

2021 DI Women's Volleyball Championship - 1st & 2nd Round

Thursday, December 2, 2021

West Lafayette, Indiana, USA

Holloway Gymnasium

Purdue Boilermakers Coach Dave Shondell Caitlyn Newton Raven Colvin

Press Conference

Purdue 25-21, 25-17, 25-11

Illinois State

DAVE SHONDELL: Thanks for being here. I thought Illinois State was really good. First game and a half, they were really hard to handle. They've got some really talented offensive players. Their coaching staff has them engineered to compete, and I was worried about them all week because I just thought they came at you from so many different angles.

Tonight they proved that for a game and a half. I thought our serving started to wear them down a little bit. We really didn't start to block balls until the last game. I think they were out-blocking us at the midway mark, or it was very, very close.

But I'm impressed with their team, and I was impressed when I watched them all week on tape, and I feel very fortunate to advance. We had to play really, really well to do it. If you look at our numbers, they were really good.

We made five hitting errors in the first set but only three hitting errors in the second two sets. That's a team playing with pretty good focus.

We had great balance, as good a balance as we've had all season, which is always encouraging, when you get to the tournament all of a sudden to have all five offensive players playing at a very high level. So I was really excited with the win. Looking forward to playing again tomorrow.

Q. Dave, I think Hayley entered this match with 999



career digs, got her 1,000th pretty quick. How rare of an achievement is that for a setter, especially they're not going to take that first ball if they can help it, to have 1,000 career digs?

DAVE SHONDELL: Well, number one, you've got to play in a lot of matches, and she's been starting for four years and has hardly ever left the floor. It's a credit to her that she's been that durable and gone to a Big Ten institution and started for four years, and then she's a great competitor. She doesn't like to lose, and she doesn't like to see the ball hit the floor, especially if it's her responsibility.

But yeah, that's a great accomplishment for a setter to end up with 1,000 digs.

Q. Caitlyn, I think you've probably taken more sets from Hayley than anybody in her four years setting. What makes her a special setter and talk about the dynamic between you two where if she needs a point she's going out to you?

CAITLYN NEWTON: Yeah, like you said, we've been playing together for four years, so we've definitely built a really strong connection, which is really nice. She takes feedback really, really well, which is huge in a setter, and she adapts to everybody however they need it.

Q. Coach, Tamara Otene at ISU had only eight kills tonight and hit .069. What was done do you think defensively to limit her?

DAVE SHONDELL: We paid a lot of attention to her. Even though I think that they're a really good team with really good talent, they shouldn't have as much talent as we do. I mean, we're at an upper-level Big Ten program, so we're big and physical, so we have the advantage to try to focus on people that we think that we have to and hope that we can manage the other ones.

There are some rotations where she got the bulk of our attention, but even that, we didn't do very well early with her. Her arm is really, really good. She shows the maturity of a pro player. I'm not saying she's a pro player, don't get me wrong, I'm just saying that she has that maturity and plays with that kind of experience.



I was impressed with a lot of their players tonight, and their names -- I don't have their names down, but I know 4 was really good for them, 14 I thought was slapping balls off our block all night long and finding ways to score, and the middles had opportunities, as well. I just thought they were a really good team.

Q. Dave, you had 44 kills. You out-killed them by 11 with only 85 swings. Can you talk about your offensive efficiency tonight?

DAVE SHONDELL: Yeah, 424. That's good against a team that I think is pretty solid. Again, we're a little bit bigger, a little stronger. We jump, probably touch it a little higher, so we have an advantage, but it was not easy. Like I mentioned early on, it was Cleveland and Newton, and that was it, and that's why the match stayed close.

Then all of a sudden Emma Ellis, who was a real key in this match, Ellis had zero kills and one error after the first set but went 7 for 9 in the second two sets, so that was huge.

Raven was fairly consistent but I thought got better in the second and third.

So I thought the fact that they came in just like we did with an idea we've got to stop certain people, but then when Emma Ellis goes off, that's the last person they thought was going to go off of them, and then you've got Jael is 5 for 10 and Raven ended up being 7 or 8 for 10. It makes it pretty tough to defend when you've got everybody hitting. Then you've got Newton and Cleveland coming out of the back row and everywhere else.

Q. Raven, 8 for 10, hitting .700 with three blocks. What does that mean to you as a freshman coming in and making such a statement your first tournament game?

RAVEN COLVIN: I think it's a big deal. Just I think my teammates helped me a lot with helping me be confident in myself and believing in me and just helping me stay calm in those situations because they're so mature and older and they lead the team so well. I just think having them not be calm -- being calm in this situation, it just helps me when it comes to those big games.

Q. Caitlyn, you as a veteran I think would know best with this question. You lost a nine-game win streak with a four-set loss at home to Nebraska to close out your season. What was the preparation like turning the page into tournament time knowing you had that kind of loss to close out the season?

CAITLYN NEWTON: I think you said it. We just turned the page and moved on. We didn't really look at it as a winning streak. We look at each game just one game at a time, and we happened to lose our last regular season game but I think it helped fuel us going into the tournament even stronger and more focused.

Q. Dave, during the selection show you said you knew a lot about Marquette and Dayton but not necessarily Illinois State. What have you learned about the team since then and how are you guys going to prepare for Dayton?

DAVE SHONDELL: Well, when you prepare, and I'm not going to bore you, but you start out with the team you're going to play first, and you watch them until you get a pretty good handle on them, and then you start watching the potential opponents you might have.

I've had a busy week, but I did get time to watch Dayton the last two days, and so I feel pretty comfortable with what they like to do, and then to watch them again tonight, confirm some of those things that you were doing -- I thought they looked a little bit better tonight than they did on tape. With Dayton, they don't play in a great conference, and so they have to get a lot of their good matches early in the season, and Tim schedules really tough non-conference because he needs to for RPI purposes. Then he gets into his league, and there might be two or three teams that are capable of beating him on a good night. They don't always really play at the top of their level in that league, but I thought tonight when push came to shove, they showed up, and their big-time players balled out pretty well for them.

Q. Caitlyn, they were serving you tough in that first set, and I think you just kind of out-talented them, kind of what Dave said earlier. Do you feel like you and Grace really had to carry the team through that tough stretch when you were trying to weather the storm there?

CAITLYN NEWTON: Not necessarily. I feel like we did a really good job of staying calm and just focusing on one point at a time. They came out really hot and we knew they would. They're a great team, and think just being able to lean on anybody at any time during the first set and staying calm really helped us just finish out the first set.

Q. Raven, I don't know if there were any nerves, but you got that first swing and you put it down. I imagine that kind of eased any nerves you might have had, but I think at the end you got a block followed by putting away an over pass that won that set for you. Was that

kind of the catapult for you into the second and third?

RAVEN COLVIN: Yeah, I think just managing like my emotions and just like my nerves, I think that really helps me a lot and just basically being confident in myself and just knowing that I'm on the court for a reason just really helps when it comes to my nerves and stuff.

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