

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: Regional 1 Semifinal - Indiana vs South Carolina

Friday, March 29, 2024

Albany, New York, USA

Times Union Center

Indiana Hoosiers

Teri Moren

Mackenzie Holmes

Sydney Parrish

Sweet 16 Postgame Media Conference

South Carolina 79, Indiana 75

TERI MOREN: Well, we're very disappointed. I felt like if we had a few more minutes, maybe the outcome would be a little bit different for us tonight. But I can't overstate enough how proud I am and our staff is of our group and the way they fought.

We got off to a tough start. You've got to pick your poison when you play a team like South Carolina, and we were trying to pack it in on Cardoso and make them beat us from the outside, and they hit the first couple, and then we had to adjust defensively, give our kids credit for always being able to adjust throughout the season, and then dug ourselves a bit of a bigger hole.

At one point I think we were down 22 somebody said, and for us to be able to fight the way we did to get back into the game.

We won the second half, we won the third quarter, we won the fourth quarter. Felt like the momentum was definitely on our side throughout.

We're disappointed because we've been here before, but we wanted to get to that next -- advance and move on because we think we really do have - I believe this - a very special basketball team.

I'll end with how proud we are of all of them. Mackenzie Holmes has been one of our greatest players ever to put on an Indiana uniform and will go down in history as one of



the greatest. So I'm sad for her because I know she's sad that it's over, but her sidekick over there Syd Parrish will be back another year, and hopefully she will help lead this team in help making that next step, should we, God willing, next year to be in a similar scenario.

Q. For either of you guys, a lot of people thought that you wouldn't even come this close to a team like South Carolina, whether it was the spread before the game or just people talking in general. What does it say about this group that you came so close at the end?

SYDNEY PARRISH: We're a tough team, and we knew we were going to have to fight until the end. We could have given up after halftime, and it could have been a really ugly game, but we're fighters, and I think we showed that tonight.

I'm glad we did because I think it put us on the map, and I think people will realize what Indiana basketball is, and we weren't going to give up. We knew we were going to fight until the end, whether that was for us to make it to the Elite 8 or whether it was for Sara, Mackenzie and Arielle, it being their last game. We didn't want to go out without a fight.

Q. Mackenzie, being that this is your last game and you're a graduate, I always feel like when a player of your caliber or any player in any Division I program, they put in all the blood, sweat and tears they put in they've earned the right to speak to all their accomplishments or their overall career and everything that they've put into this program. If you could please just share with us your feelings and your emotions and please take your time.

MACKENZIE HOLMES: Yeah, I mean, obviously anyone who knows me knows how much I love being a Hoosier. I just pray that any high schooler that is looking at colleges that they pick a school that they feel the same way that I have felt about Indiana. I know the transfer portal is huge right now, but I'm here for five years because I loved being a Hoosier, and I loved every second.

I just pray that every student-athlete gets to feel the way I



feel about a school because they deserve it. It's an amazing feeling.

I wouldn't be this upset if it didn't mean so much to me. Accomplishments aside, I've met friends that have turned into family here at IU, people that I'll have with me for the rest of my life, and I think that's the greatest accomplishment of all is the experiences, the moments and the people that I've spent five years here with.

That's all I really have to say about that, but I'm just very, very thankful that Coach Moren saw something in me, offered me to play here, and that I've gotten the chance to play five years under her with some really, really special people.

Q. If you could each take me inside what the locker room was like after halftime. You guys are both among the leaders of this team. Were you speaking up? What was the plan? How did you guys handle that ahead of the comeback that you had?

SYDNEY PARRISH: I think in the locker room we were really composed. I think we were really just -- we didn't get too high, we didn't get too low, and everyone was really speaking their part, what they saw on the floor, trying to make defensive changes, seeing what they gave us.

I think the biggest thing was how composed we were. We didn't freak out because we were down big, and I think that helped us going into the game.

Q. There's been times this season where in the second half it's kind of gotten away from you, but tonight you guys fought really hard. What was it like in that third and fourth quarter to really be in the thick of it like that?

MACKENZIE HOLMES: Yeah, I think that we knew we were capable of coming back. We saw Tennessee do it in that SEC tournament semifinal. We just had to stay the course.

