

Atlantic Coast Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 6, 2024
Greensboro, North Carolina, USA

Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets Coach Nell Fortner Kayla Blackshear Kara Dunn

Postgame Press Conference

Georgia Tech 73, Pitt 60

NELL FORTNER: Really pleased with the win. I thought our start was maybe a little bit shaky, but I thought we just really hung tough.

The first game in a postseason tournament can be a little nerve-racking a little bit, so I thought that our kids really hung tough and settled in and got ourselves to halftime where we could regroup a little bit. But really proud of that second half effort and settling in a little bit better offensively and defensively.

Pitt shot the ball so well as far as from the three, so they changed a little bit of what we were planning on doing defensively, but they came out with that hot hand. I thought we adjusted well, and I'm proud of these two sitting up here with me.

Q. I'm not sure the last time Liatu King hasn't scored in the first half. What did you do to game plan for her? Was she a focus of your defense?

NELL FORTNER: I'll let KB answer that.

KAYLA BLACKSHEAR: She's such a good player, so you have to try to beat her to her spots, push her off her spots, and not let her be comfortable. She's a great player, so it's hard.

Q. Coach, that third quarter was kind of bumpy, but then that fourth quarter was really great. What didn't go right in the third that did go right in the fourth?

NELL FORTNER: I thought defensively we came out slow.



They went on that 7-0 run to start the third quarter. And sometimes that happens to us. We get a little slow start coming out of halftime. That was something -- we took a time-out and kind of tried to correct the ship right there.

Defensively they came at -- I mean, offensively they really came at us. They came out of halftime and really just took it to us. We had to, again, readjust ourselves and get back on track.

I thought what happened for us was eventually our defense really locked in. Even though King scored in the second half, I thought KB really did a good job not giving her easy looks. She had a couple at the rim, but she's just a tough person to guard. I thought we locked in a little bit better defensively and then rebounded the ball better.

Q. Not to put words in your mouth, but the last six minutes offensively, is that about as well as you can remember -- I think about three three-point plays, a three-point shot. You really pulled away there.

NELL FORTNER: Well, I thought -- Augustinaite came in and hit some -- she's always a threat, always. She stretches the floor for us, and I thought she hit some good shots. I thought Kara Dunn did a phenomenal job going to the O-boards and really giving us those extra opportunities in getting herself to the free-throw line. That was really, really important.

And we finally figured out what our best offense was to run against that zone, and it was effective. So it got KB some touches there in the middle of the paint, in the middle of the floor, and we were able to separate out of that.

KARA DUNN: Yeah, the fourth quarter I think our team's mindset was just attack them, because they had some people in foul trouble. I told Tonie that also. If you see that girl in front of you, go at her, because Tonie can't be stopped. That was also my mindset, too.

I was just like, I need to be aggressive and I need to go -- I know I need to use my athleticism for the O-boards and go back up for it, don't shy away from contact.

Q. What do you need to do differently against Duke tomorrow, and how much have both teams changed since January 14th do you think?

NELL FORTNER: Well, I know we've changed a lot since we played them the first time. We hung with them in the first half, and then it got away from us in the second half pretty good.

We're doing some things different offensively, but Duke is good. They play at a pace that you'd better be ready for because they like to get up and down and really play with some really good energy and take it at you.

But I know we'll be ready. I know we're a better team than we were then. But you've got to come ready to play hard for 40 minutes.

KAYLA BLACKSHEAR: I think it's a great opportunity, and like Coach said, it's been -- we've changed a lot as a team. We're able to come out in the second half much better. Today not so much. But we usually lock it in for more than 20 minutes, 30 minutes, try to play a full game of 40-minute basketball, and that's the biggest difference.

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