

Big 12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Friday, March 12, 2021

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

West Virginia Mountaineers

Kysre Gondrezick

Postgame Press Conference



West Virginia - 58, Kansas State - 56

Q. Fighting through that, playing from behind for most of the game after you got back to an early start -- or off to a good start. What was the mindset, even when you're down seven in the last minute or so?

KYSRE GONDREZICK: Our mantra is physical for 40, and that's what we predicate ourselves on. Defensively, we picked up the intensity, caused some turnovers, and was able to capitalize on them. We just kept ourselves in the game the entire game.

You know, it's March. The craziest things happen during this time, and the fact that we gave ourselves a shot, it was great to come out on the side with a victory, and we're just going to carry this momentum into tomorrow night.

Q. Kysre, the second quarter, a lot of the third quarter, and even stretches in the fourth quarter, the offense just wasn't clicking like it normally does. Can you talk about how you guys fight through that and stay in the game and keep belief alive that you can win it in the end?

KYSRE GONDREZICK: You know, when we've been in these moments before -- I think the very first time we played Kansas State on our home floor, we were down by 12 with three minutes to go. So we're very familiar with playing through adversity. We were just able to capitalize on their turnovers and apply ball pressure, and that was one of the things we needed to place the focus on in our scout, and we did that.

That being said, we'll take it. We need to do a better job defensively and on the offensive end as well. Go and watch some film and do better with the mistakes we made tonight.

Q. Kysre, obviously, an unreal comeback in that last minute. What was Coach saying in the huddle when

you guys were turning on the trap that really worked?

KYSRE GONDREZICK: Yeah, just don't foul and apply ball pressure. Having Esmery out there and her length, her versatility, she was able to get her hands on the ball. I think we were able to get two jump balls to get the possession back to us, and we were able to score on that possession. So that was very important, and I think that changed the game.

Q. Kysre, I feel like you've been in a bunch of rock fights this year in terms of you guys know how to come back. What gives you that poise that you can come back from seven down with one minute to play to pull this out?

KYSRE GONDREZICK: Well, like I said before, we were down by 12 when we first initially played them with three minutes to go. We have to understand defense creates our offense right now. I think that's our best transition and able to score on the offensive end. So understanding that we had to apply a lot of ball pressure to be able to capitalize on those turnovers allowed for us to be able to come back.

But like I said, that being said, we've got some work to do. We've got to play a lot better for tomorrow night.

Q. Kysre, obviously, there's 5.5 seconds left, and they're inbounding the ball. Once you see Blessing kind of tip it, do you see KK at that point? Kind of take me through those last few seconds and obviously the emotion at the end.

KYSRE GONDREZICK: Yeah, it's funny how it played itself out because in the time-out right previously before that, KK had asked Coach, "when we get the ball, do you want us to call a time-out so we can advance it?" I'm like "we'll talk about it when we get the ball."

He put Blessing in -- Coach Carey -- my Coach of the Year, Naismith Coach of the Year -- and he put Blessing in to be able to make that deflection of her length on the ball, and it kind of just of played out for itself. The fact that KK asked what Coach wanted at the end and she was able to capitalize on it, she deserves that moment, and I'm so

happy for her.

Q. You mentioned the comeback in the previous game. Is that your mind when you're down, when you're trailing here in the fourth quarter? Are you thinking, hey, we've done this before. We know we can do it again.

KYSRE GONDREZICK: Absolutely. Absolutely. I believe in our defense. Our versatility, when we're aggressive and our intensity is up there, I feel like we're one of the top defensive teams in the country. All it is is just a mindset. We were able to get up in the passing lanes and deflect passes. Esmery did that as well, being in deny, one pass away. I was able to tip and apply ball pressure from the point position, and Jayla was able to capitalize on it and got that foul. Every possession was so important.

Q. Kysre, you obviously played in a ton of games throughout your career. Have you ever been part of an ending like this before?

KYSRE GONDREZICK: I have. I'll add this one to the books. This one feels really special. To be able to do it with this group of girls and under Coach Carey, I would say it's probably one of the top two, if not two.

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