinking, man, if we can win this set, I felt like we could win the match.

It's, again, very disappointing when you have a swing to win the set. But it was pretty amazing to be in that position and something we're definitely going to learn from in the future.



Q. How good was Logan Eggleston tonight, especially in the first set?

COACH BUSBOOM KELLY: She was unbelievable. She was player of the year. She's been a starter, six rotation starter for Texas for five years. So I'm not shocked. I had said it before, great players typically don't have two bad matches in a row. She didn't play great on Thursday. So we knew she would be ready.

It wasn't about her playing well; it was more like what can we do on our side to match that because we kind of assumed she was going to play great.

Q. Anna and Aiko, what do you wish you came away doing better? Seemed like points in the match seemed to go away sometimes just randomly, as you look back?

ANNA DEBEER: I think it's easy to look back and regret a lot of things. But when you look at the whole scheme of things and realize what this team has accomplished this whole year, I couldn't be more proud of this group.

And you go in and we said that we wish we had more time. We wish we could make adjustments a little bit quicker. And there's so many things we wish we could have done.

We know we didn't play our best. But I'm proud of the way we fought and I'm proud of the way we came back in that third set and really didn't give up. And that's what this team has done all year. It was a lot of things that I regret but you can't look at those things. You've just got to look at the whole year and how we got here. And I couldn't be more proud of this team.

Q. Coach, is it hard to go ahead and put it in perspective how great a run this season was just right after a match like this?

COACH BUSBOOM KELLY: Yeah, it's definitely hard. Like I said, these opportunities are incredibly hard to get.

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And when you don't take advantage of them, it's really disappointing.

But we're going to look back on this season and be thankful for so many things and be really proud. And we've changed the program. We've changed a city. We've changed fans. It's been really incredible what we've done.

Like I said, the senior class, insanely incredible what they've done. The last four, some of them five years, I think we've almost done something new in the program every single year they've been here.

But it's hard. It's hard, especially when you feel like you could have done more and could have given a little more of a battle.

Q. Dani, a bit of an inside baseball question. Have you ever been part of a match where there were two rotation errors? And did you get an explanation on yours?

COACH BUSBOOM KELLY: I've been in matches where there's been out of rotations called on the serve receiving team. That happens frequently where players leave early. That's a huge advantage. I've never seen an out of rotation called on the serving team in all of my coaching.

Q. You talked about just what you've done and the players have done for Louisville, but also what programs like Louisville have done for volleyball. I know you've talked about it this whole weekend. But looking at how much growth there has been with the program such as yourself, can you put that into perspective?

COACH BUSBOOM KELLY: I think it's a long answer to a great question, because we focus a lot on our university and our city because we're in it, and it's amazing what we're doing. But we talk about Claire, Chaussee and Anna DeBeer being, quote/unquote, undersized and what they can accomplish on this stage. And they got us here.

And we talk about Aiko, who didn't play club volleyball, who grew up in Jamaica. She might be fifth-year but she didn't play thousands of games like Logan Eggleston. She got here and played her first game -- and what she can do on this stage.

PK is from South Dakota. Started club, like, her junior year, practically.

And it's just amazing what these guys can accomplish. And I think it gives hope to athletes everywhere that you don't have to have this storybook career to make it here

and to perform well.

And our team is just unbelievable role models. And they're all so different. I asked Cara Cresse what makes our team so special. She said, our team has so many different ideas about the world and life and religion and politics, but we respect each other so much. On top of that, they want to learn why.

And I hope that bleeds into other teams and to young women.

Again, I think that's a long answer to a great question. And I'm proud of the ACC and the parity in our sport. I think it's going to continue to get tougher and tougher to be in this moment. I think this was the first year, like, the Elite Eight games were unbelievable. They were almost all five-setters. So, again, parity is going to continue to get tougher.

Q. I would normally just not ask this question but it's not every day that a volleyball coach wears an adidas jacket made by Gucci. Could you tell us about that?

COACH BUSBOOM KELLY: Goes back to last year with Anna Stevenson being obsessed with what I'm wearing for whatever reason. It's kind of been a thing. Adidas came here and surprised me with this jacket. And they gave it to me on Thursday and said I'm feeling really good that you're going to win; can you wear it on Saturday? So here I am.

It's a little tight. Not super comfortable, but I was pretty surprised. It was pretty cool.

Q. I talked to a dad today of one of the fans before this, and he was here, but takes his daughters to your games so they can watch your players interact, whether they win, lose, win points, lose points. To hear stuff like that, that's kind of where a lot of parents are with your program, wanting to just gravitate their kids to it.

COACH BUSBOOM KELLY: It means a ton. It's what we set out to do every day is inspire other people. These guys do it. Not me. So I don't know. I would let them answer the question.

AIKO JONES: That means a lot. I think this program and the foundation of what this program has become has been our culture. And that is something that this senior class especially has worked really hard to establish and to maintain. And I think to hear that people in the stands can see that and appreciate that for what it is means a lot.

And it shows that what we are doing on and off the court

doesn't only affect us but affects those around us. Like Dani said, that's what we set out to do as a program. But it's nice to hear that outsiders hear that as well and appreciate it.

Q. We've talked all week about hometown, home state support for you and the girls. What has that meant to you this week, today, and moving forward?

COACH BUSBOOM KELLY: It's been really special for me personally, obviously, and to know that so many people are behind us. And it just means a lot to know that no matter where I'm at there's great support. And the "go big red" is not our chant, but we got the drift that we were wearing red jerseys and that the crowd really -- I think win or lose -- they just wanted to see more volleyball.

And that's how I felt too. It was like, man, I want to see what we can do and let this game continue. I felt the crowd, they wanted to see us play great. A lot of people in the stands have followed our team, which is really cool.

I think they love watching Anna and Claire and Aiko hit her blocks. And they just wanted to see us compete and feel that spirit. It means a lot, and it's special to be here.

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