

Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

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

Nebraska Cornhuskers

Amy Williams

Alexis Markowski

Callin Hake

Jaz Shelley

Postgame Press Conference

Nebraska - 64, Purdue - 56

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everyone. We will start the Nebraska press conference with the opening statement from Coach Williams.

AMY WILLIAMS: I'm just really proud of our team for surviving and advancing, and we're excited to have the opportunity to continue to play tomorrow in the quarters.

It was a little ugly game. We give a lot of credit to Purdue. We've played them for three times now, and we know that they are a very scrappy team that is going to make everything very, very difficult. I thought they did a great job of that here today on their second day of playing already.

We were able to make some plays at the right moments to be able to create the separation we needed to get a win.

Q. Alexis, a career high of six assists tonight. What did you see from how they defended you, and what were you able to take advantage of?

ALEXIS MARKOWSKI: They were definitely collapsing and doubling from the low side, so I knew I'd have teammates open on the perimeter. I just needed to be patient and make the right reads. Lucky for me, my teammates hit big shots.

Q. Callin, once you got into the game for a little bit, what was your mindset about where you could get scoring opportunities and impact the game?

CALLIN HAKE: Going off of what Lex said, we knew they



were going to double from the low side, and that was something we had practiced and repped on in practice. I knew if I would spot up, Lex threw phenomenal passes, that just opened up opportunities for everyone on the team.

Q. Just for any of you, what was working so well defensively in this game?

JAZ SHELLEY: I think we had a game plan to be able to keep the ball in front, and we didn't do that last time we played against Purdue. I think we did a lot better job of sitting down and avoiding paint touches. So I think that's kind of how we did that today.

THE MODERATOR: Callin or Alexis, anything to add on that question?

ALEXIS MARKOWSKI: I think Jaz nailed it.

CALLIN HAKE: Agreed.

Q. Lex, how do you feel after a game like this where you only score seven points in the first quarter, but then you walk out of here with a win?

ALEXIS MARKOWSKI: In March you want to win, survive and advance. I felt like today, just kind of adjusting to the tournament and playing under the big lights and stuff like that.

Yeah, I think it was good to have an opportunity to play today. We're going to prepare for Michigan State and come here ready to play tomorrow.

Q. Jaz, just what impressed you about what Cal did in this game and what she did for the team to help you win?

JAZ SHELLEY: Callin is such an energy player for us, and she hits big shots, like timely big shots. And we rely on her to be able to do that. Once she hits that, everyone else around her gets hyped.

She was able to come in and hit huge shots for us, and help the team get going. We're a little flat in patches, and



she always helps the team get back up again.

Q. Cal, what is it like for you that this tournament is in Minnesota? How is it different?

CALLIN HAKE: Obviously this is home for me, so that's super special. But wherever we're playing, I absolutely adore playing with these girls, and that doesn't change anything.

Having family here makes it sweet, but we're here to win, survive and advance, like Lex said.

Q. Jaz, you guys played Michigan State, I guess collectively as a team if they play full-court defense, how do the five people on the court have to work together so you handle that better than you did against Ohio State?

JAZ SHELLEY: I think everyone just has to want the ball. We have to be aggressive, try and look up the floor. Yeah, we just have to take care of the ball essentially, and that comes from people being aggressive and wanting the basketball.

Q. Amy, after the first quarter what changes or what things were said to try to get more offense?

AMY WILLIAMS: I thought early in the game probably a credit to Purdue's defense, but I thought we were settling for a little -- a few too many perimeter shots, kind of quick perimeter shots. We're okay with those shots. We have great shooters that were confident in them shooting it, but we wanted to get paint touches first and be able to work hard for the paint touches.

I thought early in the game we were maybe just playing a little frantic, taking quick shots, and we needed to kind of settle into the tournament, settle into our game, and be willing to work a little bit harder to get the ball inside, inside-outside looks.

Q. If you recall, Coach Williams, I asked you before the season about Coley's development to date. Can you talk about, because she's here in town, and this is her hometown. Talk about how she's been doing, progressing up to this point.

AMY WILLIAMS: I absolutely love Kendall Coley. What a team player she's been for us. There's times where we have to play here at the 3 spot. We have to play here at the 4 spot. She has to switch screens and be willing to stay in front of pesky, quick guards. She's got to be willing to bang around with post players. She knows every position on the court.

Whatever our team needs her to do, she's willing to do. Because of that, she's played just an integral, integral role for our team this entire season. So exciting to bring her back to her hometown to be able to cap it off here in the Big Ten tournament.

Q. Coach, you mentioned Purdue is kind of a scrappy team. You've played them three times. What kind of makes that kind of their defining trait in your eyes? Then how was Sophie Swanson able to kind of get seven three-pointers? Was it just kind of the focus on Ellis and their other scorers?

AMY WILLIAMS: To be honest with you, they're scrappy, I think, because they take on the identity of their coach. You can see how much that team enjoys fighting and playing hard for their head coach, and they lay it all on the line.

They have some really great pieces. I think I've noticed, in three games of playing Purdue, some similarities in the sense that we both have fifth year seniors, very experienced players. They've got Jeanae Terry, Madison Layden, Caitlyn Harper all season, Abbey Ellis, just experienced fifth and sixth year kids. Then we've kind of got the Jaz Shelleys and Alexis Markowskis and our experience on our side, Maddie Krull.

You mix in with that some talented freshmen. We feel awesome about Natalie Potts and Logan Nissley and Jessica Petrie and the contributions to our team. On their side, you've got Mary Ashley Stevenson, Rashunda Jones who goes crazy last night, and turn around today and Sophie Swanson goes crazy on us.

I don't think we were focusing on other players. We knew how good of a shooter Sophie Swanson is. Kind of late game they ran her some really good actions to get her open looks, and she knocked them down and was hot from behind the arc. We survived her 25 points and did a pretty good job holding them to 31 points outside of hers.

Q. Just what did you see from Callin in that fourth quarter? Obviously made big play after big play.

AMY WILLIAMS: I'm so incredibly proud of Callin. She bounced back after missing a couple free throws at the Illinois game that I know she wanted to have, but the next morning she was back in the gym. She was working, she was shooting, she was back at it.

Our staff continues to maintain confidence in her. Then to watch her come out and step up and make big shots, big plays. I thought there was a stretch where she scored a bucket, went down and took a critical charge, I think, on

Jeanae Terry, and then went back down and hit another big bucket. That stretch right there really gave us the confidence to know we can push forth and win this game.

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