

Big 12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Friday, March 11, 2022

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

Iowa State Cyclones

Coach Bill Fennelly

Emily Ryan

Ashley Joens

Postgame Press Conference



environment and it's something our kids will remember for a long time.

Q. Emily, what are your thoughts on that, having a combined women's and men's tournament together at the same time?

EMILY RYAN: I think it makes the atmosphere that much better when fans don't have to pick and choose who to watch, when they're able to draw both teams, that draws more support to both the guys and the girls side, and hopefully we'll continue to have that moving forward.

Q. How about you, Ash?

ASHLEY JOENS: Yeah, it's great when we can get all of our fans down here, and especially the turnout that we got tonight. It was a lot of fun, and when they don't have to, like Emily said, pick and choose who they get to go watch, it makes it a lot more fun for them and a lot more fun for us.

Q. That second quarter you guys seemed like you took control of the game. How do you feel that the flow of the game was going at that point and where things were trending?

EMILY RYAN: Yeah, I think things were going really well first. Then we started to get some stops on defense and it kind of lead to some of our offense, so it was going well so we had to keep it going that way.

ASHLEY JOENS: Yeah, obviously shots were going in, so it makes it look prettier, and I think our defense was a contributing factor to that, and getting stops on rebounds leads to offense.

Q. For Emily and Ashley, obviously West Virginia plays stern defense, physical -- at a whole other level from them, from early in the third quarter on.

EMILY RYAN: Yeah, they're a good physical team. You just have to continue to fight through and battle. I think we did a really good job of hanging in there and getting stops on defense there at the end and helping out the offense.

West Virginia 60, Iowa State 66

THE MODERATOR: Coach Bill Fennelly has joined us on the dais, along with Emily Ryan and Ashley Joens, and we are going to get started. Coach says he's skipping the opening statement. First question.

Q. Emily, late in the game it seemed like you came up with some pretty big baskets there at the end. How much could you sense the urgency of needing something there at the end?

EMILY RYAN: Toward the end of the game, third quarter, our offense got stagnant, so Coach did a great job of calling up the right plays that got us moving and got open looks for us.

Q. Bill, after the game you guys turned around and pointed to the crowd and clapped at the crowd and everything. The contract is up for Kansas City in two years. What would you say to whoever is in charge of renewing a contract for Kansas City?

BILL FENNELLY: If it's not renewed then we need to have a conversation. This place is special. The city is special. The people who work the tournament are special. The environment is phenomenal and if you didn't walk out of here thinking that was a great environment for a conference tournament for women's basketball then that's on you.

It was amazing. Our fans are -- Hilton South is not a "catch phrase" it's real. They were supportive today and got us through it.

Obviously we were running on fumes a little bit, but we're spoiled by that, Randy, as you know. But it's a great

ASHLEY JOENS: I thought it was -- especially second half it got more physical, so that's something we did a good job of adjusting to best as we could.

I personally need to be stronger with the ball and take care of it better. Too many turnovers. I thought as a team we came together and handled it well.

It's March, and so we're going to have physical basketball moving forward.

Q. Coach, you said a couple days ago in Morgantown that this was a Mountaineer team capable of winning the Big XII tournament. Can you talk about the run they had in the third quarter?

BILL FENNELLY: That's West Virginia basketball. That is Mike Carey basketball. They're talented. They're physical. They made some tough shots.

When I said that, I wasn't just saying it. I really felt that they were one of those teams and we told our kids that.

We told them we might have gotten as tough of a draw in the quarterfinals as anyone. Really proud of how we competed. Like I said, West Virginia is not going to go away. We had a chance to knock 'em out and we couldn't.

That's a credit to them, their staff, and the way they run their program. Pleased the way we could hang on at the end.

Q. Bill, Emily came up with big baskets that last three and a half minute stretch. How would you describe that stretch for Emily specifically?

BILL FENNELLY: You know, I've said that there isn't a point guard in the country that we would have rather than Emily Ryan. There is not a point guard in the country that her teammates would rather have than Emily Ryan.

The kid is a winner, and takes -- all she wants to talk about is she had five turnovers. I tell you what, if you had the defense that she sees every single night, you're going to have your share of turnovers, too.

She is amazing. She leads the way basketball players should lead. She takes ownership in it, and at the end of the game, there is a reason she's got the ball.

She made the right plays at the right time for her team. That's all she cares about is her team.

That's a refreshing thing these days.

Q. Emily, Ashley, in the first half shooting over 50% from the three and in the second half it kind of flipped. Was there anything that West Virginia was doing that made shots difficult? It's kind of live and die by the three. How do you make sure you get more points in the paint?

EMILY RYAN: Yeah, their defense kind of picked up, they played more physical, they went on their run. We just had to hang in there, knock down a few threes, and kind of get it going again.

ASHLEY JOENS: Yeah, it was definitely easier for us to get threes in the first half, and they must have had something to say in the halftime, because they came out with a different physicality, and just continuing to hang on and do what we could down the stretch.

Q. Coach, how big, when your team is not scoring a couple of scoreless droughts in the third quarter and late into that game -- how big was Lexi Donarski on the defensive end down the stretch?

BILL FENNELLY: Lexi is the conference defensive player of the year for a reason. I thought our team defended really well. Everyone talks about two-way players. I always thought you were supposed to be a two-way player.

I don't know why that's become such a novel thing. When you are not scoring -- our kids embrace that. They never let West Virginia get into that danger zone of a one-possession game, four-point game, because we got some stops.

We missed shots that we haven't missed all year, layups, three's, but if they're not scoring and you're ahead, that's a good thing.

I thought overall our defense was really good.

Q. Bill, Emily, Lexi and Ashley played forty minutes today. You've been working them a lot of minutes every game. Is this the type of moment that you want them to play forty minutes in?

BILL FENNELLY: Yes. They can sleep in a couple weeks. They're not coming out of the game. We're not on the load management here. It's not happening. If they don't ask to come out of the game, they're not coming out of the game.

We have three of outstanding players. We're trying to win the game and -- yeah. So the answer is they're going to be in the game forty minutes tomorrow, too, hopefully.

THE MODERATOR: We're going to let you go so you can get some rest.

BILL FENNELLY: Thank you all. Appreciate your time.

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