

American Athletic Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Monday, March 11, 2024

Fort Worth, Texas, USA

Dickies Arena

Rice Owls

Lindsay Edmonds

Destiny Jackson

Emily Klaczek

Postgame Press Conference

Rice - 61, North Texas - 59

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

LINDSAY EDMONDS: We talked in our film session this afternoon about all of our core value words, but the last two were toughness and committed. We said we were going to push through adversity with toughness because we were going to be committed to the win. I feel like that's what we did. We had some adversity, we had some woes, we had some struggles, especially in the 2:30 mark down in the fourth quarter, but we did not hang our heads. We were lifting one another up, we were being upbeat, we were being positive, and we were ready to move on to the next play because we were committed to winning together, and I'm just really proud of that effort, I'm really proud of their focus, and just their togetherness.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Can you talk about the way your team was able to be so clutch down the stretch. That game came down to just stops and a couple of baskets down the line and it seemed like you made the plays you had to to win.

LINDSAY EDMONDS: I think we have the want to. We talked about it yesterday of putting our foot down and getting one more stop, putting our foot down and getting one more rebound and one more rebound, and not letting anything affect us or anything stop us from being able to do that. So, mindset, mentality, focus, and I think we've had it for 40 minutes for the last two games. But really, really



proud of their grittiness down the stretch to be able to get those stops.

Q. That's one of the highest-scoring teams in the conference. What were you able to do defensively specifically to maybe keep the ball away from Desi and Lampkin late in the paint where they're so effective?

LINDSAY EDMONDS: We were mixing up our defense. I think that kept 'em off rhythm just a little bit. Kernal and Lampkin are tremendous players, especially when they get the ball in their spots. But I thought we did a great job of walling up, making it tough for them. We were crowding their spaces, we were in our gaps and had some active hands, so we got some travels on them.

But I think our intensity and being locked in to the game plan of switching up our defense really kind of kept those two off rhythm.

Q. Talk a little bit about a 31-point turnaround in like seven days.

LINDSAY EDMONDS: 30-point turn-around? I'm sorry? Oh, from last time we played North Texas? Yeah, sorry.

You know what? At our place, I thought we played really well. We forced 19 turnovers, we had 14 steals, we had 21 offensive rebounds, we had 70 shots. We had, I think, 23 more shots than they did. The ball just didn't go in the basket for us that night. So I thought we played really well at our place too. So I think that drove us just a little bit, added a little bit more fuel to our fire. We felt like we let one slip at home. They're a great team, but we feel like we let one slip at home and we wanted to get it back today.

Q. Destiny, that layup was the game-winner there. What did you see on that play and how did you get free to get that?

DESTINY JACKSON: Which layup?

Q. At the very end there, the one that put you up 60-59 with about 30 seconds left.



DESTINY JACKSON: I'm sorry, I think I just zoned out. I got to look at it. I'm sorry.

LINDSAY EDMONDS: DJ's just really tough and she knew that I was going to keep the ball in her hands late game. We were going to set a screen. I'm wanting the ball in her hands as much as possible, especially in those clutch moments. She's won a lot of games for us, and whether we're down and she scores and we win or whether we're up and we're able to hold onto the win because the ball's in her hand. So yeah, she probably zones out, but it was after we called blue and they were icing her on her left hand. She got downhill to her right. Something we talked about at halftime as well, her being locked in to go right. If they're going to take away left, go right. They can't stop you both sides.

Q. In the second half, you got hot from all around the field as far as that corner three. Was that something that you saw on film and maybe in your first matchup that was part of a weakness in their defense? Because I've seen plenty of opponents go to that corner three, but you definitely capitalized on it. Was that something that was a focus in that game plan?

EMILY KLACZEK: It for sure was a focus. I think a lot of it was we had players, DJ at the point guard, other guards, attacking, drawing a couple girls, kicking it out, so it was really my teammates making plays, getting me open, and then the corner happened to be open a couple of times and when it did, we were able to execute on it.

