Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Saturday, March 5, 2022

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Gainbridge Fieldhouse

Ohio State Buckeyes

Kevin McGuff

Braxtin Miller

Jacy Sheldon

Postgame Press Conference

Indiana - 70, Ohio State - 62

THE MODERATOR: We'll start with an opening statement from coach and then take questions for the student-athletes.

KEVIN McGUFF: I am good. We can get right to the questions.

THE MODERATOR: All right.

Q. Very physical basketball game and at times a touch kind of a basketball game. How do you adjust to that during the game from the start to the finish knowing that, okay, some of the things that it's rough and then it's not rough. Talk about how as players you adjust to that.

BRAXTIN MILLER: I just think that it's obviously a difficult situation. We just kind of got to keep playing our game. Stay physical, stay disciplined, and we just kind of powered through it. It's going to change from game to game, but you can't let that affect what you do and what we were doing.

JACY SHELDON: Indiana's a physical team and so are we, so it was a physical game overall and I think just staying together was our main focus there to stay in the game.

Q. Braxtin, I think before this tournament I had asked you about still wanting to prove something specifically with Indiana and Michigan and those losses still kind of feeling you guys a little bit. Tonight at times it got way from you, but then you battled back late. Just what do you think could have gone better and what do you think about your team's fight down the stretch.

BRAXTIN MILLER: Obviously it didn't turn out the way we wanted to. I think that we gave a lot of fight and effort and hard work and sometimes those things happen, but I don't think it was because that we didn't work as hard as we want to and fight back and things like that.

Sometimes shots just didn't fall for us, but that will happen. But I was really proud of the way that we pushed today.

Q. Jacy, you had 22 today. You were on a (no microphone) she was guarding you a good bit. How were you able to find successes against her, what kind of matchup is she from a defensive standpoint?

JACY SHELDON: She's a great player. She's great defender. I think overall we moved the ball today. We didn't make all the shots we wanted to, but we played really hard and stayed together. So I'm proud of everybody on our team. They fought until the end of this game.

Q. What was the high points of the tournament for both of you guys?

BRAXTIN MILLER: I think there was a lot of high points. Super excited for this team. We just gave it all we got, and being the No. 1 seed, we just played as hard as we could with a lot of my best friends and great teammates. So that was probably my high point being able to finish this tournament out with people I really care about and I know really care about me and will fight for me and I'll fight for them.

JACY SHELDON: Yeah. Just being part of this team, honestly. It's a really good group. We're really close and we love going out there and fighting for each other. So just being able to do that throughout this whole tournament was awesome.

Q. When you guys played Indiana last December to now, what can you say about the growth of this team in that span? Obviously the result was disappointing but what can you say about the growth team from then to now?

JACY SHELDON: Yeah. I think the first time we played them was one of the first games of the season. We got our butts kicked and we really fought and we go out every night and give it our all every game. So we learned so much from that and I'm just proud of everyone on this team.

BRAXTIN MILLER: I think it speaks volumes to our heart and our dedication, you know, where we started and we were starting to finish off is totally different and I'm just really proud of us for coming in the gym and working every day to be our best together and it's super inspiring and motivating to all of us.

Q. It looks like when you guys were able to drive inside the paint you guys were successful but you got away from that a little bit. Is that one of the adjustments that you guys will have to make going into the March Madness?

BRAXTIN MILLER: I definitely think that getting concise shots and outside shots is super important. Getting to the rim is really big for us and being able to use that to even some ground and things like that. But I think if that we'll stick with and just keep working hard and get into the gym and make sure that we make the correct adjustments with whatever the coaches think.

Q. The team was just 4-21 from outside today. Kevin was talking to us about how good Indiana is defending in the half court. Was it just kind of the way they played defensively? And then for you, the three-point shots not falling, what are you feeling with your game there?

JACY SHELDON: Yeah. Indiana, credit to them. They're a great offensive team, but I think we got a lot of looks we wanted to tonight and we couldn't hit them today. And so that happens and we didn't make as many shots as we wanted to, but we'll get back in the gym and work on it and we'll be all right.

