

Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 2, 2023
Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA
Target Center

Michigan State Spartans

Dean Lockwood

Moira Joiner

DeeDee Hagemann

Postgame Press Conference

Michigan State - 67, Nebraska - 64

DEAN LOCKWOOD: First of all, just very, very proud of this team, just for their resilience and their grit today. We talked about that in the locker room just now. We had a 13-point lead. Again, I have to go back and look at the exact time frame, it was something close to seven minutes left in the game, and we were up by 13.

Obviously playing a very good Nebraska team. We have a lot of respect for that team. Leading in the league in three-point attempts. They've got a prolific scoring team. They've got Shelley, who's the hottest player in the league right now for our money. We knew this was a task. We knew they had kick and fight left in them. But we're very proud of this team, the grit and resilience.

I think this team has really committed defensively here more in recent days, and it's shown. It's shown. Again, just these two players here are stalwarts for us defensively, but just our team, our team. This was all about our team. We can get into numbers and things later. But I just want to say we are so proud of the grit and the unity and the resilience of this basketball team today. Very proud.

Q. In a close game like this or in any game, how important is the great start at the first quarter and the fourth quarter to kind of set the tone?

MOIRA JOINER: It's always important. We've had a lot of close games this year, and we look back at the start of our quarters, and we're like, okay, we took a punch there and we didn't come back.

I remember in a couple huddles, we were like, okay, let's go out. Five minutes at a time. Each five minutes, after



the media timeout, we've got to make a punch. So it's extremely important.

DEEDEE HAGEMANN: I feel like the way we start is, I mean, the way we finish. So just us starting, defense, transition, I feel like it put us in a good spot for the game.

Q. Any time the momentum seemed to shift in Nebraska's favor, you guys seemed to have an answer right away. DeeDee, I think, with both lead changes, there was a bucket from you that took the lead right back within ten seconds one time. I think it was less than a minute the other time. What were some of the things you were able to do on the floor to shift the momentum right back into your direction when they were getting closer?

DEEDEE HAGEMANN: I felt like there was a lot of time left, so just keeping our composure. Just taking it just one possession at a time. That's pretty much it.

MOIRA JOINER: Yeah.

Q. You guys made your first five shots of the fourth quarter. What was that like, and how did you do that?

DEAN LOCKWOOD: We planned for that. That's just something we practice every -- we're going to say, okay, we're starting the third quarter, make every shot. Start the fourth, make every shot.

We've been, as one of these young ladies alluded to, we've had some up and down moments. I just think -- again, I attribute everything to our players. Their execution, I think their awareness -- we talk a lot about awareness. Awareness is more important than intelligence in basketball, just being aware. Being aware of who you are, being aware of what a good shot is. And I thought their awareness level during that time was very good. They were working together.

Basketball is, has been, and always will be a team game. As great as any one individual will be, when a team works in sync with one another, that's when the beauty of basketball really happens, and that can -- Colin Powell



used to call it a force multiplier. When a group of people work together, whether it's 5, 10, or 20, it magnifies the effectiveness of the group, and I think that's what this team did in that stretch.

Again, I just credit them with being aware and really working together to make each other look good.

Q. What type of players do you have to have both athletically and mentality to play full court defense like you do at times?

DEAN LOCKWOOD: You've got to have warriors. You've got to have warriors. You've got to have people that aren't afraid to put it out there every single game, not take possessions off. We've been a work in progress in that department, I'll be honest with you. But I'm really proud of what this team is showing right now.

Number one, coaches, there's an inside joke in recruiting: Everybody, when you talk to players, hey, I want to play fast. I want to run and run. Then when you really run in practice, oh, I don't want to run anymore. When are we going to stop? So these players have embraced that.

Again, part of success in basketball or life is knowing who you are. Knowing what your strengths are, knowing who you are. We talk about our strengths, we're not as big as Nebraska, but we have quickness. We like our quickness, and we like our ability to harass people.

So to answer your question specifically, you have to have players that really buy into that, and they're going to do that for a 40-minute period, whether things are going good or not good, they've bought in, and they're doing it.

The other piece is this, holding each other accountable, and that's what I'm seeing more in this group is that they're holding each other accountable. Part of loving people, sometimes in our world today accountability is a bad thing. I think it's a great thing. When you love somebody, you care about them, you hold them accountable, and I've seen this group do it for each other.

Q. You guys handed Indiana their first loss of the season, a ranked team. That was such a huge accomplishment. What worked for you so well in that win to be able to accomplish that?

