

Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 7, 2024
Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA
Target Center

Maryland Terrapins

Brenda Frese

Allie Kubek

Brinae Alexander

Bri McDaniel

Postgame Press Conference

Maryland - 75, Illinois - 65

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everyone. We'll start with the Maryland press conference. Opening statement from Coach Frese.

BRENDA FRESE: We're thrilled to be playing another day. Just really proud of this group for finding a way. I thought Illinois came in red hot, 8-for-9 from the field. We couldn't have had a colder start.

Credit Illinois and their veterans with their will to win.

Love that we flipped the script in the second, third, and fourth quarters. Nae, Bri, Allie leading the way for us says a lot about how this team dug deep and found a way to battle.

So really proud. I think this win shows we're an NCAA Tournament team. We have wins over Syracuse, three wins over Illinois, win over Penn State. Six wins over top-55 teams with a top seven strength of schedule and the toughest schedule in the Big Ten.

It should matter who you are playing night in and night out, and I think that type of schedule prepared us to never flinch, to be down 14 and to be able to come back and play the way we did today.

Q. Bri, let's start with you. What kind of adjustments did you guys make defensively after that first quarter? Because like you said, they started off hot, and it seemed like you guys kind of started closing that space on some of the jumpers they were getting. Then



you scored 24 points off of turnovers.

BRI MCDANIEL: Just playing together. I feel like it was little moments where we weren't sprinting back, and we had to fix that. So we just came together and told each other we've got to pick this up and be better on the defensive end. It starts on the defense.

So we just came together and put together a good game after we were down and just kept -- never looked back, yeah.

Q. Brinae and Allie, you guys had a great game from three obviously. Allie, you made two. It seems like you're uber efficient when you do shoot it from three. I know you passed up one and made the extra pass to her. How big was that turning point? Because you started missing a couple layups, and then to hit the two threes to bring the game close, how important was that?

ALLIE KUBEK: It was definitely important.

For me, I was not making any of my shots in the beginning, but I made two of my threes. It's definitely a confidence booster too, seeing that ball go in, and knowing Brinae is passing the ball because they both collapsed to her.

Credit to her because Brinae could have shot that and it probably would have went in, too.

Q. Question for Allie, third game of the season where you eclipsed 30-plus minutes. What's your mindset behind just always being prepared when your number's called?

ALLIE KUBEK: Yeah, like you said, just always being ready when my number is called. When I'm in there, just doing my best, whether it's scoring, rebounding, or playing defense, whatever my coaches need me to do and whatever my teammates need me to do. And just being there to do what we've got to do to win.

Q. Question for Bri. Today was your first career double double. Was there like something you noticed



when you were grabbing rebounds out there? Was Illinois not paying attention to you? Were you just being extra aggressive today?

BRI MCDANIEL: Just being extra aggressive. Coach B told me -- she pulled up our last stats from the game with rebounding, and she told me I've got to get on the boards more for her.

So just coming in and being the pest I am and going in and getting the rebound. So that's really what it was today.

Q. For any of you guys, Brinae, you haven't gotten to talk, so I guess this is going to be for you. In a tournament setting like this, can you explain to me what the turnaround is now? What are you doing in these next 24 hours to both prepare for Ohio State, get rested. Take me through the Brinae routine, I guess.

BRINAE ALEXANDER: I think the most important thing is fueling our bodies and also recovering well because this will be a game every day. So we'll have to play back to back. Like you said, it is a quick turnaround.

I think it's just really important that we lock in on that, because if we don't feel good, we won't play good. I think it's an emphasis on going back now, eating a meal, getting off our feet, doing recovery, watching film. I think the rest of the day is going to be a big mental day for us as far as locking in on the scout for who we have up next and just to lock in on our recovery.

Q. Brinae, this is for you. Can you take us through that 16-2 run in the third quarter. What was the feel out there? What were you guys doing so well during that stretch? And what are you guys talking to each other about it as you guys are starting to put some distance in between you?

BRINAE ALEXANDER: We know that Maryland basketball is getting out, rebounding, and running in transition. Also it starts on the defensive end, so I think we really had to lock in more defensively.

In the first half, we really didn't make them work hard for their shots. They had a lot of open looks. So I think we went in at half and made it a point to make them work for everything that they got.

Also, just be tougher. We talked about having that dog mentality. Also, it's not really how you start, it's about how you finish. I think we finished strong, and I'm proud of my team for that.

Q. Brinae, how much of it, since you can't see Ohio

State live, is like watching you guys' old games versus watching their recent ones. What are you guys doing?

BRINAE ALEXANDER: I think it's pretty much an array of games. It's our last games, which obviously we lock in most importantly. But we do watch other scouts to see player personnel and what their tendencies are. This will be the third time playing them, so it's not like we're not familiar.

But I think it will be very important to know your personnel, and it really comes down to one possession at a time, and those possessions matter.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Bri, Brinae, Allie.

Q. Brenda, from your perspective, what did you guys start doing better defensively after that first quarter?

BRENDA FRESE: When you look at the stats in that first quarter and just us not guarding, I really thought we were going to play more zone in this game because we had the first two games. I thought the switch defensively when we went all predominantly man, we just got a lot more aggressive, dialed up, and made them have to take difficult shots.

So I thought it started with just getting a lot more aggressive on the defensive end.

Q. I want to ask you about the role players, kind of Allie, Brinae, even Faith had that big layup to increase it to 6. Shy fouled out, and Jakia wasn't as efficient as she has been. How important that they showed their scoring punch?

BRENDA FRESE: It's huge. You've got to have that in tournament play. Timely plays. I thought Faith with that O board to put back, she was ready when her number was called, especially when Shy went out, and we had to have the points and the rebounds we were able to get.

I just love the resiliency. I thought Allie started slow, but to come back and kind of hit those threes, I thought was big. That really boosted our team with confidence.

Q. Hey, Coach, it was around this time last year when we really started to see these glimpses of potential from Bri, and now a year later she's getting her first career double double in a tournament game. What can you say about her growth as a player over this season?

BRENDA FRESE: She's put the time in behind the scenes. She put her head down and went to work. I love



being able to see it pay off because she's put that time in and has prepared herself for this moment.

Q. Just a quick one on Ohio State. What do you guys got to do a little bit differently especially now that you've got them on a neutral site at this point?

BRENDA FRESE: Finish it. Both times we've been right there. Got to get a few more stops on the defensive end. They're a great team. They can all score the basketball. So from our end, it's finishing the 40 minutes.

Q. Kind of similar to what Kareem asked and what I asked the players, what does your process look like for now these next 24 hours? How much are you going to scout this game versus go back and watch Ohio State? What are you and your assistants going to do?

BRENDA FRESE: They've been working behind the scenes. They always do a terrific job. For us, it's get the team ready for the scout against Ohio State. From us as coaches, we'll meet and talk about our game plan and then watch film the rest of the night.

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