

Big 12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Saturday, March 11, 2023

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

Municipal Auditorium

Oklahoma State Cowgirls

Coach Jacie Hoyt

Kassidy DeLapp

Naomie Alnatas

Postgame Press Conference



can you talk about how you guys got the rebounding fixed, and Naomie the turnover differential never did get fixed.

KASSIDY DeLAPP: There was definitely a point at halftime we realized that they were outrebounding us, and we know that rebounding wins games, or can lead to winning games, so it was definitely a point of emphasis in the second half to go get those rebounds and go after it.

NAOMIE ALNATAS: Texas is a team that pressures all the time. They're a really good team and that's just what they do. When we talked about it at halftime we talked about turnovers and we made a change when we come back out. That's what it is. They're great at putting pressure on other teams. That's it. We have to move forward and learn from it and that's just what we do.

Q. You guys started hot from three. Kinda cooled off a little bit. Was link a factor in that, the way they play pressure?

KASSIDY DeLAPP: 3-point shooting, that's definitely something we do, but you have hot and cold of that throughout 40 minutes. It's probably a mix of things, it's probably just feet, their length, or just feeling like not the best opportunity at the moment and you try to find something else.

I think that's up to the shooters to answer, but I'm proud of our girls for -- I'm not shooting threes, but I'm proud of them for taking any chance they had and us getting an opportunity to rebound it and get a second chance.

NAOMIE ALNATAS: Our terminology is "just hunt it," and our shooters didn't give up, even if we went through maybe a cold -- I would say that's just the game of basketball that happens, ups and downs, but I am proud of my girls and they didn't stop hunting.

I just like going to battle with them, and everybody doing their job. It makes it more fun when every single one of us just commit to their role on the team.

Q. How difficult was it scoring inside the 3-point,

Texas 64, Oklahoma State 57

THE MODERATOR: We are now joined by Oklahoma State head coach Jacie Hoyt, student-athletes Naomie Alnatas and Kassidy De Lapp.

Coach?

COACH HOYT: It's always disappointing to lose this time of the year. I thought the game we battled. Proud of our effort and our fight. I thought there were a couple of possessions or calls that really could have swung the game any which way, but ultimately we put ourselves in a position.

I'm very proud of that. Proud of the season that we had. I can talk on that later. Really just perspective, you know. I think there were a lot of takeaways from this game that are going to carry forward into next week, and that's what we plan on doing.

Q. Naomie, can you talk about the battle with Rori? You guys were going at it and maybe where the game got away?

NAOMIE ALNATAS: I mean, Rori is a player I always had respect for. She is a great player. She is really smart. I love playing good basketball, and that's what we did out there, you know? Going into a battle against each other.

I just enjoy going to the grind against her and that's it.

Q. In the first half it looks like you're getting beat on the boards pretty bad, second-chance points. Got that fixed and got that even by the end of the game, but the turnover discrepancy really ended the game. Cassidy,

inside the paint today against Texas?

NAOMIE ALNATAS: I mean, I looked it up, how many points did we have in the paint? I did look it up, but I don't remember -- yeah, I think we -- I understand they have size, but I do believe that our bigs did an awesome job. They went to battle. They did battle. They gave it all and we hunt all the time.

We didn't allow that size making us shy away from it. The numbers don't lie, and when you play a team like Texas, which is known for being so big, I think we just did pretty good and didn't shrink. I don't know. Did you want to talk on it?

KASSIDY DE LAPP: I think it's just about not shying away, even though you're going to get blocked. I got blocked at one point, but it's just what happens in the Big XII. A lot of people are smaller this year, but it a cool opportunity to play against that kind of height and it's a different look.

You just keep going. Although it's different, we did fight to get our feet in the paint and we didn't shy away from that height.

Q. Naomie, talk about you lost today but getting ready for the NCAA Tournament.

NAOMIE ALNATAS: Coach said it in her opening statement. Yes, it is a disappointment when you lose in a tournament, but growth mindset right now is we get to play in the NCAA Tournament. That's something I was never able to experience.

So I go back to believing in God, having faith, and having a grateful attitude. It is true the outcome was not what we wanted, but it's still excitement because I am going to experience something that I only have heard about before.

So exciting, keep your head, find ways, learn from today, and just have fun, you know?

Q. Cassidy, it looks like you guys were exhausted. Did you feel like you were running out of gas?

KASSIDY DE LAPP: Definitely a little tired, but nothing that we can't fight through.

Q. Do you feel like you left it all out there today?

KASSIDY DE LAPP: I think we definitely gave it our all. Some things don't go your way, but you have to push through. I think everyone did their job, tried to do their job, and we were coachable in those moments where we needed to be and we fell short.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, ladies. Questions for Coach.

Q. How does Texas length impact things for you? You won rebounds, you did good things but it had a big impact?

COACH HOYT: Yeah, they've got so much size and so much depth in that position, you know. Their 4s and 5s mean, they do such a good job at clogging up the paint and you might get past that first line of defense, which they're so good at pressuring, but then once you get into that second line it's a whole other deal.

I challenged our team at halftime. They had 11 second-chance points, and just challenged them, and they finished with 13, so I was proud of that response for our team to adjust.

I actually didn't think -- Naomie said it well. For us to have 22 points, I thought our kids did a good job of adjusting to that. This conference is so challenging, because yesterday we were playing a team that is so guard-dominant, and you turn around today and it's post-dominant.

So I thought it took a little bit of time for our team to adjust to their style, but I thought they did. They did well over the course of the game.

Q. Yesterday you win that game with 20 turnovers, and today you have 17. Was it the points after the turnovers that made the difference with Texas today?

COACH HOYT: I think live turnovers are different. And, I mean, that's what Texas does. They're going to pressure you. They're going to make everything hard for forty minutes.