Q. Taylor came into the season, transferred to the team, has made everybody better from the time that she got here with us guys. How has her leadership in this particular tournament meant to you guys, especially without her having 18 points a game. That's usually what she had, but she was able to contribute in other aspects of the game.

JACY SHELDON: Yeah. She's a great player. She's a great scorer and she's an even better teammate. So she's made everybody better and she pushes all of us every day and her leadership has been awesome for this team.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, ladies. Good luck in the tournament. We'll take questions for coach.

Q. Great season. You lost today, but over the season, you had a tremendous season, made progress all the way through. What do you take from today going forward into the NCAA Tournament?

KEVIN McGUFF: Yeah. First, Indiana's a great team. I thought they played really well and they're very physical, very disciplined. So give credit to them for great win.

But I was proud of them, just for, in terms of the season where we started to where we are now. We made significant progress, which is a real credit to our players, especially our upperclassmen, our leaders. They really have shown the way to the young people and we had a lot of people make significant progress and we have as a team because of that leadership.

Q. How did foul trouble with Taylor, Tanaya, and Rebeka, too, kind of effect what you wanted to do?

KEVIN McGUFF: Yeah. I mean, certainly it was a problem for us today and I think it kind of hurt some of them trying to get into a good rhythm in and out, fouls, and all that type of stuff.

Q. The game didn't come down to this, but when Kateri misses that kind of bunny at the end, what do you tell a player like that?

KEVIN McGUFF: Yeah. That kind of sums up the day, you know, because it's like just missed opportunities. Indiana's a great team and a great defensive team, but still even with that, I thought we got enough opportunities, but we didn't capitalize and they made the most of their chances more so than we did.

Q. Growing up playing soccer and up and down I understand the physicality of it. One of the things I learned about the other opponents is size. It looks like huge, Indiana had a little more size, is that something that you guys can, obviously can't fix that, but on the physicality, what's one of the things that you can do as a coaching staff to improve that?

KEVIN McGUFF: Yeah. No, they're very physical and you can tell they have done a great job in the weight room and they got size around the basket too, which bothered us as well.

Q. Yesterday both teams combined for an 0-9 start, so it was a real slow start. Today, comes out very quick. How did that set the tone for the pace and how the

game played out?

KEVIN McGUFF: I will tell you, I was most concerned with our ability to execute and generate quality shots. From the get-go we were doing that against a great defensive team. So I was really pleased with our offensive execution, and on the flip side, we weren't getting stops. Indiana was really hot to start and we really wanted to, part of the plan was to try to push them to score from the perimeter more so than around the basket but they made especially Patberg made some really big shots and really got it going.

Q. How big was it to build some defensive momentum just sort of at the end of the game just heading forward and how crucial was that just heading forward into the NCAA Tournament?

KEVIN McGUFF: We played really hard down the stretch. We kept fighting. That's what I told the kids afterwards I said, Hey, if we'll continue to play like we practiced and take that intensity and focus and fight into the NCAA Tournament, we'll have a chance to do some things.

Q. At what point did you find out that Gulbe wasn't going to start for IU and from your advantage point how did they makeup the difference without her there?

KEVIN McGUFF: Just before the game. They were putting the starters in, we knew that she wasn't going to start. But their other kids stepped up and played pretty well and she got in the game and had some good minutes as well.

Q. IU guarded Taylor pretty well tonight. Every shot she had was further from the three-point line and multiple people on her. How do you kind of deal with that and is it even harder when you are dealing with foul trouble with your bigs?

KEVIN McGUFF: Yeah, it makes it a little harder when you're dealing with foul trouble and she garners so much attention, rightfully so. I think still it kind of opened up some opportunities for other people who at times capitalized, but we just didn't capitalize enough.

Q. Braxtin toward the closing she had, she hit back-to-back threes and I was hoping for momentum on that. However, foul trouble again kind of took her away from the game. So is that one of those adjustments that can be made?

KEVIN McGUFF: Yeah, foul trouble was critical today and you're right Braxtin had a great game, really, she fought hard and was really inspirational and vocal in the huddles and just keeping people organized and so forth. So she had a great game and she obviously has a sense of urgency, the end coming for her, you can see that today.

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