

Big 12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 9, 2023

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

Municipal Auditorium

TCU Horned Frogs

Coach Raegan Pebley

Bella Cravens

Tomi Taiwo

Postgame Press Conference



section yelling "switch" and communicating with your team. And not one single rotation was missed on that complete team defense. Can you kind of walk me through what you were seeing on that play and what type of pride that you take in being able to be that person in the background communicating and then getting that block?

TOMI TAIWO: If I remember, we were in our blood D, and they punctured our defense. We knew we had to peel out. So Holly had it on the wing. And I knew to stay down because I had a feeling she'd shot fake. And then she stepped back, and I was talking -- make sure we're peeling, make sure we're peeling. Honestly, just I thanked my teammates.

The whole game we were clicking on cylinders. Just knowing that our team chemistry is getting better and better as the season is going on and it's best right now. So it's amazing.

Q. What was the game plan for Taiyanna Jackson. She struggled today?

COACH PEBLEY: She's the most improved player in our league from where she came in to where she is now. We had really a great scout done by Kianna Ray on our staff. Kianna played in this league. She's familiar with Kansas. She does a great job with tendencies.

And she gave our posts some great keys. I think knowing her right shoulder was really strong, timing of her duck-ins, play calls that were going to be for her.

So I just think like super-focused defensive effort by Bella and Lucy in particular. They had the charge to deal with her a lot today.

And I think one of the things with her, as good of a job as we did on her, man, she had 21 boards. That's just how good she is and how much she's developed.

But I just -- I thought Bella, so tough, and Lucy. What Bella and Lucy did, Lucy challenged her on the defensive end and Bella was, with her defense, and Bella was challenging

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THE MODERATOR: Coach, an opening statement.

COACH PEBLEY: Sure. That was fun. I think even though we haven't had wins, we've been having fun. I thought the energy that the team came to Kansas City with was so good. And they played really hard. They practiced hard. They played hard.

I told them in timeouts, I think my last timeout I was very clear: I am not going to win you this game. You guys are going to win this game. You're going to make plays. And they did.

I mean, they just really, really played with a ton of synergy. They were super fun to watch today.

Kansas, I just think so much of Brandon and the job that he does, how he does it, from what he does on the court, his composure on the sideline, his in-game situations, all of it. And there's so many games with them that we played over the years that just come down to moments like that.

He's built a really good program. And just a ton of stability that he's got. I knew they'd been playing with a lot of chemistry. They have a ton of familiarity. And our team has a lot of -- we're new pieces.

They've had pieces that have played together for three, four years. And it's so hard with new pieces to come into a conference tournament and win. And super proud of this team that they were able to get that done.

Q. Tomi, the last defensive possession where you got the block on there, I could hear you from the media

her on the offensive end, being matched up with her. I just loved how they batoned off on the attack.

Q. Knowing that your coach will step down this season, what did it mean to play for her for this game, knowing that it could have been her last? How did it feel to play?

TOMI TAIWO: Coach P is an amazing woman. She's like another mother figure for us. Just coming here, she's one of the biggest reasons I came here. So every time I'm on the court, we're all on the court, we're kind of playing our hardest for her. The wins may not have been there so far, but we're just going to give it all out. And FIWB.

BELLA CRAVENS: I think, adding onto that, Coach P has played such a big role in both of our lives. In just the short amount of time that we've been here, and just like Tomi, she's a big reason I came here.

And it's sad to see her step down. And I think it's just like overall, at any point that if we should lose, it's the end for all of us -- Tomi and I, Fish, couple of other seniors -- it's like doing it one last time for each other.

COACH PEBLEY: It's awesome that you're here from the university newspaper. Good job.

Q. What was the message that you guys had together as a team coming into this tournament with everything kind of going on and the opportunity to come here to Kansas City to play against some great teams in the Big 12?

COACH PEBLEY: We have a tradition in our program that we do devotionals. And our devotional today was by one of our coaches, Rodney -- Rodney Hill, who is so good. He's a great coach in every element, the Xs and Os and development, but also understanding the pulse of the team and what they need to hear.

And it was his turn today and his devotional, the message was a lot about life is a game. And the thing that makes it a game is that there's a time. We had a game today. There's a time. There's a certain amount of time that you had to decide if somebody was going to win or lose.

And a lot of times in life we wait too long to try to really play the game and really be in the moments, take advantage of the tiny little moments that you have.

And so the message was don't wait in life on that. Start right away. Take advantage of every little moment.

And in the game, in the literal game of basketball, you have

those. It's not just about winning the first quarter. It's about what can I do in this possession, in this second, in this millisecond, to win that moment. And that was really the mantra, I think, that we took into the day and the game today.

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