

Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Friday, March 6, 2026

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Gainbridge Fieldhouse

Minnesota Gophers

Dawn Plitzuweit

Sophie Hart

Grace Grocholski

Postgame Press Conference



Ohio State - 60, Minnesota - 55

THE MODERATOR: We'll start with an opening statement from Coach and then we'll turn it over for questions for the student-athletes.

DAWN PLITZUWEIT: Okay. First of all, I would like to congratulate Ohio State. I thought they played a really good game, I thought they were really aggressive, made us feel really uncomfortable, got us sped up in a lot of ways, and forced us to turn the ball over in either full-court scenario or even in the half-court scenario. And then I thought when we had good opportunities, even in the fourth quarter, we just -- it looked like we felt sped up and rushed a little bit and didn't capitalize on a lot of those.

They got some offensive rebounds kind of later in that game that hurt us. I thought they were kind of dumping it down low to Lemmila in some either handoff actions, or ball screens hurt us too.

So good opportunities for us to learn. Good news is we get to continue playing, and certainly proud of our young ladies for putting themselves in a position where we feel very confident that our body of work has put us in a good spot for the next tournament.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Sophie, Grace, what are some of the learning lessons that you guys take from this right after the game? I know you haven't dissected the film yet, but what can you use to your advantage for the NCAA tournament?

SOPHIE HART: I think it's just staying together. I mean,

we played really hard. I don't think we lost for lack of effort. I think we took great shots. I thought we, to the best of our ability, executed the game plan. So really not losing our confidence, if that makes sense, and getting too down on this game. They're a phenomenal team. They will probably make a deep run into the tourney, if not here. So I mean, we just kind of have to stay together.

Q. Grace, what's the immediate conversation like amongst the team once you guys suffer a tough loss like this? I know you dealt with some adversity this season. How do you guys typically respond?

GRACE GROCHOLSKI: I think in the past and after this game, we're going to respond well. I think -- I mean, Ohio State's a great team and we knew that, so I think coming into this game we wanted to put our best foot forward, and I don't think we did that. I think there was some uncharacteristic things that we did, like she was saying, about us getting sped up. So I think after this game, we're just going to go back and look at everything we need to do and go into each game with the same level of confidence, like Sophie was saying.

Q. How grateful are you for the opportunity to continue playing and knowing that despite this loss, you still get to go to the NCAA tournament?

GRACE GROCHOLSKI: Yeah, I mean, I think that's something we've been striving for every single year since we've been here. So I think we're obviously super grateful to be in the position we are, yeah.

Q. Sophie, you finished the game with 19 rebounds. What did your preparation look like going into this week and how will you build off of that in the NCAA tournament?

SOPHIE HART: You know, I don't know if we specifically focused on that. Just kind of what the team needed me to do today. So tried to pull down as many as I could. Sometimes you get some balls that just bounce your way, and I think that happened today, and just kind of keep going after 'em with all my might.



THE MODERATOR: We'll excuse the student-athletes and we'll take questions for coach.

Q. Good season, solid season, and you've got shot some good recruits coming in next year to add some depth to this team and some quality depth. Talk a little bit about where you think your team is right now headed into the NCAA tournament.

DAWN PLITZUWEIT: Well, certainly playing in the Big Ten, and you can, from a metrics standpoint, an analytics standpoint, certainly argue the depth of the conference is the best of any Power 4 conference in the country. So in playing in the Big Ten night-in, night-out in 18 games, now 19 with the conference tournament, we really believe it prepares us for whatever style we play next and whatever that looks like.

Q. Now that you've been through the whole gauntlet of conference play this season, can you kind of speak to the resiliency and the strength of your team this year so far.

DAWN PLITZUWEIT: Right. I think in order to compete against the best you're going to have to play at a really, really high level. And again, I give Ohio State credit because I thought they were -- they played really hard, they played really, really well. I don't think that we played as well as we could play, obviously, but at the same time, we were right there with them and had opportunities. So I think it helps you get better in a lot of different ways, and certainly excited to use that moving forward.

Q. It seemed like they were working harder to involve Lemmilla kind of with the pick and rolls and things like that just to make your big girls work on defense?

DAWN PLITZUWEIT: Yeah, they were. I thought we, both in the hand-off scenarios. And then also in the ball screens and I thought there were a number of times that we were kind of there but we didn't make a play on the ball, whether that was because we weren't ready to make a play on the ball, whether it was because they just passed it in a spot we couldn't get to it, we'll go back even back on film and evaluate some of that, but certainly I thought she was a good key in that game.

Q. I was in Champaign when Jaloni dropped 40 points on the Fighting Illini. It's one thing to watch her game on paper, what is it like now that you've coached against her a couple of times this year to try to prepare for her and the Ohio State attack?

DAWN PLITZUWEIT: Well, she's so challenging because she's so good in transition. So you got to be very, very

acutely aware of where she's at and what she's doing. It's not like the first move, she has the speed to get by you in the first move, but then she also has the hesitation or stop, start, and ability to re-attack. She has the ability, and I thought the last layup that she had, she kind of split two kids and got to the rim. But her ability to finish at the rim is very, very special because a lot of players, even if they can get to that point struggle to score at the rim the way that she does.

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