

Atlantic Coast Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Friday, March 8, 2024

Greensboro, North Carolina, USA

Louisville Cardinals

Coach Jeff Walz

Jayda Curry

Postgame Press Conference



Notre Dame 77, Louisville 68

JEFF WALZ: First, I always like to congratulate Niele and Notre Dame. I thought they played a really, really good ballgame, a really good first half. Really gave us fits, and we did not respond well in that first half, especially at the offensive end. We looked anemic at times. It was really, really poor.

Then I thought our energy level really picked up in the second half. I thought we competed. I thought we fought.

Unfortunately fell a little bit short, but I was proud of how we competed there in that second half. But unfortunately you have to play a whole game. You can't play halves. That's what we've done a lot this past month is we've played halves of games.

I'm not in it for moral victory, to make you feel good. It's a loss. We've got to get tougher. We have to be able to fight. I thought we showed that in the second half, but first half was not very good.

Q. Jeff, you mentioned there's been a pattern of only playing halves so far. How do you fix that? You had more turnovers than made field goals for a while. How do you fix that going into the next stage of the NCAA Tournament?

JEFF WALZ: It's impressive. It's not easy to turn the ball over more than you make a field goal.

We work on it in practice. If you don't give a s--- then it's hard. We think of new ways to turn the ball over. We have turned the ball over five straight games on an inbounds pass after a made basket. It's special. I've never had a group that's -- I mean, how do you practice that? Like

okay, basket is made, when you take it out, look before you pass it and then throw it to your team. I don't know how else to practice it. We somehow still figure out a way to do it.

They have to care. Players have to care, as well. They have to own -- they have ownership as well as coaches do. Believe me, it's my job to get it fixed, but I can't play for them. I can't pass fake. I can't ball fake. You can't stare where you want to throw it, then throw it. Good teams are going to step in front and steal it.

Until we get to the point where it really matters -- see, this is where NIL could really improve our game because see, if I could fine like, say, \$500 a turnover, I'll guarantee you we wouldn't turn that thing over one time. They'd care.

But they get all this good stuff, it's all great, but let's make it pay for play. The game will get cleaned up, I promise you. Our game will get better. If you pay for play, it'll get better, because that's really what it is. We just can't fine them. As a player, would you not care more, Jayda, if I said, every turnover it's \$500 -- you're out 2 grand tonight.

We'd make money as coaches. Our athletic department would make money off our players. Our NIL would come back to the school. But they'd start changing.

They have to care. That's where we are right now, that we've got to care. The ball has to matter. Every possession matters. We're going to work for a week and a half on just grinding that in and instilling that into them.

The fight we showed in the second half, I think this is a ballclub that can still get to the second weekend of the NCAA Tournament, and then once you get there, anything can happen. Anything can happen. It's who's playing the best that night and then what crew you've got on the game. Anything can happen. I'm excited because they showed that fight.

Q. Jayda, you fought, you scrapped, you scored. What can you take from this game going into the playoffs?



JAYDA CURRY: I think the one thing that our coaching staff has been preaching to us we have to put two halves together. We oftentimes have a good first half and then we fall off in the second, or vice versa like we did today.

I think just in this week and a half we have before the tournament we've really got to lock in and really understand that we can show the fight that we had in the second half in the second half, but we've got to show it as soon as we come out, as soon as the ball is tipped up. I think that's a focus for us for sure.

Q. Also for Jayda, for those of us who have never experienced it ourselves, tell us what it's like in that fourth quarter where it seemed like an almost out-of-body experience. You could do no wrong. Could you take us through that?

JAYDA CURRY: Yeah, I'm just trying to do whatever I can to help my team win. I think we have such a selfless team. At times it's to a fault. In that first half we were passing up a lot of open shots and over-penetrating.

But I think just in the second half we did a good job of finding each other, moving the ball, getting downhill, attacking, drawing fouls. That's the type of basketball that we want to play and we know we can play.

Yeah, I appreciate my teammates and my coaching staff believing in me, and we're going to keep going.

Q. Jeff, I wanted to ask you about that fight that you were talking about. How important was that second half? I know you'd rather keep playing this tournament, but now you've got a week and you're getting ready. Just to have that example of this is how you can play when you're intense, urgent and desperate?

JEFF WALZ: Yeah, it was really important. Now I told them in the locker room, if we don't have a few of them start to compete a little harder, then I know what six I'm playing. It's not a grade school team. It's not my daughter's fourth and fifth grade team where everybody gets to play the same amount of time.

You earn your playing time, and if you're not going to compete and play hard, at least be a damn good cheerleader on the bench because I'm not putting you in the game. We have a few of them that have about a week and a half to show me that they're going to compete or we'll have a few extra on our cheerleading squad.

Q. Jayda, you and Jeff both talked about the inconsistencies. What do you feel like you need to do

to put together two halves?

JAYDA CURRY: Yeah, I think honestly it comes down to us as a players, like Walz is talking about. They're instilling these things in us in practice when it comes to turnovers. That's something that we've struggled with all year. We just have to value the basketball and really care about it.

I feel like we've got to really think about that because we see the things we can do when we take care of it, when we execute and things of that nature. If we want to go deep in March, we know what we have to do. We have to have some personal pride, some team pride and listen to our coaches and really just go with what they're saying.

Q. Obviously a couple calls you disagreed with in the game. There at the end I guess you're trying to make a point at that point, but do you have any comment on any of that?

JEFF WALZ: You know what, I've donated enough to the fund. But I will tell you I am looking forward to going back and looking at the pass that went inbounds to see if the girl was out of bounds and threw it in and then the other one picked it up and stepped out of bounds, because if that's what took place and that's what I saw -- I may be wrong, but I just need a game to be administered correctly.

If you step out of bounds and throw it inbounds -- unless the rules change and there might be an interp tomorrow at that says if you don't mean to take it out of bounds but you're out of bounds and throw it in, then it's okay for the other player who is inbounds to catch it and then step out of bounds.

Maybe there is an interp that I haven't seen. If that takes place then I'll apologize. But if she was truly out of bounds and then throws it inbounds, at least at the fourth grade level, they don't let you do that. It might be allowed now, and I'm just -- I didn't read that rule. So I will check on that.

I could be wrong, and if I am, I'll apologize for it. But if I'm not, I don't expect to hear anything to say that it was a missed call. That's normally not what you get.

Q. Jayda, I think this is your first ACC Tournament. Your thoughts, experience?

JAYDA CURRY: Yeah, I mean, it's a great environment. Obviously this is not the outcome we wanted or were shooting for, but I'm just excited to move on, to get ready for the NCAA Tournament. It's something that I haven't been a part of yet, either. I'm just excited to be doing it with this staff and this team. I feel like we're going to figure this out and we're going to go deep in the tournament. It

was a good experience for sure.

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