

Big 12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 10, 2022

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

West Virginia Mountaineers

Mike Carey

Madisen Smith

Postgame Press Conference



West Virginia - 68, TCU - 48

THE MODERATOR: We'll start with an opening statement from coach.

MIKE CAREY: First of all, I want to, we had a lot of the -- our guy players from West Virginia at the game. We had some staff people. We had some pep band from the men. So I want to thank them. That was great. They gave us a crowd. So I really appreciate that.

We come out and played hard. We come out, we went through a little bit of right there in the third quarter, which we've been doing, but I tell you what, Madisen hit some big shots right there when we were struggling, really did. We were struggling to score. Madisen hit a couple big shots.

We hit our foul shots down the stretch. So it was good. It was good to get the win, play the first game, get the win. I know we got a tough game tomorrow at Iowa State, but that's good, that's good. We're looking forward to that game and I'm sure they are. But we are also.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions, please.

Q. Coach, some bangs and bruises there at the end. Kari, I saw she had the ice pack, and J.J. as well, with her finger. Are you guys good health-wise going into tomorrow?

MIKE CAREY: I mean, we played like that all year. I don't know when we've had a full squad. We normally don't. But everybody's got aches and pains at this time of the year. So we don't make any excuse. We just got to play. People got to play through some of that because everybody's got things hurting.

I'm sure Madi, Madi, we played two overtime games this year, which, and double overtime is 50 minutes. Madi

played 50 minutes both games. First time in the history of WVU somebody played two overtime games 50 minutes and Madi did that. So we just got to suck it up and play. She does.

Q. Madi, first, for you, what does it, how does it help your game having J.J. with her speed in there too? Obviously you're very quick also. Do you think that's even putting more pressure on opposing defenses trying to cover both of you?

MADISEN SMITH: Yeah, definitely. To have somebody that is as quick as me or even quicker than me. Like, she's young. She's fast. She gets up the floor. She plays great defense. I mean, to be able to play with somebody like that for 40 minutes and know that she's going to give it her all, it's great.

Q. How does that change what you can do a little bit? I know you've gone through obviously several different kind of iterations of this team this year with injuries and everything. What does having those two ladies help you on offense --

MIKE CAREY: Well, like Madi said, it gives you another, somebody with a lot of quickness out on the perimeter, defensively, even on the break. If we can get that third person to run on the break with them two and then we get some easy ones down the other end.

But tonight I thought the third quarter we quit blocking out. We just started fouling and all that. But again, fourth quarter, we regrouped a little bit, hit a couple big shots, and was able to get the win.

Q. Madisen, through your career, maybe more of a pass-first player, but these last couple of games you've taken a lot of shots. Does that feel any different as a player? And they have gone in. Don't get me wrong. But has it been a little bit different as a player to take more shots late in the season here?

MADISEN SMITH: I mean, I just take my shots when I feel they're open and just play within the flow of the game. I mean --

MIKE CAREY: Let me answer that.

MADISEN SMITH: Okay. (Laughing).

MIKE CAREY: Madisen sacrificed, when we had KK and everybody was healthy on the team, Madisen sacrificed a lot of her game because, you know, as a point guard you have to sacrifice a lot of your game.

Now, with KK out, then we need her to step up a little bit and do some other things for us. So she's done a great job of that, whether we need a bunch of assists or we need some scoring. And like tonight we were struggling scoring. I think she hit two big threes that got us going a little bit. So Madisen can do that. I always tell Madisen she always sacrifices for the team and that she's a team player.

Q. Coach, early in this game you had Jayla, who's been struggling offensively a little bit more lately knock down some shots for you. Is that something that you're happy to see now that she's maybe turning a corner now in a time where you need something from everybody you're putting on the floor?

MIKE CAREY: Absolutely. Jayla plays great defensively too. She's another one who can play defense on perimeter and if she's hitting shots, that's great. And really she's the one who got us going early, hit a couple threes right there in the first half, got us going. So, yeah, when she's hitting her shots -- even if she's not hitting her shots she helps the team defensively and talks and communicates, but it makes it a lot better when people are hitting their shots.

Q. What has to go better for you, what has to change, if there's one or two things, to get a win over a very good Iowa State team?

MIKE CAREY: Yeah, I really can't tell you because I'm sure Iowa State will watch this. But we're going to make, we're going to do a couple tweak, we'll do a couple things there, especially when they were driving us, getting to the rim. So we'll do a couple things on that. But I really don't want to tell Iowa State right now what we're going to do.

THE MODERATOR: All right, thank you.

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