

2022 WNBA Commissioner's Cup

Tuesday, July 26, 2022

Las Vegas Aces

Becky Hammon

Postgame



Las Vegas Aces 93, Chicago Sky 83

Q. The second through the fourth quarter, the Sky staging that comeback, what did you say to your team to encourage them not to have what happened last game be repeated?

BECKY HAMMON: Just to stay solid defensively, handle the pressure and to continue to play defense. That game that we had in Vegas, they're the champs. They're not going to go away easily. It's not going to be easy. That's a very, very good basketball team. They're coached very well. They understand how to play. They understand what it takes to win.

Even tonight, it wasn't easy. They're not going anywhere. I don't care if we're up by 50. They're not going anywhere. My message to them was just to stay solid defensively, and then offensively handle their pressure.

Q. Chelsea Gray really stepped up in the third quarter, especially when the Sky started to get on that run. What did you see from her where she was able to go back and forth with the 2021 Finals MVP?

BECKY HAMMON: I mean, Chelsea is a gamer. She is a huge part of what we do. She is the extension of the coach out there. Hell, I'm her assistant. I tell them all the time, if Chelsea calls something and I call something, you listen to Chelsea. When the head coach calls something, you run it.

But really, she's somebody who likes big moments, and she likes to take and make big shots. To me, she is the cooling factor. When things get a little hot, out of control, the pressure starts to rise, she is the cooler.

Q. Going back to the theme that you've mentioned earlier today about you can't out-give life or the game, I was wondering if you saw any player particularly embody that today or the team as a whole embody that in any one moment?

BECKY HAMMON: I think especially in the first quarter you come out and the ball is popping, so there's a lot of different people. I thought A'ja was sensational -- six blocks, 17 boards. There's a lot of people that contributed. KP got us off to a hot start coming out. It was a full team effort.

I thought Kiah gave us great minutes, I thought Riquna -- there's a lot of people to credit with the win. I thought Chelsea made some big ones.

But there's a lot of people. There's a lot of credit to pass around. I think Chelsea would tell you that, too, which she already did actually in her little speech.

Q. There has been a lot of talk and a lot of speculation leading up to this game with people saying that this was a precursor to the Finals this year. I'm just wondering what your thoughts would be on an Aces and Sky matchup for this year's Finals.

BECKY HAMMON: I mean, there's just a lot of basketball to be played between now and then. I think Seattle probably has something to say about that. Connecticut, Washington. It's a game; we're happy to win it, obviously. But it's not what we -- it's not the ultimate goal. It's a nice little thing, and I want the girls to remember how it feels. I want them to remember how we got here, which is together, and playing with each other.

The Sky are a lethal team because they play together. They are, to me, the ultimate team. Move it, move it, move it -- everybody is willing passers. They have two really good-passing post players. They're a handful. They're hard to guard because it's anybody on any given night that can hurt you.

As much as I want them to enjoy this moment, I also want them to remember this moment and understand that it takes all of us to get there.

Q. You've talked a little bit about the defense, but I wanted to specifically ask about your three-point defense. To hold a team that includes Allie Quigley to



20 percent shooting from three and to hold her to just three points, how difficult is that and what were you guys trying to do out there?

BECKY HAMMON: This is a team that really wants the paint. They came back really by getting downhill and into the paint.

Obviously, Allie is somebody you have to game-plan for. You don't want her teeing you up. I thought some of it, even with Vandersloot, they just missed. So some of that is just they didn't have a great night. Some of it is a tribute to our defense.

Like I said, I thought actually late game when we just started redding, made it really super clean for our players, probably was our best defense. But you can't start out like that and just put your bigs in a hard spot, put your littles in a hard spot because they start getting rolled down there. The perimeters start going at the bigs, isoing a little bit. You saw Kahleah Copper doing that a little bit.

Just trying to mix up looks, make it as difficult as possible. But our paint was more the focus. I thought in the second half they really got into the paint, which actually opens up their three ball. Some of that is they just missed and some of that was our defense and our second and third efforts, which is really important against this team because they're going to break you down one side. You have to have multiple efforts to stop this team.

Q. I know you talked about Chelsea's game today, but after she missed out on the All-Star Game, how nice was it to see her get some real recognition tonight?

BECKY HAMMON: I loved it. I loved it. I thought it was appropriate. We missed her last time we were in Chicago. For her to come out and have a great game and be recognized as a great player in a big moment, super happy for her, and well deserved. Like I said, she's a huge part of what we do.

What do you think about Chelsea Gray? Is she pretty good?

CAYDEN HAMMON: Yeah.

BECKY HAMMON: Did you like anything specific about her game tonight?

CAYDEN HAMMON: No, she played the same as she played every night.

BECKY HAMMON: That's a great answer. She's super solid every night.

Q. I was actually wondering if I could have a follow-up with your assistant. Cayden, what did you think of the team's performance tonight overall and how are you planning to celebrate? I imagine it might be past your bedtime right now.

CAYDEN HAMMON: No, I go to bed later than this.

BECKY HAMMON: You're going to put me on blast like that? How are we going to celebrate?

CAYDEN HAMMON: In the locker room.

BECKY HAMMON: Did you bring a towel with you?

CAYDEN HAMMON: Yeah.

BECKY HAMMON: Good thing you have glasses because it protects your eyes from the champagne. What did you think of the girls, like how they played?

CAYDEN HAMMON: I liked it.

BECKY HAMMON: Anybody specifically?

CAYDEN HAMMON: No.

BECKY HAMMON: Everybody was good?

CAYDEN HAMMON: Yeah.

Q. You guys have won six of your last seven, including tonight, coming out of the All-Star break. Before the break, A'ja mentioned that the break came at a good time because you guys had kind of lost your identity in a sense. Was that a point of emphasis for you guys coming out of the gate, and how do you feel like things have gone since?

BECKY HAMMON: We had a little bit of a coming-to-Jesus moment after All-Star. I think the way we finished that last two and a half weeks before All-Star left a pretty bad taste in everybody's mouth. Right now, like I said, it's just all about defense. If you want to play, you're going to play defense. Give me some people that want to compete on that end of the floor, and I feel like our offense will take care of itself.

They've responded for the most part, I thought. I have some great leadership. Here is my leadership walking in right here. There they are.

So you can ask them. All I can tell you is we had a little meeting. Basically, most times -- nine out of ten times



when I challenge these ladies, they respond. You can ask
the real dogs in the room.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports.

