

Big East Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Friday, March 8, 2024

Uncasville, Connecticut, USA

Mohegan Sun Arena

Providence Friars

Coach Erin Batth

Olivia Olsen

Postgame Media Conference



Providence 75, Butler 60

THE MODERATOR: Joining us from Providence Head Coach Erica Batth and student-athlete Olivia Olsen. We'll begin with coach.

ERIN BATTH: First of all, thank you. This has been a real blessing. I can't tell you how proud I am of this team. We've been on a journey. We're still on it, and the really cool thing is that we're getting better.

Sometimes throughout the season it didn't look as much, but I have wonderful people around me that keep me grounded and keep me positive, keep all of us positive, and I really believe this was the game.

I'm so excited how we moved the ball, how we shared the ball, how we shot the ball, how we defended the ball. Let's go, y'all. Are you with me?

Again, I loved how we defended. Mostly I'm a defensive woman, so really tried to -- I got to give a lot of credit to Butler, though.

Strande is awesome. They have a lot of weapons, and they're just hitting the ground. They're going to be a force to be reckoned with as well too as far as this overall conference, which is great.

I'm so excited to see the women I get to be with every day flourish and do well together. It's a great game.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Olivia.

Q. Just wanted to ask you about the attack mode that you seem to be in right from the jump, particularly you close to the basket, even Emily and the way that she was playing defensively too.

OLIVIA OLSEN: I think where I get my energy from is really my teammates. I think they get me the ball great. When I get doubled in the post, it's really easy to kick it out to them because they're moving all the time. Our shooters have been knocking them down, so...

Q. The last time you played Butler, you only were on the floor 17 minutes. You ended up with 11 points, but how much of a motivator was that for you in terms of staying on the floor, staying out of foul trouble, helping your team win?

OLIVIA OLSEN: Yeah, like last game, I really tried not to foul this game. Carrying over from the last question, I think really my teammates, we ran the floor tremendously. I think even if I'm used as a decoy, it's perfectly fine because somebody else is going to be open.

Q. I wanted to ask about the defense too and just the spark that provides this team?

OLIVIA OLSEN: I think our defense today, we switched a lot today. We practiced a lot of switching throughout the past couple of days, so I think our talking on defense was the best I think it's ever been, to be honest with you.

Q. Congrats on being named to the Second Team.

OLIVIA OLSEN: Thank you.

Q. Just curious what that honor means to you and how you've been able to develop your game under Coach Batth's leadership this year?

OLIVIA OLSEN: A lot of credit to Coach Batth, Coach Molly, Coach Kaili. They've made a big impact on me and my game as well as the other post players. I wouldn't be here without them.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Olivia.

Questions for Coach.

Q. I just want to talk about Emily today. What has it



been like watching her grow? She had herself a game today, but even when she's on the court doing all the little things, she makes this team a little bit more gritty.

ERIN BATTB: She does. I know the parents aren't supposed to have a favorite, but she's one of them. I love all of them, but Emily, she's a "yes, Coach," what do you need, Coach, "I'm going to do it, Coach." I can coach her really hard.

I probably say her name the most. I know she hears my name at night, girl, because I tell you what, she's tough as all get out. It has been an honor to see her grow. We've had tears of joy, tears of not so much joy just during the process. But really the biggest thing with Emily is for me to remind her -- it's my job and my duty and honor to remind her how great she is and that she can shoot the ball and that she can be a great rebounder, and she did that today.

It's been awesome. We don't win a lot of games without her for sure. Because she is on the floor. She's the one, if you go back and watch our games, who is throwing her body out of bounds to get the ball that she probably wouldn't even ever get, but it gets everybody riled up.

I can't thank her enough. I love the way she shoots it. She can shoot it. We've been trying to continue to remind her of her greatness there and to get her some reps in that too.

But today she did it all. She did. She passed the ball. She got rebounds. She defended. She knocked that thing down. So I can't thank her enough.

But it's been so much fun, and it's so cool because she just said, "Coach, I've never done this before. We get to stay." I tell you what, right there is everything I can only ask for in what I do.

She's excited. We're all excited, but she's been a real blessing, yeah.

Q. From your first game of the season until your win today, what growth have you seen in your squad, and how has the team chemistry just gelled so well?

