

American Athletic Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Sunday, March 10, 2024

Fort Worth, Texas, USA

Dickies Arena

Charlotte 49ers Cara Consuegra Dazia Lawrence

Postgame Press Conference

Tulane - 65, Charlotte - 52

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

CARA CONSUEGRA: I definitely want to commend Tulane. I thought they played an excellent game. I thought they played excellent yesterday, and they were just able to carry over that momentum. Lisa's a great coach. They beat us fair and square. They did a great job.

With that being said, just disappointed with our team's performance. We've had an up-and-down year. Unfortunately, I think today we picked a bad day to play one of our worst games. We just weren't connected defensively, we weren't on the same page, we allowed a lot of easy buckets for them and they took advantage of it.

Then I think certainly offensively problems that we had all year shooting the ball just really came out on this stage. It's a really unfortunate way to end. I really enjoyed coaching this team, but certainly this will leave a bad taste in our mouth moving forward.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Anyone in the room with a question?

Q. When you get in a situation like y'all did in the first half, what do you talk to them at halftime about, starting over and just letting the first half just go?

CARA CONSUEGRA: I think the biggest issue is we weren't playing together. When you don't play together as a basketball team and play connected, you play like that. So it wasn't even really as much about trying to let it go



and regroup. It was trying to remind them about the team that they want to be. That's to play for and with each other, because we weren't. We were playing as five individuals. We weren't moving the ball well, we weren't sharing the ball, we were playing frustrated, and basketball just can't be played well that way. So that was our biggest focus to try to just get everybody back on the same page at halftime.

Q. Kind of a slow starts have kind of been a common theme through the season. Did you sense sort of an advantage with Tulane, already having a game under their belt within this tournament?

CARA CONSUEGRA: I don't know. I try not to think too much about that. I think my focus is always to control what we can control. They had to play. We didn't. So that really wasn't something that I thought about a lot. I just tried to do whatever I could to prepare my team to win. We practiced well the last few days and we felt good, and we felt prepared, but, obviously, we've got to look inside ourselves and see why that didn't carry over today.

Q. You always talk about what you can grow from on the season. What's something that you hope the team can grow from this game going into the off-season for next season?

CARA CONSUEGRA: I hope it motivates us. We did have some really great moments this year and we did play really well in some games, and then we had games where we didn't. I think the potential of this team is there if we can get everybody connected and on the same page and move forward for the right reasons. So I really hope that the biggest thing we can learn from this is that we can grow and get better, and that we will be motivated because, obviously, being our first year here in the American, I think we showed that we belong.

We didn't do that today, but over the course of 18 games, we showed that we belong in this league, and that we can compete with anyone. I hope that will, again, motivate our team to continue to get better moving forward.

Q. If you can just expound a little bit more about



moving over into the American, the challenges that it has that was in front of you and trying to overcome them and win the regular conference season.

CARA CONSUEGRA: Yeah, I think the American is a great league. Obviously this year was exceptional with all the parity top to bottom. It will be really very interesting to see who wins this because I think any team can do it. I think for us coming into the league, we did a lot of scouting, but it's one thing to look at teams on video and a second thing to play against them. I think the first year has really given us a better sense of what we need to do roster-wise. We need to get more athletic, we need to get bigger. We got crushed on the boards in most games. We have to become a better rebounding team.

So we have some areas that we know that we can improve and we'll work obviously really hard to bring the right pieces in to do that. But even with that said, knowing that maybe our roster isn't built exactly like an American team right now, our kids, they played really hard, they fought their tails off again. We won some really great games, we were close in a lot of other games, and we're right there. We have the coaching staff and we have good pieces and we just have to continue to improve.

Q. The team kind of went through a lot of adversity this year, but a lot to be proud of this season, first year in the American. Obviously from an individual perspective for you, I mean you went from pre-season second team to first team, Naismith Starting 5 honoree and Player of the Week. Could you talk about how you felt the team grew together as the season went along?

DAZIA LAWRENCE: We didn't know what to expect coming to the American. We knew it was going to be tough competition, but throughout the season I think we stayed the course, we stayed together, and we just took it game by game. I can't reach those accolades without my teammates. So, my teammates, they have got me where I have all my accolades, I can't get them without them. Throughout the season we've just stayed together and we're going to be even better next year.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thank you, Coach. Thank you, Dazia. Appreciate it.

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