

American Athletic Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Tuesday, March 8, 2022

Fort Worth, Texas, USA

Dickies Arena

Temple Owls

Coach Tonya Cordoza

Mia Davis

Postgame Press Conference

SMU - 63, Temple - 55.

MODERATOR: We have Temple Coach Tonya Cardoza, Senior Mia Davis.

Coach, if you want to give your opening statement and we'll open it up to our group that's with us on our Zoom. Coach, if you want to get us started with your opening statement.

COACH TONYA CARDOZA: Just hats off to SMU. This was like the rubber match and three straight games that we've had to play against them and they definitely got the best of us today.

You know, I just felt like offensively pretty much all season, if Mia's not scoring, that we struggle. And, you know, she didn't have a great night offensively because of how they were defending her. We didn't -- you know, I felt like we passed up some wide open shots, but we weren't able to knock down shots and defensively we were allowing them to -- actually, they were making contested shots. It was hard because we put them on the free-throw line so often that -- you know, 26 free throws, it's going to be hard to win basketball games when they're getting to the free-throw line like that. Just to start the game, they had nine offensive rebounds in the first half. We talked about that, you know, making sure that we don't allow second-chance opportunities.

Just again, hats off to them and best of luck.

Q. You alluded to the rebounding situation. Can you talk about the disparity and what impact that had on the game?



COACH TONYA CARDOZA: Impact on us all season, honestly. You've watched us, Glenn. You know, again, they don't have a true post player, but they're aggressive, they're really aggressive. And the way that we had to defend them because of Wilkinson, we were leaving someone open a lot of times and that guy went to go crash. Like when we're trapping, there's an open guy and that guy definitely just went to the boards. I just felt like we needed to focus more on making sure, because there were opportunities where we were standing right there and we just didn't do the job. Again, when you give people second-chance opportunities and put them on the free-throw line, it's going to be hard to win basketball games.

Q. I'm curious, I think at halftime, I don't know if I had ever seen -- they had two fouls and I wondered how much of that was like -- were you guys just not quite aggressive enough in the first half? Was that a sign of that or something else?

COACH TONYA CARDOZA: Yeah, I felt like, you know, we weren't being as aggressive. I mean, I'm always going to sit there and complain. I mean, I feel like all coaches do. Especially I feel like Mia's always getting beat up, but I didn't think it was anything out of the ordinary. I thought the refs did a great job of officiating this game. We just needed to be a little bit more aggressive and they were really aggressive and that's why they got to the free-throw line more than we did.

Q. How was the preparation for this week. Am I understanding it right, you guys spent all the time down there after playing those last two games after SMU?

COACH TONYA CARDOZA: We went back to Philadelphia.

Q. So the preparation was kind of like normal?

COACH TONYA CARDOZA: Yes, it was normal preparation.

Q. For -- the way this league is now, now we're two



years with UCONN out and, right, there were teams that were always at the bottom moving toward the top. Where is this league and where are you guys in the pecking order of the league at this point the end of this season?

COACH TONYA CARDOZA: I think this year more than any has been, you know, any particular game anyone can win. Again, you look at Cincinnati, they're the ones that upset UCF and every game that they played early on was really close, and that's a team that was at the bottom of the league. We got new coaches in here that have new styles and they all did a great job. But yes, from top to bottom this league is so much better than it was when UCONN was in it.

Q. Coach, looking at this group of freshmen, how have they stepped up and grown these last couple of games?

COACH TONYA CARDOZA: That's the positive that we have to look at. We started three freshmen and when you look around this league, there's a lot of fifth-year seniors in the starting line ups and the fact that we have three, that's very encouraging, knowing that they actually got a lot of game experience. And then even Caranda and Jasha only being -- I mean, they get that year back. So we're playing a lot of young guys that have garnered a lot of experience and just hoping that, you know, being in this position, that they don't want to be in this position anymore and that they really devote time and effort in getting in the gym and getting better.

Q. Question for Mia. Talk about the defense they played on you. Were they being physical with you and what made it difficult for you to score?

MIA DAVIS: Back to what Coach said, a lot of teams double and triple-team me. Sometimes once I catch the ball and turn around, like I'm not laying it up or scoring it quick enough. So it's a double-team and I don't get it out quick enough.

Q. Do you have any thoughts about this possibly could have been your last college basketball game?

MIA DAVIS: Yeah, I was actually pretty sad that it's a couple -- it's sad that it's a lot of our last game and I wish it would have ended a different way.

Q. Mia, I'm curious, as this game goes along, it seemed over and over you guys would cut it to one or tie the score and then they would hit a basket right back. Are you sort of aware of that, the score and the situation, even in the middle of the game and do you

feel that, like, oh, we're right there and then -- because even momentum-wise, it felt that way watching.

MIA DAVIS: Yeah, we definitely feel when we're trading baskets, but the thing is we didn't get stops down the stretch.

Q. So in terms of, you know, this being the last game maybe, what was on your mind beforehand? Was anything like that on your mind beforehand? If not, when, when does the -- when does this kind of hit you?

MIA DAVIS: No.

Q. Tonya, obviously not the outcome you wanted, but you talked about the freshmen being -- three freshmen in your starting lineup. What's your outlook on the season at least at this point? I know you haven't had time to really decompress thus far, but what's your outlook about the season as a whole?

COACH TONYA CARDOZA: I definitely felt like we underachieved. I felt like even with three freshmen and all the new players, I felt like if we were really connected and focused. We could have done -- we could have had a better year. I mean, you've been around and you've watched how many close games that we came up short because of whatever. Just felt like we never really turned the corner to now not let those things happen again. They just continued to happen. Where again, I felt like we battled and we fought, but there's just so many games that we let slip away because we weren't paying attention or we gave up offensive rebounds or we turned the ball over. So when I look back, I feel like we underachieved, that we could have been or we should have been so much better than we were.

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