Like Coach said, we battled our butts off tonight the entire third and fourth quarter whether shots were falling or not. We kept getting back on defense, keep getting stops, kept making plays on the other end.

I'm just super, super proud that we didn't -- our backs were against the wall and we did not go down without a fight, and that's all we can really ask for.

Q. Sydney, in that third quarter you had an 8-0 run that really sparked that comeback that brought you guys really back into the game. What exactly was

motivating you in those moments to bring your team back?

SYDNEY PARRISH: Just chip away slowly. I don't know if there was any motivation exactly. I think coming into the game my biggest motivation was trying not to make it Mackenzie, Sara and Relle's last game.

Q. We're still within the month of March which is respect Women's History Month. Who are some inspirations that turned you guys into the persons that you are today?

MACKENZIE HOLMES: The person sitting to my right and the person sitting to my left. I mean, Coach Moren has exemplified what a strong woman looks like, what a fearless leader looks like. She's the most competitive person I've ever met in every aspect of her life. I've never had a female head coach before coming to college ever in my life, and the fact that Coach Moren has been able to guide all of us and lead all of us, there's really no one better, and I'm very, very thankful.

SYDNEY PARRISH: You know, going off of that, I completely agree with Mackenzie. I told Coach Moren last year when I transferred and came to IU, she made me fall in love with the game again, and I thank her every single day for that because she makes me enjoy playing basketball, whether that's in game, in practice. She trusts us, she loves us, she wants to win for us, and then Mackenzie --

TERI MOREN: We said we weren't going to do this.

SYDNEY PARRISH: These are all the tears after the game. I think it's just more because it was the last time I got to be on the court with Mackenzie.

Coming here I didn't think we would be as close as we are today. But I can say she's a sister more than a best friend.

Q. Going back to what Mackenzie said and Sydney said about their love of the game, about love of IU, is that the counterpoint to the NIL era and transfer portal era that maybe doesn't get discussed enough in terms of being dedicated to the team and to your teammates and things like that, what they were talking about?

TERI MOREN: I don't know. You know, I think everything is -- the landscape has changed, and we all know, and we all have to adjust to it.

I think for us, our biggest goal at Indiana is, yeah, NIL is a part of it, but the retention piece is so important, and the only way that, at least I believe, that you can get your kids



to stay on your roster is by having great relationships with them and loving them up and caring for them on and off the floor, impacting them.

They're basketball players, but the impact that you can have on their lives -- I want all our kids to be able to leave Indiana and believe that there's nothing in life that they can't accomplish and do.

So our goal is retention. We've had great examples of Mackenzie and the Grace Bergers and the Chloe Moore-McNeils that have stuck with the process, have stayed on our roster in spite of not playing a lot of minutes, when I think about Chloe.

I know that the NIL piece is going to be part of it, but I'm still a firm believer that you can't have a roster with all kids, all transfer kids. I want a combination of both. I want to build chemistry. I want to build a team. I don't know that you can do that with the transfer portal and by NIL.

But I will say this: You have to have special kids that come from special homes that have been brought up with special parents that understand there's a bigger picture out there than NIL. It's, can you take my daughter, and when I drop her off, help her become a woman. That's what we try to do at Indiana.

Q. The last minute, the three off the time-out that Raven hit, Dawn said they were looking to get the ball inside and you collapsed on them. Was it one of those pick your poisons?

TERI MOREN: Yep, that's exactly what it was. We felt like we had them right where we wanted them, and then we gambled, and Cardoso made the right play to kick that thing out, and she stuck it. But that's exactly how we wanted to play it.

Q. What kind of physical challenge does Cardoso bring to any game?

TERI MOREN: Well, she's about four inches taller than any kid that we've got out there. What I am impressed with seeing her up close the way we did tonight was how good she is. There was a moment there where I feel like Mack was super physical, and she was almost dang near underneath the backboard, which was kind of where we wanted to drive her and was still able to stay balanced. She has long arms, and come back and knock down a shot right at the rim and not look awkward or off balance. It was like, this is a rhythm shot for me. I do this every day.

So she's a load. I think that you have to pick your poison, as I said with Doug, but she requires a double-team. She

requires somebody that's either bigger than she is, and if you don't have somebody on your roster that's as big as she is, whether it's a dig, whether it's a double, sometimes it's a triple, you've got to go at her because she is very consistent around the rim, as she's shown tonight being 10-for-12 from the field.

