

American Athletic Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Monday, March 7, 2022

Fort Worth, Texas, USA

Dickies Arena

East Carolina Pirates Coach Kim McNeill Tanyah Thompson

Postgame Press Conference

Memphis - 59, East Carolina - 48

MODERATOR: We have East Carolina Coach Kim McNeill and Junior Tanyah Thompson. So we'll open up with a statement. Anybody on the Zoom, if you want to raise your hand we'll call on you.

COACH KIM McNEILL: First and foremost, hats off to Memphis. Thought they played really hard. They did some things that are going to help you win games in tournament play. Obviously not the way I anticipated us coming out and performing today. You know, we played them a month or so ago and beat them by 30, and these last two games, just haven't been the ECU I know we could be. We played South Florida at home to an 8-point game and we played Memphis to finish out the regular season and here in tournament play. Just not the tenacity that I thought we would have. We've had some good practice here these last two practices, so I was anticipating us coming out and playing better, but when you shoot 28 percent from the field and 7 percent from the 3, you get 20 offensive rebounds, but you can only get 10 points off of that. We struggled offensively tonight and I think that was the difference in the game.

Q. Coach, you know, you mentioned your team's slow start, but in the second quarter and third quarter too, a 10-0 run, a 7-0 run. What worked there that maybe didn't at the start of the game?

COACH KIM McNEILL: You're right, we had some runs, but we couldn't sustain it. We had a couple stops and once they really took us off the trouble, really need to take away that penetration, take away that paint and I didn't think we did a good job of that. We had some spurts where we turned them over, but as I said before, we couldn't sustain it. And we were getting some turnovers and then not being



able to execute on the offensive end of the floor. We've got to be able to put the ball in the basket because a lot of times (inaudible) and they stop playing hard, their energy comes off the offensive end of the floor.

I'm disappointed in the way it ended, but we had some good things happen this season. Tanyah Thompson, First Team All-Conference and being named Most Improved Player, which I definitely think she deserved every bit of those honors. Not how we wanted to end the season. We're still in the building process and we're going to continue to fight and make this program better.

Q. I have a question for Tanyah. It's been really fun watching you play basketball all year. I know as the year went on, teams are starting to focus on you a lot defensively. How are you able to really able to continue to score points when I'm sure you're the focal point of a lot of different scouting reports?

TANIYAH THOMPSON: Just player development, prepping for the game with my coach. We do a lot of film, see how teams are going to guard me and then we go on the court and we rep it out. So just preparation before the games.

Q. Do you still feel like there's a different or a higher ceiling you can still reach as your career goes on? Do you think there's more in the tank for you to learn and kind of improve on?

TANIYAH THOMPSON: Definitely. I'm definitely not at my best. Just going to keep working hard, working on things I've got to get better at for next season and just keep going.

Q. Obviously the challenges of just playing a team three different times, what kind of adjustments maybe did they make or you guys make that just kind of changed the course of that series, I guess?

COACH KIM McNEILL: I think definitely the first time they were more stagnant on offense. The second and third time I thought they were more aggressive with their guards really looking to take us off the dribble. We were looking to utilize the high post and utilize their size going high-low on



us. For us, we wanted to be able to execute a little bit better offensively. We knew we were probably going to see more of their matchup zone and they did plan, so we added a couple of new plays in there to get some different looks. I thought we got some open shots, the lid was just on the rim for us today. Sometimes that's the way it goes.

Q. The last 45 minutes of the game were played evenly in terms of scoring, but the first quarter, down 11 after the first and had to kind of chase it the rest of the day. What was the difference in those first 15 minutes, or 10 minutes rather?

COACH KIM McNEILL: I thought we settled down a little bit later on as the game went to be able to contain that penetration early. I thought they were just from the corners, from the tops they were just getting inside either for a layup or a dropoff from the post and we really came in, and we said at halftime we have to sit down and we've got to guard, we've got to guard the ball. If we can keep them from penetrating and getting in the paint, so I think that was probably the biggest difference early in the game, we allowed them to just drive by us and get easy shots. We guarded the ball a little bit better, but just didn't see the ball go through the basket for us.

MODERATOR: Any other questions? Thank you all.

COACH KIM McNEILL: Thank you.