

# Big 12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Saturday, March 13, 2021

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

## West Virginia Mountaineers

### Mike Carey

#### Postgame Press Conference

West Virginia - 59, Oklahoma State - 50.

MIKE CAREY: Good to get the win. Good to play in the championship tomorrow. Quick turnaround, play at noon. I thought Esmery played very well coming out of what she did yesterday, came and played very well, 19 points, 15 rebounds. Kysre did what Kysre does. KK did what KK -- and I thought KK did an excellent job on their point guard, number 21. So she did a great job on her.

But then we got lazy on defense, and then we started taking bad shots, throwing the ball away, and all that. We can't do that tomorrow. We'll have to play hard for 40 minutes, take care of the ball for 40 minutes, and block out for 40 minutes. Baylor, they just keep shooting until they score or you foul. Guards, posts, everybody is going to have to step back and box out if we've got a chance.

**Q. Mike, it looked like you limited your pregame warmups. Are you trying to steal a few extra minutes of rest? What other strategies, tactics do you have to try to get as much rest as you can before tomorrow?**

MIKE CAREY: Well, we just didn't want to be on the floor. It seemed like yesterday we were on the floor an hour and a half before the game started. So we kind of cut back a little bit today. We'll get them over there, feed them, get them treatment, and then get them in their rooms. Like I said, the game is at noon tomorrow here, 1 p.m. your time. So they'll be getting up early here, around seven o'clock.

**Q. Coach, you're obviously not done, but through all the transfers, the injuries, the stoppages, how satisfying is it to get the shot at the title?**

MIKE CAREY: Well, it's very satisfying. You've got to give all the credit to the players that are here. I mean, they're playing a lot of minutes, a lot of minutes, more than what they should be playing, but they're finding a way to win.

You know what, I never worry about the players that aren't



here. I always worry about the players that are here, and those are the players we need to worry about, and those are the players that we're playing in the championship with tomorrow.

**Q. Coach, you said last night you thought -- you knew, you said, I believe, that you would come out better today and execute at a higher level. Why did you feel that way? I know you discussed at length how much you like this team and its dedication and heart, but why did you think you'd have more success, particularly on the offensive end, and get off to a quick start?**

MIKE CAREY: I just think, my experience in tournaments is the first game, you've just got to get over the first game. You've got to find a way to win that first game. Second game, you kind of settle down a little bit and execute a little bit more. I thought we did that at times today. We executed a bit more and hit some shots and was able to get the win.

**Q. Coach, you also mentioned yesterday about the rebounding effort. You thought it would be better to outrebound them by ten with their Big 12 defensive Player of the Year on the other side. How much was that the key to the win today?**

MIKE CAREY: It was big, especially because Kari was in foul trouble. Esmery really stepped up in the rebounding at 15, and our guards got some -- everybody contributed to the rebounding. It absolutely was big. They went big at times. They put two -- they had 6'4", 6'4", 6'1" wing player. They went big at times, and we were able to still rebound.

**Q. A number that pops out off of this box score, they were 2-for-19 from three-point range, which says your guards were doing a pretty good job around the perimeter. Was that a focus, and were you pretty happy in that area obviously?**

MIKE CAREY: Absolutely. I thought KK did a tremendous job on their point guard. She is the leading three-point shooter in the Big 12 percentage-wise, and she had a big night last night. I thought KK did a great job and paid attention to detail. When she got picked, other people

stepped up and helped her. I thought, yeah, we paid close attention to her.

**Q. Coach, obviously, Esmery got the double double. Kari made a lot of great plays on offense and on defense. How crucial was the inside game to today's win?**

MIKE CAREY: It was big. It was big. We felt we had -- even though they were big, we were a little bit quicker in the paint. We felt we were a little bit quicker, so we wanted to bring them out a little bit. Mack, I think she had, what, eight blocked shots? That's our fault. We took it into her. Even our guards went over there and tried to shoot over her. You're not going to do that. You've got to go around her or jump stop and kick it.

It don't surprise me. Our guards are not scared. But if you're going to do that on the chopping block, you've got to go right in her chest. You can't fade away. You've just got to go right up their chest, and we didn't do that.

**Q. You hung around with Baylor twice early, had the lead, I think, in both games in the first half, and it was like the first game was a run in the third, and the second game was a run in the fourth. Just how do you make sure you hang with them and don't let them have that big second half spurt this time around?**

MIKE CAREY: It's all about they leak out -- their posts are so good, the guards leak out. That's how they get all those breakaways and all that. Guards don't even block out for them. We were in a game with them, both games, Kari and Esmery was in the game. Both of those games, when they got in foul trouble and we had to go smaller is when they took advantage of us.

You know, we're just going to have to block out. Just not the post. Their guards rebound the heck out of it. They'll send four people to the boards, so we're going to have to block out. That's going to be the key to the game. We don't block out, it's going to be a long night. It's going to be a long day.

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