Q. You mentioned Sydney taking the reins next year and with these three Sweet 16s in four years, how optimistic are you for next year and the future of the program?

TERI MOREN: Well, I'm always optimistic. That's just how I am. Always look forward to what's next for our program. We've done a lot of really, really great things and have accomplished -- this has been an unbelievable year, especially when we started out with the tough loss at Stanford, and I think everybody was wondering what's up with this team and will they have an opportunity to get into the field and how far can they go, and then we rattle off 13 straight wins and beat some teams and have a great Iowa win at home and so forth.

I'm always optimistic. That's just how I've been raised. Those guys that are coming back, this is a great experience for them. It needs to sting. It needs to hurt a little bit. I want our kids -- as I said to them, to walk out with their heads held high. But I want it to bother Beau. I want it to bother Jewels. I want it to bother Chloe, I want it to bother Lily, all those kids, Lexy. I want it to bother them, and I know it does.

Q. You've talked about the continuity, and Chloe said she's coming back. Syd told us a month ago she's coming back. How much when you look at the fight the team had tonight do you think that continuity plays a part in allowing something like that to happen?

TERI MOREN: I think they are so close. They are so connected on and off the floor. We are blue collar. We play with a chip. We are okay with people giving us an underdog role. Nobody is talking about Indiana.

For some teams that have had the level of success, that might really bother them. It doesn't bother us. It's like we're going to show up every day and we're going to practice together and we're going to work hard and we're going to be aggressive. Whatever game that is next on our schedule, we're going to try to fight like crazy to win it, and we're going to do it together. We don't care who scores. We've had balance, great balance. At one point we were the most efficient team in the country. That's a team that shares the sugar. They love each other. They're connected. They don't care who gets the -- they don't care who scores. They want to win games.

You're always excited when you have the chemistry, and ours has been out of this world the last four or five years, and I think it'll continue. But we have had great examples of what good chemistry looks like. Mackenzie has been a huge part of that.

Q. To your point you made in the last part of your answer, to have Mackenzie as an example going forward, how can that be used within the program in order to continue that as a legacy when she's gone?

TERI MOREN: Well, the way that we can honor Mackenzie, the way we can honor Grace, the way we can honor the Ali Patbergs who have been in our program is doing what they do, and they show up and they do more than what's required, and that's part of the recipe for us.

We're not a team that will come in and look forward to a two-hour practice. I'm going to have kids in there before practice. I'm going to have kids that are going to stay after. I have to adjust my meeting times usually with my staff because they are scheduled on the half hour, on the 40-minute with those kids that are coming in doing extra. That's what it requires, not just the two hours. What are they doing outside of practice time.

That's what Grace Berger -- every day, every day, Mackenzie Holmes, every day. It's cool when you bring in kids and you say you're an outlier if you're not going to do this every day, and we're not for everybody, but if you're willing and you want to get better, this is a place you probably want to think about because our staff, we're going to be in the trenches, we're going to roll up our sleeves, we're going to help you develop and get better in your time here at Indiana.

I think we can talk about Grace Berger, the career she's had, the career Max had and so forth. We've got great evidence that the way we're doing things is working for us.

Q. For one player I think even though it shows in the stat sheet she didn't score much is Chloe Moore-McNeil and the energy she brought.

TERI MOREN: I'm glad you mentioned her.

Q. The minute she came off that bench, the minute she came back in the game, everything changed. If you could speak as to her value to the team, especially tonight or any other day.

TERI MOREN: She is as tough as a six-dollar steak. She really is. She is as tough as they come. She has been our leader all year.

You know what, I'm so proud of her is that she is quiet by nature, but when I tell you, when she gets in those huddles and she leads and she gets in the right way, gets in her teammates, like we need you, we need you to do this -- if you are around her, you quickly love Chloe because she's a great teammate, but when it comes to competition and never, ever backing down and never being afraid of the moment, she's not afraid of the moment.

She's been -- I'm so grateful she's coming back. That's the thing about these kids is you never want them to leave. We're grateful, and we know this, at least we'll get her another year to lead this basketball team. I appreciate your question.

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