

Pac-12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 4, 2021

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

UCLA Bruins

Michaela Onyenwere

Postgame Press Conference



UCLA - 58, Washington - 46

Q. They played you guys really tough and then you were able to -- you guys were able to get some separation in the end. Can you just talk about, you know, what that took and what it took out of you, considering you've got to turn around and play again tomorrow?

MICHAELA ONYENWERE: I would just say credit to Washington. I think they're fighting for something bigger than themselves right now. For them to come out and kind of punch us in the mouth a little bit, it's kind of how March goes.

I think the first quarter we started off really well. Our tempo was really, really good. We were able to get a lot of stops and run in transition, which is one of the things we do really well. When they took that away it was a bit challenging for us to get back into it.

At the end of the day we found a way. And moving forward we're going to go into Arizona and kind of figure out what we need to do to get a win there. But I'm proud of my team for just sticking it out and winning this one.

Q. Help us understand what happened in the fourth quarter. You (indiscernible) and Charisma just taking advantage of the turnovers (indiscernible). And can you elaborate on that?

MICHAELA ONYENWERE: Of course, first quarter, like I said, that's something that he with really were really doing well in the first quarter. We started to get back to that. That just comes from energy from us getting stops on the defensive end. That's our anchor. That's what we tell ourselves all the time. When we're able to get stops and run like that, we're really hard to beat and we're able to get back to kind of that anchor in the fourth quarter, which is really nice to see.

Q. How valuable are your teammates like Lauryn and Natalie in that first half especially when you're really trying to get things going?

MICHAELA ONYENWERE: I think Natalie was huge for us today. We harp on her just being our defensive stopper and being a passion player for us. For her to come out and get all those deflections, get those steals, get those loose balls that were going out of bounds and give us extra possession is so, so huge and I'm super proud of her for her to have the confidence be that for us.

And Lauryn is the rock for us even if it's not on the stat sheet. She comes and does everything well. She kind of keeps us steady. They're very, very valuable even if it doesn't show up on the stat sheet all the time. I'm super proud. Glad to call them my teammates.

Q. So take me through -- it seemed like all of a sudden you were one team and all of a sudden somebody just flipped a switch and all of a sudden you went back to being the Bruins. What happened there? Like that was real quick and then all of a sudden everything was fine again. What happened?

MICHAELA ONYENWERE: Yeah, I think it was just, like I said, defense is really our anchor. That's really what really gives us energy. Tonight we weren't shooting our best and that's what we kept talking about in the huddles, okay, y'all, we know it's a battle right now on the offensive end but let's get stops. That's something we can do all the time. When we're able to run like that it's so fun to play with my teammates.

I think that's kind of where we kind of turned it around and kind of flipped that switch but we know that's what we have to kind of settle in our identity. So, yeah, that's something that we definitely have to continue to keep doing.

Q. You guys have been there before many times this season. It seems like you keep finding a way -- if this isn't working you keep trying that and is that how it feels like to you guys?

MICHAELA ONYENWERE: Yeah, we find a way at all



times especially during this time when there's a team like Washington who is fighting for a playoff spot. We know they're fighting for something bigger than themselves, like I said. But yeah, find a way, survive and advance is something we'll keep doing in this tournament and moving forward.

Q. (Indiscernible) and you guys just basically indebted on defense; defense is what you guys stand for. How important is it to have someone like Lauryn to fire you guys up even though certain things she does doesn't show up on the stat sheet?

MICHAELA ONYENWERE: In the second half I heard Lauryn, we were struggling in the offensive end, I heard her say, come on, y'all, let's get a stop. Let's deny this. Pressure the ball.

And to hear that, have a teammate pushing you sometimes when you don't want to be pushed is just super valuable. I'm proud of her for staying level-headed even when things were going well on the offensive end. She's huge for us. Someone we'll always rely on. So that's super huge.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports