

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - Fairfield vs Indiana

Saturday, March 23, 2024

Bloomington, Indiana, USA

Simon Skjodt Assembly Hall

Indiana Hoosiers

Coach Teri Moren

Sara Scalia

Yarden Garzon

Media Conference

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Head Coach Teri Moren, senior Sara Scalia and sophomore Yarden Garzon. We will open up with a comment from Coach.

TERI MOREN: Thank you. I just want to start off by saying thank you to Hoosier Nation for being here this afternoon. It's so great to have the energy that we have in this building and we're so grateful once again. Congratulations to a very good Fairfield team that had a terrific, unbelievable kind of season.

Carly has done a great job, and her staff have done a great job this season and they have had a very special one. There is a reason why. They gave us everything, you know, we wanted in that first half, as far as from an offensive perspective with their movement, body movement, ball movement, their threes that were going down. I thought we made some adjustment in the second half, give our kids credit for being able to make those adjustments in real life action.

Offensively we finally got going, Sara had a special afternoon, but as I said to all of them, they had help, balanced scoring. Anytime you can score almost 90 points; we had 25 assists on 31 makes, which is really, really good. We were plus 15 with rebounds. I thought those things in combination with adjustments that we made defensively, it was a tally of two different halves.

So we're awfully proud that we got the win here this afternoon, but we're trying to keep the main thing the main thing. We gotta get these guys some food, they're going to watch the next game and help us where the scout. And so we're happy, always happy in this tournament to be



advancing.

Q. Sara, when you hear a team is -- as Teri talked about only yesterday, shoots 242 threes more than you, do you start to think, hey, this could be my kind of game and maybe my team will need me more than usually even to do and keep up with them and shoot like that?

SARA SCALIA: Um, yeah, I mean, I just think -- honestly I continue to play my role each game and continue to do the same thing, have the same mind-set, as far as playing my own game, not going off that. But like Coach said they are a very talented team, they can obviously shoot the ball, they cut well off the ball so it was a good win we had.

Q. How did you guys respond to the halftime message from Coach?

SARA SCALIA: I think the biggest thing was just defensively we kinda had to lock in defensively. We were off to a little bit of a slow start in the first half at times. I think the biggest thing we had to lock in defensively and get out to the shooters, don't let them get, un, knock-down threes or anything like that, so I think that was the biggest thing, defense.

YARDEN GARZON: I feel like we all know how important the third quarter is for us so we try to go out, be ourselves, tighten up our defense and have a good quarter.

Q. Sara, the stats are across the board great for the team. Incredible day for you with 27 points and 5 of 10 from behind the arc, 4 of 4 at the free throw line. What does having a big day like that in the first game of this tournament do for you to get you jump-started?

SARA SCALIA: It's always good for a shooter to have a good shooting game and kinda go off that. It just brings more and more confidence.

But it also opens it up for other -- some of my other teammates, too, when I hit my shots like I do this game. So I think it was definitely a good start to the tournament, good start to the first game for me and our team. I think it



will open up a little bit more.

Q. Seems like you guys really turned a corner with four minutes to go in the first half. What was different about those four minutes compared to the other 16?

SARA SCALIA: I think we just kind of had to -- we were off for two weeks, as far as playing a competitive game like that, so I think we kind of had to get our feet under ourselves for a little bit in the first half. I think that was the biggest thing. We obviously played really well in the second half so our second half was good to us.

YARDEN GARZON: I feel like in the halftime we understood like what it require for us to do to win this game. We know the feeling from last year, how it is to lose and regret about stuff you did and didn't do, so I think we locked our defense and started to play like us.

Q. Ladies, to expand on that, you clamped down defensively on Brown in the second half. How did you do that?

SARA SCALIA: I think the biggest thing was knowing personnel. We kind of let some of their players, we kind of let them if to their strengths so I think the biggest thing was knowing the personnel and going out to the shooters and staying in front of them.

YARDEN GARZON: I agree with Sara.

Q. Sara, you seemed to have a lot of fire in the third quarter, especially in that three-pointer to put you guys up 16. What were you feeling in that moment?

SARA SCALIA: Honestly we needed a run like that. I felt like it was kind of going back and forth for a lot of the first half and we came out hot in the third quarter.

I think we just needed to run and needed Assembly Hall to get us going a little bit because we had the advantage at home.

Q. (No microphone.)

SARA SCALIA: Yeah, I would say it just -- I feel like -- liked I said we have the advantage at home and we have a really big fan base, really grateful for the fans that show out to our games. When it gets loud in Assembly Hall it gets us going and helps build our energy up and we want to play good, especially in front of our home crowd to show 'em we deserve to be playing at home in the tournament.

YARDEN GARZON: I agree. I love to play in front of our fans. It's always fun to play in Assembly Hall and I'm

looking forward for be Monday.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, ladies. Questions for Coach.

Q. Teri, the pace was torrid in the first half, and I was like, wow, I started counting shots. Is that a pace that you want to keep up? I don't know if that had anything to do with the adjustments that you guys made in the second half, but it was a torrid pace but you guys played into that. Is that something you want to do?