MOIRA JOINER: The same thing it did today. That's why the games got close and we pulled out with a win. It was honestly defense and sticking together. When we do that, we have each other's backs. We're not -- we're really hard to beat, and I think tomorrow I'm excited to play them again.

DEEDEE HAGEMANN: Yeah, I have to say unity of purpose, that's how we beat Indiana. Just staying locked in all 40 minutes.

Q. I know earlier in the season there were a few games where you -- you've always been good at forcing turnovers, and there were a few games where you were struggling converting those turnovers into points, and you guys did a pretty good job of that today, especially early on. Is there something that you've seen going differently recently towards the end of the season or something different that you worked on that has made those changes to make those points?

MOIRA JOINER: I think we're like very self aware. We know like that has been an ongoing thing during the season. So like we just talk about it. We do execution drills, like stuff like that. So we just know we need to take the right shots, shot selection, and things, and look for each other.

DEEDEE HAGEMANN: Piggy-backing off that, I feel like our defense is what makes us. I feel like if we go in locked in on defense, that it always translates into offense.

Q. This is for Mo: Mo, I believe there's a stretch during that fourth quarter where I think you had three straight baskets during that run. As a veteran, kind of describe your mentality in a Big Ten Tournament situation like this and stepping up to help your team kind of build an advantage there.

MOIRA JOINER: Going into that fourth quarter, I remember I looked at DeeDee, and I was like, okay, we need to get a cushion here, like Nebraska's a very good team. So not necessarily I was -- kept looking for my shot because I know I was looking for my teammates too, but that was just kind of the mindset I had at that point.

Q. For both Moira and DeeDee, you guys as of late you've won 4 of your last 5, and during the season it seemed like you guys would always find yourself in a hole trying to come back. As of late now, it seems like you guys have been taking leads late into these games and kind of finishing them out, like the Minnesota game on Senior Day, along with this one. Do you guys think you, as a team, you're finally starting to put together a consistent game, especially during the most important time of the year of this season?

DEEDEE HAGEMANN: Yeah, like I said before, I feel like our defense is what makes us. So just us owning it on defense and just everybody on the same page, I feel like that's how we became so consistent.

MOIRA JOINER: I just think that towards the end of the year, this is the time you want to come together as a team. Teams either come together or they don't. We talk about that all the time, and talk isn't a lot, and it's action, but if everyone has the same mindset, that's where things happen.

Q. I'll ask you the same question. Big task going up against Indiana tomorrow. What worked so well for you in handing them their first loss of the season earlier this year?

DEAN LOCKWOOD: I was hoping you could help me with that, you know, it's been so long. I just told them in there, I'm dating myself with this one, but I feel like we just knocked out Frazier and now we've got Ali waiting for us. It's just like holy cow.

I think, to answer your question in all seriousness, we were very much who we are in that game. We pressed. We pressured. Obviously you've got to make shots. Defense and rebounding can certainly keep you in games, but you also have to make some shots, you have to score points.

So we had some people produce in that game, and again I thought our shot selection was pretty good. Again, Indiana is a very, very good team I think without Grace Berger. We've got the Indiana with Grace Berger now. That's another task. Once we can enjoy this for another five or ten minutes, we're going to think about that and get right back to more headaches.

I just think, to go to your question, we were who we were, and we stayed consistent with that. It's very easy sometimes, especially when you play a really good team who's very prolific, you can get swept away by the current. You can get sucked into a game that you don't want to play. So I think for us we were very much in sync and staying the course with who we were in that game.

Q. Kind of the same question I have for you as for the players. From your perspective, do you think your team is finally starting to figure out how to just pull out these sort of wins instead of trailing at one point in the game and then trying to force a comeback rather than you guys play -- you keep a lead consistently throughout and then finish off teams in the end? Do you see kind of a difference going now that the season's kind of in the most important stretch?

DEAN LOCKWOOD: We hope we're maturing in that way. I think we've gotten better. It's kind of like sometimes I'm not a parent, but I talk to parents. I talked to one the other day, I said, I have a 13-year-old. I wish I could press a

button and make them 25. So we'd love to push a button and allow teams to mature at a faster rate.

But I think we're growing in that area. I think we've shown that we don't get as rattled. We made some bigger plays. Obviously in a close game, you have to make big plays. You just simply have to make big plays, and players make plays. So, again, I credit our team being able to do that.

I could give you the flip side of that coin. Obviously we practice with a three-point lead giving an opponent two open shots at end of the game. We practice that, right? So we've still got growth to do. There's still growth and maturing to do.

Again, to go to your question specifically, I do think we've matured. I think we've come further along the path. Again, we're proud of that team for embracing that growth.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports