

Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Friday, March 3, 2023

Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

Target Center

Michigan Wolverines

Kim Barnes Arico

Maddie Nolan

Emily Kiser

Postgame Press Conference

Ohio State - 81, Michigan - 79

KIM BARNES ARICO: Great basketball game. Sorry to be on the losing end of it. I thought our team was amazing. Shout out to all of our student writers here. We didn't have 27. So I hope you're all proud of us.

We really took care of the ball. We put ourselves in a position to win. We made plays down the stretch in terms of taking charges and doing what we needed to do.

Just really proud of our team and just the way that we battled. I thought we probably played harder than we've played all season long, and that's a great sign moving into tournament time.

You know Ohio State was a team that was up to No. 2 in the country at one point this year when they were healthy, and we battled with them until the last possession of the game. So hopefully the NCAA Committee takes that into consideration when they're choosing their home sites because I think we've got a pretty great team, and we're excited to play some basketball.

Q. Coach mentioned that you did not have 27 turnovers like the first two games and seemed much more successful against the press. Ohio State mentioned they noticed it wasn't as effective early. So this looked like a very different game from the last two times you played. From your perspective, what was really the difference?

MADDIE NOLAN: I think just playing them from the first two times, we knew like their press was a big difference maker, so we tried to do that from the start. Having two guards at the front, I think, really helped us, and then



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putting Leigha in the second line, so she was able to either attack or make those passes that she's really good at was really beneficial for us.

Q. In the final 30 seconds of the game, you get that big defensive stop, and then you have a couple chances to score. What is the game plan for before that defensive possession? And then what are you talking about in the huddle offensively?

EMILY KISER: I'm pretty sure we were in the bonus at that point, if I'm not wrong. So I think we were really looking to take it to the basket. I know we got that shot from Maddie right off the bat, and she knocked one down.

But I think we were thinking get to the basket. They swallowed their whistle there at the end, so you've got to live with that. But take it at them, I think.

MADDIE NOLAN: Defensively, just pack the paint. 32 did a good job of attacking us, so just trying to collapse on her and not let 24 or 4 get a wide open three. Big defensive points at the end.

Q. On that last baseline out-of-bounds play, it seemed like earlier in the game you were finding some success with cuts to the basket for layups. Was that a similar shot that you were looking for? What were you looking for on that last possession off the inbounds?

EMILY KISER: For Leigha, the shot that Leigha was looking at? I mean -- I'm sorry. I don't really know right now, to be honest. I think we were thinking get the ball in Leigha's hands. Maybe we should have gone to more of a screening action. They were kind of getting lost in that earlier in the game.

But when I saw that girl, the inbounder's head under the basket, I thought Leigha had that shot right there. She went to the basket, and they didn't call anything. But I think we were happy with the look we got.

Q. Today you were able to make adjustments from teams that you had played earlier in the season, adjustments with the press from against Penn State



yesterday. What does that ability to make adjustments moving forward do for you the rest of March?

EMILY KISER: I think it's something we've been talking about all year long. It's something our team hasn't been super great at. I think just with the lack of experience that some of our players have had.

Obviously it sucks with the outcome of it, but there are a lot of good takeaways from this game. Moving on into tournament play -- I mean, we're not going to know these teams like we've known our conference opponents. So adjusting throughout the game, players might be a little different than what's on the scout. Adjusting in games is going to be huge come March. One positive, I guess, from today.

MADDIE NOLAN: I think just like we talk about communication, continuing to repeat ourselves. Like Emily said, we do have a lot of young kids on the court. So just reminding them of what we want to do, what Coach just said in the timeout, anything like that. So it's going to be big come March, or I guess for the NCAA Tournament.

Q. You mentioned 32, Cotie McMahon, she had 28 points. How hard was it to guard her, and how important was her contributions for Ohio State?

MADDIE NOLAN: I think she's a really strong driver. We talked about pregame trying to not let her get like that spin move that she really likes, and I don't think we did a very good job of closing that. So that was huge. She came up big, especially for them in the last couple minutes, I think especially.

So that was something we didn't really do a great job on obviously.

Q. You scored the most points you had against Ohio State all season. What did you see offensively that made you so successful against them so far?

EMILY KISER: I think with their press, I think in the past we've been a little more hesitant once we've broken it. I think we put a little more pressure on them and really went aggressively. It was nice to have Laila back obviously. She can really get in there.

I'm trying to think what else. Anything you got?

MADDIE NOLAN: I just thought we looked more confident, more ready to attack the basket. Everyone like seemed to be ready out there to score, whether it was Jordan starting off the game with like an and-one three, kind of started the momentum for us. Even Elise coming in and giving us big

minutes, Laila attacking.

Just I think everyone felt comfortable and was ready to contribute with whatever they could.

Q. Can you just talk about your offensive game plan coming in and how you were able to find more success today than in those first two matchups.

KIM BARNES ARICO: I think taking care of the ball and limiting our turnovers definitely gave us more opportunities to score, and that really was helpful.

I thought having Laila back, and that's what they talk about a lot, she just is able to get downhill. And we move Leigha to the second line against their press, and I thought that was really effective early because she's such a good passer out of that.

And that allowed us to break their press, which they had to take it off, which is something we hadn't been effective at early. So I think our scoring definitely helped because we took care of the basketball. I think we only had two turnovers in the second half, which is pretty awesome against a team that forces over 20 turnovers a game.

Q. I'm going to ask the same thing I asked the student-athletes about the final 30 seconds. You get that big stop, and then what was the play you drew up in the huddle there. What are you looking for? Were you able to get the look you wanted?

KIM BARNES ARICO: On the sideline, we called timeout, we had one timeout left. On the sideline out of bounds, we had just run a flare on the previous possession for Maddie, and Maddie had a shot. We ran that last week as well, so we were trying to get that look back again. But it got broken, and that's when we made the pass. Elise got a tip. She went aggressively. We went underneath. We didn't have a timeout at that point.

But agree, like they're saying, we were able to get that weak side screen. But Leigha is such a good playmaker. For her to have the ball in her hands at the end of the game, you feel like something good is going to happen.

Like Emily said, I thought she may have had that first look, and Emily read it because the defender was underneath the rim. So they made an adjustment, and they moved the defender under the rim so we wouldn't get caught on that, which allowed Leigha to be open coming off of that screen.

So she had the initial look, but she decided to put it on the ground. I think she thought she was going to go to the basket and probably get the foul and one. But coming off

that, she was wide open coming off that screen.

Q. Ohio State kept the game fast paced in the first half. In the second half, it seemed like you came out of halftime ready to slow it down and play your speed. What made the pace of play so fast in the first half, and what pace did you want to work at?

KIM BARNES ARICO: I think their press really tries to speed you up, and they did -- they tried to speed us up in the first half, but we couldn't really get -- we talked about it at halftime, we couldn't get stops. They were really good offensively.

We were pretty good offensively too. It was a game of runs. They got up, but every time they got up, we came back. We just couldn't get over the hump a little bit. I just wish there was a little bit more time because we were right there.

It came down to making one play at the end of the game, but when you have a First Team all conference kid on your team that averages almost a double double or a triple double, you want the ball in her hands, and we had that opportunity to either tie it or win it, and we didn't get it to go our way.

Q. Another similar question I asked the student-athletes, but Cotie McMahon had 28 points. How important was she for Ohio State, and what was really your game plan against her?

KIM BARNES ARICO: She's a kid that goes a hundred miles an hour downhill and is one of the best players in our league. And we tried to take some charges on her early. We didn't get those calls.

We've been able to get her in foul trouble the last two times we played them, and we didn't get those fouls to go our way, which allowed her to get hot, and then I think our kids were nervous to take the charge because they weren't getting the call. Then she split us a few times.

We did get some calls against her down the end, but when you have someone coming that hard at you full speed, if you don't get that foul called, if you don't get that charge called, she's pretty difficult to stop. Credit to her, she had a great game.

Q. Quick turnaround here between now and the tournament. How do you reload? What's your message and mindset going into the tournament?

KIM BARNES ARICO: Like I said, I think this was an unbelievable basketball game, like a really great basketball

game that we were in a position to win. So I think that gives our team confidence that we can compete with anybody in the country.

Our league is the best league in the country right now with five teams that have been in the top 15 all year long. So I think our kids know, and I think we're looking forward to an opportunity to play somebody out of our league.

This is a chance to really practice, us get better at the things we need to get better at, and use this week to rest, recover, and get ready for the NCAA Tournament.

Q. You mentioned things in practice that you're going to work on to get better at. What are those things you're working on?

KIM BARNES ARICO: I think defensively we don't want to give up 81 points a game. So if we can be a little bit better on the defensive end, we're always a work in progress. We took care of the ball early tonight, but there are games where we don't take of it as well. So we are always trying to do that. Obviously finishing is another thing.

Just trying to get better, trying to win a championship.

Q. When you say "finishing," do you mean like closing out games with wins, or do you mean finishing at the basket?

KIM BARNES ARICO: I mean finishing at the basket. Thank you guys.

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