Q. Obviously in March the intensity is elevated. For either player, just how much does that improve your game?

EMILY KLACZEK: Winning in March is just, it's so fun. We struggled in February a little bit, so I think it just means a lot more. We don't want to go home. We're going to do whatever it takes. We're not done yet. We got a couple more. We're going to enjoy tonight and then turn around and get ready to go for tomorrow.

Q. He mentioned the last game was at Rice and it was a huge blowout win for North Texas.

LINDSAY EDMONDS: It wasn't a blowout win, but okay.

Q. I'm sorry. The outcome was different. Can you talk about how the neutral site kind of brings a different sort of intensity? You know, regular season games are different and even though we are early into March, this just felt different, right? Can anyone talk about that?

LINDSAY EDMONDS: I mean, conference tournaments are always at a neutral site. That's what you want for conference tournament time. So I think that's what it's about. Again, we're four hours away from here. Some other schools are not four hours away from here, so they have the most likelihood of being able to have a home advantage when they're playing on a neutral site here.

No matter where we're playing at, we want to play our best brand of basketball. Whether it's a home court, away game, neutral site, it doesn't matter. Especially in March, you just want to put your best foot forward.

Q. Destiny and Emily, what's it like playing in a game where you never get to exhale? It felt like it was a one-or two-possession game for 40 minutes.

DESTINY JACKSON: I felt tired, but I didn't want to show it. It was really good. I really enjoyed it, just being out there.

EMILY KLACZEK: Totally. To piggyback DJ, you never want it to be as close as it was, but to some degree, it's kind of fun sometimes when it's down to the wire. I really got a lot of belief in our team and when it's a close game like that, I would take us any day. So we were taking our breaths every huddle, quick timeout, media timeout, whatever we could.

LINDSAY EDMONDS: I was so impressed by our team too, lifting them up, giving them energy. When they were coming to the bench, there was like so much energy fed into them. Timeouts were really locked in, really focused, so I think that also helped them being able to push through because they knew their teammates a hundred percent had their backs.

Q. I'm sure you would rather win every game by a hundred and not sweat, but is there something about playing in March and needing to win a game like this if you're going to do what y'all want to do and win a couple more?

EMILY KLACZEK: Yeah, absolutely. Knowing that going home is on the line is everything that you need to keep going to give you an extra little bit of energy to make plays and I think that's exactly what we did tonight.

LINDSAY EDMONDS: We've talked a lot about adversities that we faced this season, how it was going to bring us March blessings, and here we are. We got to keep doing it. Tomorrow's the next day that we got to keep fighting.

Q. It felt like, and you mentioned at the top, couldn't get that last shot or hold onto the ball the last couple



minutes. You'll take a win anyway. But winning with defense and having to get that one stop, is that something that just is a different kind of feel, a different kind of test, than maybe making that buzzer beater?

LINDSAY EDMONDS: Yeah, I think the last two years with us we have always kind of hung our hats on offense, but this year when we've been really good, it's us been hanging our hats on defense. January was really good to us, because our defense was so good. We had some let up in February, where our defense wasn't where we needed it to be. I think we just had confidence tonight, and that one more stop, that want to get it and not let the offensive miscue that we just had affect our defensive possession. We talked about 95 percent. Okay, when you have the ball, that's five percent of the time. There's so much more you can do. You can get a stop, you can get a rebound, you can get a steal, there's so much more that you can do, even if we missed the last opportunity, and we found a way to get that.

Q. A macro look at the tournament, the No. 1 and No. 2 seeds are out, the No. 4 seed has won two games in the tournament. You're in the semi-finals, does your approach change based on how the tournament's played out so far?

LINDSAY EDMONDS: I think this year this conference has, any given night, anyone can win. There's been a lot of games, and I think we were all kind of jumbled in there together with our record. So, there's a lot of great teams. I think right now we have the mindset of, it doesn't matter who we're playing, we want to be the best Rice basketball team that we can play, that we can be, no matter who we're playing against. So, seedings are kind of out the window at this point, it's about getting the win no matter what the records are.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you.

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