ERIN BATTB: It's been -- there are so many things that they've gotten better at, but I really -- the culture of this program, you saw it today on the floor. It is the high-fives. It is woman down, woman up. We've had adversity with injuries, but our women just keep stepping up.

Really the other big thing is the importance of the next play. Our women want to do so well, like most athletes. They all want to do really well, but sometimes it's what happens if you make a mistake, what do you do next?

We have -- I have because I'm the one. I'm the one with the voice. I've been asking them and requiring them to move on to the next play and not in just basketball, but in life. What are you doing next?

It's been really awesome from the very first game to right now to when we just won to see them move on and can we get it back? They went on a run. Everybody does. Butler did. They're great shooters.

So we were up by 13. At the end of the half ended up being only up by four. What do we do next? That was the great conversation that we had. And that has nothing to do with all the points -- I didn't talk about rebounding. I'm just talking about what's going on in their minds and how are they treating each other.

Can we move on? Have you lifted her up? She didn't do a good job. Can you talk to her? Real talk. It's on to the next play. That's really what we've become, and I'm so proud of them. I am.

Q. Wondering if you could talk a little bit about Providence's choice to honor Kathy Finn Hill as the legend. Have you had a chance to get to know her story and why she was selected?

ERIN BATTB: She's amazing, first of all. Baller alert, so do not give her a ball to this day. Kathy, we've talked about that. I had a great opportunity to spend time with her on one of our road trips.

Greatness everywhere. It's really cool because when she spoke to our program, it was very heart-felt, family-oriented. This is her home. She's a great player.

We had a lot of great players. We'll continue, and that is a goal of mine to help get these women to where they need to be to. To remind people of Providence. Not to just surprise them because we have been good before. We are well on our way.

But Kathy, I can't give her enough credit for everything she's done. She's very involved with the team and what we're doing. She's very kind to me, but great player. Can get after it. So I'm so excited to be able to honor her tomorrow myself and give her a great big hug.

Q. Two-part question if you don't mind. The first question is, is it a positive or a negative that you have seen Connecticut so recently as you prepare for tomorrow? Second part of the question is the impact Kaili McLaren has had on your coaching staff and your players?

ERIN BATT: If you had told me my first head coaching job I would be coaching against Geno three times in one season, I may not be here. But, no, I think it's a positive. It's all right. I'm glad we're playing them. I'm excited.

We've played them just seven days ago, and so they are fresh on our minds. It's a team that you don't forget about at all ever. I know it's a great big challenge, but we're up for it. I think it's a positive. I love it. Let's go.

I'm excited about that. Now, with Coach Kaili, she's a two-time national champion. She has been coached under one of the greatest. Are you kidding me to have her on the staff? She's made a huge impact. Be I've been trying to ask her all questions about Geno, where he lives and his zip code and social security number. I'm just kidding. Off the record.

But, anyway, yeah, Kaili has made a huge -- her level of excellence, as all my assistants who I have hired and wanted to be with me through this journey purposely -- intentional on who I hired -- greatness all around.

Just like Coach Kaili, someone asked Kaili about her tenacity and why she's being so aggressive. First of all, mama dragon on the sideline is demanding. I'm yelling at her like crazy. But Coach Kaili is telling her, I know what it means to be great. I have done it. I have gone places where you would want to go, right?

So she has made a huge impact on not just our women, but myself. Grateful to have her. Thank you.

Q. Just in general this victory today, going through the ups and downs of your first season, to get this win and to see everything come together for double-digit scorers, the way that they attacked early on, what does it mean to just get this win today?

ERIN BATT: Just about everything. We practice hard, and I coach them hard. I do. I have asked these women to do things they've never done before, and I am very greedy. I ask for seconds at the dinner table, so you know I want seconds and thirds and fourths, hello, on the floor.

So to see them take it all in and to do that what we just saw is -- I'm blessed. This is why I do what I do. It's so cool to see them jump up and down and realize the reality that we are a good team. We haven't arrived totally yet. We have some things we have to work on, but we can get it done.

I saw greatness in these women when I first got hired. I saw them beginning of the season. I've seen it. It's about being consistent. It's really cool to see them be consistent

out there, and then onto the next play; right? When we did make mistakes, we still came out.

Yeah, it's everything. Today was a big deal. Thank you.

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