

American Athletic Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Saturday, March 9, 2024

Fort Worth, Texas, USA

Dickies Arena

Tulane Green Wave

Lisa Stockton

Kyren Whittington

Postgame Press Conference



LISA STOCKTON: You know, I don't really think it's about proving anything to the American Conference. I think it's about us having another opportunity. We just feel like that we're better than we have played. This is a chance to kind of start over. It's a clean slate.

I just thought today was so much about the leadership of the team and just how they could fight through adversity and we did that. I felt like when we got in that third quarter, we just played with a lot of confidence. I think it's probably going to prove to ourselves that this season really isn't who we are and hopefully we can continue to do that.

Q. Do we need to bottle up your halftime speech? Was there a big speech that accounted for the third quarter or was that just a veteran team?

LISA STOCKTON: I wish it was that easy. No, I just think it's pointing out things we got to do better. I think it was really just trying -- for us to say, these are things we're doing well. We didn't turn the ball over a lot in the first half. There's things like that. And we talked about moving the ball more, the ball not sticking. I think you saw that, especially in that third quarter. We moved the ball so well and having four players in double figures scoring, I think it just shows we shared the ball pretty well.

I give all the credit to the team. I thought they had great spirit coming out of the locker room at half and they took it and they earned it.

Q. Is it as simple to say 0-12 from three-point range until late in the first half, then 1-13 at halftime, and then you couldn't miss, it seemed, from outside. Was it just that simple, the shots that are falling are getting better looks?

LISA STOCKTON: A little bit of both. I thought there was a couple shots that looked like they were in. They were like in the bottom and then rolled out. I felt like some of them it was kind of bad luck.

Second half -- I think some things are contagious. You start getting on a roll and you make some shots and then everybody loosens up a little bit and someone else makes

Tulane - 68, SMU - 62

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

LISA STOCKTON: Proud of our team. We've had a tough stretch here and just trying to get our team focused, just really trying to come out here with some confidence after some of the losses we've had. I'm just really proud of just the mindset. I've said all along, I think we have talent on this team. We just haven't been able to make plays when we needed to. I thought we did that today. Kyren really -- I reminded her, last year she had a tremendous tournament here and made All Tournament, and I reminded her this is kind of her place, so she's showing it.

But just really proud of 'em. I thought our team played well on both ends of the floor, especially down the stretch.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

Q. You had an amazing game, 28 points. What went into that performance tonight?

KYREN WHITTINGTON: I can only give credit to my teammates. The first half was pretty rough. Just went in the locker room, talked about adjustments, came out, rotated the ball, swung it, people made plays, made cuts, made reads, and it worked out for us. I'm just proud of them. We played different today and I'm proud of 'em.

Q. Your team, 14th seed going in, bottom of the tournament. What do you have to prove to the rest of the American Conference?

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a shot. But we've been a good three-point shooting team all year and I think that's part of our game. I thought tonight we did a good job of using the outside game, hitting the threes, and also being able to score at the rim. So that combination, I thought, was really key for us.

Q. You had 17 in the third quarter alone. Can you just tell us, what was your mindset going in? Did you feel like you needed to give your team a spark? And it seemed your teammates followed after that as well.

KYREN WHITTINGTON: I think Coach kind of drew up a play for me during halftime, which gave me confidence, just because -- you know, just to have your coach be able to trust in you and give you the green light, you know, I go out there, relax, and play my ball.

Again, my teammates were swinging it, so if I didn't have a shot, they had a shot, like, I don't mind passing it to somebody else, but we really just made plays and Coach believed in us.

Q. Looking ahead to tomorrow's matchup with Charlotte, what do you expect to see there?

LISA STOCKTON: Well, we split with them during the year. We know they have got a good team. They do so many things well. I had a really close game at Charlotte with them, and it felt like we let that one get away, and then we had a great game against them at our place. Again, Kyren made some really good plays down the stretch.

I think our team will be excited to be there. I think our team is excited and this gives you a little confidence. Anybody can win this tournament, so I don't think there's any team out there that you can't match up with. I think our team will come out with some excitement tomorrow.

Q. Along those lines, the league has been fairly tightly packed this year. You can say that the top isn't appreciably different from the bottom. Can you talk about that, maybe your mindset going in, that every team has a puncher's chance of taking this thing home?

LISA STOCKTON: Probably more so than any league I've been a part of. Again, the American's been three different leagues since I've been here, I think Conference USA was a lot. I think all the leagues always have two or three teams that were kind of the one to beat. I think this league is, there's so much parity, everyone one's beating everyone, I think it's who is hot that night. We talked about who can make plays at the end of a game, and things that are going to make it really exciting. There's not a team that's going to run away with this tournament so everybody

better show up or they're going to go home.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thank you, coach.

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