

American Athletic Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Monday, March 11, 2024

Fort Worth, Texas, USA

Dickies Arena

USF Bulls

Jose Fernandez

Vittoria Blasigh

Postgame Press Conference



last minute of the game. Was that out of necessity, was that the game plan, some combination of both?

JOSE FERNANDEZ: Yeah, the six that played were the six that needed to play. I didn't think conditioning was a factor. Again, there's a reason why we played those guys. We felt that those guys that played would give us the best opportunity to win today. Again, I thought those six guys that played the majority of the minutes -- and we've dealt with this. You know, that fourth quarter has been tough on us when we need a basket and we need to string multiple stops.

I think, from an emotional level and a physical standpoint, we're very good. For one reason or another we've had a lot of breakdowns mentally as far as personnel and coverages and everything like that. So that's something that we're really going to have to improve on in the future.

Q. This is a game that really was back and forth, 10 lead change, 12 ties, neither team led by more than six. Is it elementary just to say that the stretch you midway through the fourth quarter was the defining moment?

JOSE FERNANDEZ: Yeah, it was. We lost a kid that knocked down two threes, the baseline out of bounds one was tough. We had an opportunity to come out of timeouts, and I thought UTSA did a good job -- we tried to get Carla on a high post entry back door and they defended it well. Then we went with a pin down to Romi and a dribble towards her to get her back door and her man didn't bite on it, did a great job defending. Again, everything's magnified in that last minute, but it's, every possession in the game on both ends of the floor is so important. Because everybody remembers the end of the game. But possession 1 to 14 to 32 to 58 all mean the same as the end of the game. If you do things differently throughout the game, it doesn't get to that.

Q. Vittoria, 23 points today, would you give us your thoughts on your performance today and also on a fine freshman year as the freshman of the year in the conference.

UTSA - 58, South Florida - 56

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

JOSE FERNANDEZ: Yeah, you know what I told my team is, right now, this isn't a time to talk about what we did wrong. I thought UTSA was really, really good in that fourth quarter and down the stretch. So got to give them a lot of credit.

I was proud of our kids' effort. I thought we did compete and we fought hard. The glass was really, really good. The first time we played 'em, we got out-rebounded 55 to 32. Today it was 40 to 37 in our favor and 17 and 11. So a lot of improvement since the last time that we played them. We were up five with the ball in that fourth quarter, and we shot 30 percent from the floor and 26 from the three. So when you shoot that percentage, it's tough. We got a lot of offensive rebounds, getting 17 of 'em, but if you don't score off of 'em, your offensive rebounding percentage is not good.

We'll see what happens Selection Sunday to see what happens. We will accept an invite to WBIT, if we are invited to play in it. If we're not invited to play there, our season will be over. Aerial, Maria, and Eve, you know, those three seniors, hopefully, that wasn't the last game that they played, that they will play in our program.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.

Questions?

Q. You went with six players basically for all but the



VITTORIA BLASIGH: Yeah, I had 23 points, but how I could say, like, I think we play a really good game, we play hard and I'm proud of my team. We just made too many mistakes at the end of the game, and that shouldn't happen. But, yeah, we have to just move on and work, but, like, it wasn't good.

THE MODERATOR: All right, thank you.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports....