TERI MOREN: Yeah, that's us, Jim, I mean, we want to play past fast. I thought it was really good for us, Sara alluded to it, we haven't played in two weeks. I didn't mind the pace. I would have liked to have hit a few more shots. I didn't mind the pace. What I did mind was us not getting back better in transition from time to time.

Again, you're playing the first game of the NCAA Tournament, and there's going to be some nervousness and some -- there's great anticipation, but, you know, there's always some jitters I think they gotta get out. I thought that was -- that probably helped us, you know, just to get those out early. But to say that we wanted to slow it down, we weren't trying to slow it down. That's who we've been, a team that wants to play with freedom but also play with pace.

Q. Coach, what I was general asking the players, your defense in the second half dramatic, especially clamping down on Brown.

TERI MOREN: The adjustments we made -- we decided to switch everything 1-5, and we're not a team that does that. That's why we're so proud of our guys being able to make those adjustments and really having to sit down. I thought several people had to guard her, I thought Lex, Chloe, from time to time. Anytime she tried to go downhill and we got those switches. Mac did a great job I thought of protecting the rim.

But she is a very talented player, and I'm proud of our guys. That was the biggest adjustment we made was just trying to stay on our people but switching. I kinda laugh about the third quarter you guys asking about what that conversation was like.

I would like to say it was much better. I think we came out and gave up two threes, so I guess I not didn't inspire them enough, but they finally were figuring out some things, especially when we went to switching 1-5. I thought that was a good move on Coach Rhet's job.

Q. Mackenzie had three defensive stops in a row in the

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

second quarter, established your physicality. Was that an important moment for you guys? And something you said at Big Ten Media Days, do you think she is under appreciated nationally, when you see the awards come out?

TERI MOREN: She and I haven't talked about it, that could maybe be -- she has been different this week. I think the biggest thing for Mac and what we're all so excited about is she is here and she is playing and she looks relatively healthy. But, yeah, she has been great, you know? You could tell she was in here early this morning, getting extra shots up.

She has anticipated this day and has looked forward to it being here, I think to get back out on the floor with her team, feel healthy, but, you know, that's why she was the Defensive Player of the Year a year ago, in the Big, because she could protect the rim for us. We talked about, she had to sit down, she had to guard off the bounce today. I thought she did a good job of doing that as well.

I would have liked to have gotten her more touches, but I thought they did a good job of being physical with her, trying to front her from time to time and the thing I'm most proud of Mac is she didn't push it; she didn't press. She allowed the game to come to her, and do I think she is the best post player in the country? Yeah, absolutely.

Q. Along those lines, when Mac shows so much heart and she was charged up today, in your mind how do you think that affects her teammates? You haven't played for two weeks, in a potentially nervous game.

TERI MOREN: I think anytime Mac is emotional -- she is a great teammate. She is all the right things. I think anytime her teammates see her getting excited, getting fired up in those timeouts, I think they all get excited with her because they understand and realize how much it means to Mac.

But I think it also helps Mac. Her intensity, I think talking defensively helps her when she plays with more emotion. And she is such a great teammate. She is so excited for her team and her teammates when they do well. It was so good the two weeks, but so good to see her out there today.

Q. Same vein, Sara seemed to have a lot of emotion today, especially 2349 third quarter. What did you think of that and her third quarter play especially?

TERI MOREN: We've seen her be more emotional than ever this year, today wasn't just her -- one of those moments.

She has had several of them where she's showed playing with a tremendous amount of joy, playing with the emotion, and you know it's great to see. I mean, she's done the work, and beautiful shot anytime that thing goes in. Anytime she shoots it we believe it's going to go in, that's how much confidence we have in her. Just another great day for her and the emotional part of it, we've kinda come to -- it's something we're now used to and there for a long time we didn't see it. This has sort of been her breakout year.

Q. Teri y'all went into the media timeout in the second quarter down five, and Chloe said she spoke up in that huddle. What did she say? How do you pick up yourselves in that key point in the game?

TERI MOREN: I think she was more frustrated with us defensively than she was offensively. I think we felt like we could put people in positions to score but what we were not doing a very good job of was guarding the way that we wanted to.

So I think, if anything, she was trying to jump start them and inspire them to guard so much better. But, Seth, that's not the first time. She has been a leader, whether you guys see it or don't see it, inside of practices, inside of locker rooms, inside of timeouts. She jumped 'em pretty good.

Q. The pace in that first quarter was just way up and down even a little bit in the second. How do you adjust to dictate the game the way you wanted to play?

TERI MOREN: We didn't change anything in terms of -- there were moments where maybe I -- I could count 'em on one hand -- where I asked them to slow it down a little bit. But, again, I thought the pace for us was really good. We hadn't played in two weeks as we continue to say. Us getting up and down the floor and we haven't done a lot of that in practice.

We've done a lot of -- some conditioning with the ball, but have not gotten up and down the floor five-on-five like that, because to be quite honest I have been a little bit paranoid. I didn't want to get anybody hurt trying to do that with our practice squad. So we've really stayed in the half-court. So going into Monday I thought a game like this for the pace, all of it, I thought was really good. The evidence behind it shows that we're still in pretty good shape, even taking those days off. What we have done has worked because I thought they looked fresh, but I also thought that they pushed the pace.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, congratulations.

