

# American Athletic Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Sunday, March 9, 2025

Fort Worth, Texas, USA

Dickies Arena

## Wichita State Shockers

## Terry Nooner

## Salese Blow

## Postgame Press Conference



Tulane - 69, Wichita State - 63

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

TERRY NOONER: Well, I thought it was a good game. I thought we showed our resilience as a team. I thought we played -- overall, we had some bad stretches, but I think the kind of defining quality of our team throughout the season has been -- of course, you go through ups and downs as a coach and as a team throughout games, but I think we always show a lot of resilience and a lot of toughness.

I just think the ball didn't bounce our way today in the second half. I think we caught a few loose balls that we made stops and didn't come up with 'em for whatever reasons. But I'm just happy for the fight and the grit that I thought we showed as a team. And our future is bright going forward. We got some great pieces coming back. We talked to our young players just about putting in the amount of work that they need to put in so they don't have to keep -- they don't deal with this tough feeling that we have right now.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. You talked about the scoring drought throughout the game, especially coming out of halftime. You had the four-minute stretch where you weren't able to score. How was that a challenge in that third period to get points?**

TERRY NOONER: I just think we didn't value the basketball. We had some unforced turnovers that are

uncharacteristic, just throwing the ball away and not making the easy play, which is kind of one of our tenets and things we talk about all the time. So we didn't make the easy play coming out of halftime.

Then just defensively we gave 'em a couple of threes on some bad helps. We had some downhill drives where we didn't guard the ball in the middle of the floor that led to threes. We had some turnovers that we created and we didn't make the easy play in transition or find the open man. So we just didn't have the right kind of focus coming out of halftime.

I thought we flipped the switch towards the end of the half and definitely all throughout the fourth quarter where we held 'em to 14 percent shooting, but we just kind of dug ourselves a hole and couldn't get out of it.

**Q. During that fourth quarter -- you talked throughout the season about hitting those shots at the rim and not falling through the rim at that point. How frustrating is it to go through that period where neither team feels like they can put anything on the board?**

TERRY NOONER: Yeah, I mean, half of it was, I mean, we was happy that they were having trouble scoring at the rim. I think we really stepped up our intensity and our heart and fight and kind of picked up our pressure a little bit, which is a part of it. But all of the games that we played them, we just didn't finish how we need to finish around the basket, and that's what doomed us and led to us not being able to pick up the wins in those three games.

**Q. Victoria Keenan scored 26 points, 11 shots during this game. Was that just a situation where you kind of just have to give props out to her for making all those buckets or was there anything else you could have done?**

TERRY NOONER: I think of the first, I think she started off the game with 2 threes where we just -- it was game plan discipline where we didn't follow the scouting report. I think our players, if you ask 'em, they know how she play, and they understood what the assignments was, but we start



off the game giving her a couple different threes.

Probably the one that you would give her was the one that she hit late where we were pressing. It was like a kick-ahead pass and we were pressing, and they were trying to run the clock out, and she just shot a deep three, which is -- I mean, that was kind of really like a dagger because it was a tough shot. But she's made those kind of shots for her team throughout the course of the season and that was kind of the one that doomed us.

But she's a heck of a player, a great player. She's played good against us all the times we played her. We know what she brings to the table. We just had some scouting mistakes.

**Q. You played so hard throughout the course of this game. Talk about how you're feeling right now.**

SALESE BLOW: I'm not feeling great. I've always been a competitor. Like, just growing up, it's just how I was raised. Both my parents told me never quit, my entire family. So this one definitely stings, especially going out first round. Just proud of the fight we had, but it stings. I just wish we could have came out with the dub.

**Q. Playing this team three times this year and losing by five or less points in all of those games, why do you feel like it's a challenge to close out the game against Tulane, and lessen the gap between the two teams?**

SALESE BLOW: Respectfully, I don't feel like there's a gap. I think our Achilles Heel has always been our third quarters throughout the year, I think those doom us the entire time. I think if we had a good third quarter I don't think we would have been super neck and neck. But credit to Tulane, they have a great team, they play together, they have a great coach. But I think if we were able to clean up our Achilles Heel, our third quarters, we would have came out differently.

**Q. For you why is it such an Achilles Heel?**

SALESE BLOW: I'm not sure, it's something we've been dealing with since our foreign trip to the Virgin Islands, like we come out so flat, it's something that we haven't been able to shake.

**Q. You scored a lot of points in the paint today, like you were kind of posting up players. Has that been part of the game you've been working on throughout the season? Talk about that.**

SALESE BLOW: Oh, yeah, it's a part of game that I like to go to a lot, like just to -- it makes it easier when you're

around the rim, it's not forcing you to make outside shots. When they're too little I can turn around and the goal is right there, I don't have to try to make a move on somebody and hit a middy, so it's a part of my game that I definitely have been working on and that I love to go to.

**Q. You mentioned the hustle of both teams that showed in the game and through the season, the defense intensity. Is that something you feel like you've kind of keep building on throughout the next few years in the program?**

TERRY NOONER: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I think our defense is probably the best part of how we play, probably the past month. You look at like our defensive field goal percentage has been in the top of the league probably for the past month of the season. Definitely something that we can build on, off of, something that we hope that our players when they come back they understand the position that we're in right now and understanding the type of work that you have to put in in the off-season to be able to get over the hump in these tough matchups. So it's going to be a mindset thing, it's going to be a conditioning thing and it's going to be a bunch of stuff that you are going to have to do from in June and July and August to get yourself prepared so that when we come to these tough matchups next year we'll be getting over the hump.

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