

Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Gainbridge Fieldhouse

Penn State Nittany Lions

Carolyn Kieger

Makenna Marisa

Postgame Press Conference



BIG

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL
TOURNAMENT
INDIANAPOLIS 2022

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Rutgers - 75, Penn State - 50

THE MODERATOR: We'll start with an opening statement from coach.

CAROLYN KIEGER: Obviously we're very disappointed in how we played today, the fight, the level of intensity, the toughness, lack thereof, that we had. Penn State deserves better. The jersey deserves better. The game deserves better.

Credit to Rutgers. They played really tough. They played really disciplined. They were really poised and we got to get better. We got to spend this off-season figuring out how to leave the jersey in a better place and put a product out there that can complete.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. You're such a fine shooter. You started the game off really well, two buckets right off the bat and then your whole team really -- you had a lot of point blank shots that just didn't go in. Talk about how frustrating that is after your first couple shots go in.

MAKENNA MARISA: Yeah. It's definitely frustrating. Something I got to work on in the off-season is when my shots aren't falling I got to get to the rim. That's something I got to work on. Drawing contact, getting fouls, that's something I didn't do today and that was a mental thing and I got to fix that. That's just something I got to change next year because you're not always going to have great shooting nights or even off the bat, so I got to get myself going to the rim and then hopefully my shots will fall after that. And that's just something, it wasn't something I did tonight, so...

Q. In terms of just this whole season, I know you had

a very great individual season, but what are you looking forward to next year in terms of just being able to build this team together and continue to keep pushing people forward as a leader?

MAKENNA MARISA: Yeah. There's a lot to work on, myself individually, and then the team too. A lot of it is going to be IQ, playing smarter. Consistency is something I talk about a lot and I think I really try individually to stay consistent, but I think I need to push my teammates more to be consistent and that's something we're going to work on in the off-season and just getting back to playing Penn State basketball, playing fast, being tough.

That's something we didn't bring today was toughness, and the last few games, and that's just something we got to get back to. It's something we're going to work on and like I said consistency and the IQ part of the game.

Q. Just in terms of what you all, I guess this is more of a season how it looked, but what can you all take away from today just in terms of the way the entire season has gone and then be able to move that for next year and push it forward and continue to build?

CAROLYN KIEGER: Lots of stuff. Obviously we got to get better and we got to get better and the first area for me is toughness. We got to recruit to toughness. We got to recruit to a lion heart mentality and play the way that Penn State deserves, diving on the floor for loose balls, being the first one to 50/50 balls, not letting someone play harder than you.

That's all stuff that we need to fix and I need to fix. I need to put a team out there that is not going to back down from anyone and can play through adversity and just thrive when they need their best.

We talk about competitive greatness all the time, being at your best when your best is needed, and we did not do that this year and we got to find a way to be able to do that.

THE MODERATOR: Questions now for coach, please.

Q. Your team started off well, hit some shots, got a



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lead, and Rutgers went on that run. At that point I think they outscored you 12-2 at one point. Did you know at that point were you trying to make some adjustments to stop that and what would you do differently if you could?

CAROLYN KIEGER: Obviously, yes, you're constantly making adjustments, throwing different people in there. I thought our post players tonight, it was tough. They got in foul trouble a lot. We needed more size down there to rebound and we didn't have them in foul trouble. We had to play small. And I think Anna had two quick fouls. Ali had four fouls. Maddie. I thought Kayla played well in spurts. But we need to get better down there in the post and be able to grab more rebounds, specifically on the defensive end.

Offensive adjustments obviously are spacing. That's what happens when adversity hits. We don't run offense and we over-dribble and we kind of go into an over-dribble and not pass game and that's what happened again tonight. It's been the Achilles heel of this team where when we get nervous and anxiety hits or a run is happening, we shut down and we shut down mentally and we just kind of lose our heads and we got to fix that.

Q. You have one of the best players in the country this year in one of the best freshmen in the conference and the season kind of unfolded in a disappointing fashion. How do you kind of grade the season you guys had?

CAROLYN KIEGER: Not very well. I'm a competitor and I want to win and I want to win at the highest level and I want to be playing in March. That's what I came here to do and this program needs to be in that NCAA tournament.

Q. Rutgers defense against Makenna. She's been able to be successful to a good percent, efficient percentage, in many other games. What did they specifically do that just seems to bother her enough with her numbers being a little lower.

CAROLYN KIEGER: Yeah, obviously they're physical with her. They gap in passing lanes. They sink in on her. Three people rotate over to her on her drives. She needs to go off of two feet. Every time she did she got to the foul line. Every time she went off of one she missed. So she's got to makes adjustments as well.

But they did a great job of sending different bodies and being really physical with her.

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