You know, when we played them the first time and we won we had about the same amount of turnovers. That's just kind of what you can expect going up against their defense.

Again, I thought we had a lot of bad turnovers in the first half, but then we adjusted better in the second half. At this point, you know, you're looking for, okay, what adjustments did we make and do we need to make moving forward for the next game?

I thought, again, our team responded really well at halftime.

Q. Cassidy seemed to give you a big lift today. She played most of the way after you put her in. What impact did she have of at least giving you a chance

inside, not just rebounding but scoring?

COACH HOYT: Kass was great. A big, bright spot for us today. I loved how she competed and battled. I mentioned the second-chance points. She was a huge part of that.

You know, we really challenged them, knowing the size that we were going to be up against that all of our posts were going to be important.

We didn't have Claire Chastain yesterday and she was just coming back off of zero practice all week today. So just, again, the reason I say that is because we had a lack of depth in that position, and I just thought she was great at stepping up to the challenge. I hope she can carry this momentum into our next game.

Q. Jacie, you didn't leave here with the trophy that you wanted, but how would you sum up your return to Kansas City this week?

COACH HOYT: I love Kansas City. This has been a very full circle moment for me because I started my head coaching career here. I am so proud of our team and I'm proud of the way that we were able to come into Kansas City, having been picked 9th after the season that they had last year, and more importantly only having four players.

My staff did an amazing job of just filling the roster.

Then just overcoming all odds. For us to come in as a 4 seed, for us to be playing today, in the semifinals, I just couldn't be more proud. Not just of the wins, but how we have won. The character of this team, the fight that they've shown. It's just so, so special. It's special to be a part of. I've never been a part of a team like this, whether that was as a player, as a coach, and it's just very special.

So it was a very great experience for me just because I was able to walk in with my head held high and I'm going to leave with my head held high.

Q. Coach, a lot of firsts this year. It feels weird asking this after a loss, but what's your excitement level like for your first tournament experience at Oklahoma State?

COACH HOYT: Again, going to the NCAA Tournament is something that we all dream of. That's the whole point. At the start of the year that's what it's about, and we get to leave here knowing that we get that opportunity.

I'm incredibly excited. The times as a head coach or any time that I had an opportunity to get to do that was taken away by COVID, so that really taught me not to take things

for granted and just to be incredibly present.

I am going to do that. I'm disappointed, but I know that there is more to play for. Like I said, I love the team that I get to do it with and share that memory with.

Mimi was supposed to be playing in that NCAA Tournament in 2020, so just perspective. Not just that we get to play, but, again, where we started. No one thought that we would be in this position and this team has overcome all odds and far exceeded anyone's expectations so I'm really excited.

Q. Jacie, 62 points per game last five games, about 16 below your season average. Do you feel like the Big XII has figured out your offense and are you excited to play someone outside of the conference?

COACH HOYT: I think that happens the second time you play a team. That's just the -- the scout is different, and that just kinda comes with the territory. I think what's what makes the Big XII the best in the country.

My gosh, we have to play everyone twice. Not everyone else has to say that. You look at The Net, you look at everything about it. This conference is incredibly tough. Just like we maybe had a harder time playing teams second time around, so did they.

This just comes with the territory. But I'm thankful for the way this conference has prepared us, and I know that any team in this conference that goes on is going to be successful because of the way that we have all challenged each other throughout the season.

Q. Jacie, you talked about a couple of possessions where it could have swung. Can you go into more detail about that? Obviously y'all cut it to 6, I think, with 7:00 to play.

COACH HOYT: Yeah, I think basketball is a game of momentum. It's a game of runs. I thought the biggest possession was the made three going into halftime. There's a moving screen and it's not called.

So it's not about the three points, okay, it's about the momentum. It's about the momentum that Texas is able to go into their locker room at halftime and have versus the momentum that we've just lost. That's basketball. Things are going to happen. I certainly understand that.

But that was one in particular that I just thought really, you know, didn't work in our favor. It kinda hurt. Several throughout the game. I'm not going to say too much, but it's about momentum. It's not about the points but the

momentum and the runs that teams are able to go on that, I think, if it would have been called differently, I think our chances could have been a lot better.

Q. Jacie, you mentioned the COVID year three years ago, so that's three years ago tomorrow. Can you go deeper into your emotions? What do you remember about that loss of that opportunity?

COACH HOYT: Well, losing that opportunity was really, really hard. That was the first-ever championship in school history in Kansas City. Just to know you worked so hard for something and then not be able to get to experience it or see your kids experience it was very hard.

But, I mean, COVID is -- that was a much bigger deal than losing the tournament and I definitely understand that.

But it has made this ride that much sweeter. And like I said earlier, it's taught me just to stay in the present and soak up the time that you've got. I felt like as a coach at that point in time I was always focused on the next game and the next game and the next game, and I never really appreciated those very, very special moments.

It's made me a better coach, and I know I have just loved every second with our team this year, and I'm going to continue to do that and value that moving forward, with any team that I get to coach.

But it is going to be incredibly special. Man, looking at the way that God has worked in my life, all the different lessons, all the different things that have happened that got me where I'm at right now, sitting here talking to you. I don't know that I would have been at Oklahoma State if that year didn't happen that way in my coaching career. So I don't question it, I don't doubt it, I know I'm exactly where I'm supposed to be, and I couldn't be more thankful than to get to represent the Cowgirls.

Q. Coach, Vic said y'all are going to be a nightmare for people in the postseason. Talk about Texas and why they're the Big XII regular season champs and what makes them tough.

COACH HOYT: Their defense. They're very good defensively. They're going to turn you over, they're going to give you problems. Their height and their size, their depth in that position is something that has made them very good, and I think is going to allow them to have a lot of success in the tournament.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, congratulations.

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