

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - Portland vs Kansas State

Friday, March 22, 2024

Manhattan, Kansas, USA

Bramlage Coliseum

Portland Pilots

Michael Meek

Maisie Burnham

Kiana Hamilton-Fisher

Media Conference

Kansas State - 78, Portland - 65

THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and get started with an opening statement from Coach and then take questions for the student-athletes.

MICHAEL MEEK: I can't think thank this team enough for how incredible they have been to coach and how much they have continued to support each other and continued to improve and not give up on each other, and also just how they represent our university as people and as students. It's just been an awesome team to coach. We talked about it in the locker room. Like, the wins have been great. Winning a championship they will be able to have forever and all those things, but the fact is is that they just care about each other so much, they get along so well, and it just has really been an awesome group to be around. Just really proud of 'em.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. For both players, not the start that you wanted in this game. Wondering if the environment had anything to do with that.

MAISIE BURNHAM: Yeah, it's a really awesome environment. We were kind of just reflecting on how fun of an opportunity it is to play on such a stage like this. But yeah, I think we came in and I think we wish we would have had a stronger start. But I'm really proud of this team for battling back. We could have rolled over and I think we just got a little used to the environment and adjusted and we really came together. So, yeah.



KIANNA HAMILTON-FISHER: Yeah, I would say the same. This environment was awesome. It took a second for us to get used to it, but I feel like we did a really good job fighting back.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thank you. We'll take questions for Coach.

Q. Same thing just about the environment and how that might have played into the start that you all had today.

MICHAEL MEEK: Yeah, I mean, one, a lot of the start, Kansas State is an awesome team. I think before Lee got injured, they were ranked No. 2 in the nation about 20 games into this year. So I do think the environment obviously plays in their favor. They're playing on their home court. But also, I think that our players were motivated by the people that they had here supporting each other. We have had a lot of games this season we didn't get off to the best start, but I think, even like the whole season went, like we didn't necessarily, things weren't necessarily going our way early on, but this team just kept battling and fighting and competing and really proud of how we came into this facility and this crowd and made it a really competitive game. I don't think -- I don't think we played our best four quarters, but you could see the fight and the competitiveness all game long, and I couldn't be any prouder of again this team on the court, but who they are off the court as well.

Q. Just talk about what changed after being down by 20, you guys outscored 'em the rest of the game. What changed?

MICHAEL MEEK: I think once we start scoring a little bit we could get into our pressure a little bit. I felt like the tempo became a little bit more in our favor. Lee obviously came out and scored, I don't know, four of the first six points. I think Lucy did an awesome job on her. She's such a great rim protector, and I don't know how many of her points she scored of her 21, I think seven of 'em were from the line. I think, unfortunately, they shot 29 free throws today and that's going to be a tough thing for us to overcome, but I couldn't be any more prouder than the fight



that our team put forth, and it just, it was a good game and I think we cut it to seven late, so.

Q. Your pressure got better as the game went on. Did you tweak anything with your full court pressure?

MICHAEL MEEK: Well, I think the biggest thing is we started scoring so we could get into our pressure. I think, if you look at the first quarter, just some shots that we had been hitting, especially late in the season, just didn't quite fall our way, and then you could just see the team get in a rhythm together and start knocking down shots and then we could get into our presses a little bit more. I think that was probably the biggest part of it is just that momentum that scoring can create for a team, but his also the fact that we need to score to get in our presses as well.

THE MODERATOR: All right, thank you.

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