

Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Championship

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Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Wisconsin Badgers

Marisa Moseley

Katie Nelson

Press Conference



BIG
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Illinois - 75, Wisconsin - 66

THE MODERATOR: We'll open with an opening statement from coach and then go to questions for the student-athlete.

MARISA MOSELEY: Yeah. I think obviously a disappointing way to finish your season. However, I think that we had a lot of growth here, especially in the second half of the Big Ten. And usually when you play your best basketball in February and March and I think we were, we just kind of had a little hiccup today.

But so incredibly proud of the lady sitting next to me and very grateful to have the opportunity to coach her the last four years and really, just told the team in the locker room that next season preparation starts right now.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please, for Katie.

Q. You played with, about a month now without Sydney and you guys looked like you played really well today. Despite the loss you guys looked like you played really hard. You had some determination and grit out there. You hit the shots when you needed to hit shots. Talk a little bit about your preparation coming into this game and then about going through the game and the changes you made.

KATIE NELSON: Yeah, definitely. I think that we prepped for this game like we do every other game. Coach always tells us it's the most important game because it's the game you have tonight. So I think that we all came in with the mindset that we were going to win.

We made as many plays as we could but ultimately we didn't make enough to get the win. But really just proud of the growth of the team that we had this year. I think we all stuck together and there's only good things to come.

Q. When you look at your team, very, very young. I think you're the only one leaving, aren't you, if I remember right?

KATIE NELSON: Yes.

MARISA MOSELEY: Unfortunately. I mean that she's leaving (laughing). Sorry.

Q. What are some things that you learned from your younger teammates this year about how they progressed during the season?

KATIE NELSON: Yeah. I think looking back at the summer to now it is insane. I feel like we're a completely different team for the better. I think that it's been a really tough year and we talked about transitions as a team but just working out team chemistry, playing team basketball, playing for each other was huge and just continuing to try to leave Wisconsin basketball better, in a better place than we found it, and I think we did that this year.

Q. What does it mean to you to be able to play another year under Coach Moseley and just how much the team grew this season.

KATIE NELSON: Yeah. I mean, it meant the world to me. I wouldn't want to play for any other coach. The team is really lucky to have her. She's so knowledgeable on and off the court. She pushes us to be better women in the community, as basketball players and as people, and it really prepares us for life after basketball.

She is so passionate about the game of basketball. She made me play with the passion of the game again and my love for the sport. The team is super lucky to have her and I'm really grateful for the four years that I had.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thank you, Katie. You can go back to the locker room.

We'll take questions for coach.

Q. We talked to you at Big Ten media days. You had

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just got the job basically. Talk about your experiences this year. Even though this is a tough loss, your kids played hard and they played determined and there was a purpose in what they were doing. Talk about from when you took the job late in the summer until now.

MARISA MOSELEY: Yeah. Like Katie mentioned, completely different team. And one of the things that I was trying to instill in them in my excitement when I was at media day -- and I saw a video, and I was like, Wow, I was a lot fresher then. Now I'm just a regular coach -- is that we were going to compete for 40 minutes every time we took the floor, that we were going to play extremely hard, and that we were going to put a better product on the floor each time we went out there.

And those things I think that we did each game that we went out. We definitely had a little bit of a roller coaster year but that's really what your non-conference is for. It's to prepare you for the conference.

Would I have loved to have had a winning season and do all the things that I've been fortunate enough to experience in my career to this point? A hundred percent.

But I think the way that this ended up playing out and the growth and especially in the Big Ten and for our players to understand what we were capable of doing with this particular group and now we're going to have a whole new crop of kids coming in.

But one thing that I reminded them of and I just said it again in the locker room is you never get an opportunity to play with this group of people ever again and each day we wanted to try to take advantage of that and that was one of those opportunities.

Q. Marisa, what was Illinois doing with their defense in that third quarter that kind of stopped you guys? And also talk about that fourth quarter comeback. You guys almost pulled it off again.

MARISA MOSELEY: Yeah. I think -- I don't know, obviously the defense, there seemed to be a lid on the basket there for us in the third. We got some good looks. We did a great job boxing out and getting to the boards and we were kind of one shot and done. We took some quick shots.

But the fourth quarter, I mean, if anyone's watched our team or followed us this year, we definitely have a habit of putting ourselves in a position of trying to make it exciting and coming back. So we made some big plays there and I thought we had the momentum going, but in the end, they made a few more plays than us.

But that's who we are at our core and that's who I am at my core, that we're always going to fight, and we're not going to give up until the final buzzer.

Q. Your team grew tremendously this season. How excited does that make you for next year and what Badger fans can look forward to?

MARISA MOSELEY: Yeah. I think definitely very excited and anxious to get back to it. As a coach, sometimes this time of year you're a little spent, but I'm feeling encouraged and excited about the recruits we have coming in, young ladies that we're talking to now, and the fan base, their excitement. I've gotten several Tweets and e-mails and even handwritten letters from people in the community, just, I've been a Badger fan for 20 years. You know, this is so much excitement this year. I can't wait for next year.

For a team that won eight games, for that to be the environment and the kind of atmosphere that people are feeling, I think that we have so much support for next year and we are building a brand here with the Badgers women's basketball. Like, we have a really strong brand with Badgers overall, but I think with women's basketball we're reinvigorating our fan base and we're definitely going to be in a different situation next year when we're at this tournament.

Q. Did anyone from Illinois surprise you today?

MARISA MOSELEY: Surprise? No, but one of our Achilles heels this year has been the post, right, post defense? We're not that big. We don't play very deep bench. And so I think that we had prepared for the ball to go inside, but I think we didn't do a good enough job of doubling at times.

Once we made some adjustments in the second half, then they made some adjustments as well. But, you know, I think probably, if anything -- we've played each other now, this is our third time. I don't think anything surprises you.

But what I told my team what we shouldn't be surprised about is that people play their best basketball at this time of year and sometimes players who haven't had a significant impact will have career days and that's what happened. So I'm prophetic, unfortunately.

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