

Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Friday, March 3, 2023

Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

Target Center

Illinois Fighting Illini

Shauna Green

Genesis Bryant

Kendall Bostic

Postgame Press Conference

Maryland - 73, Illinois - 58

SHAUNA GREEN: Credit Maryland, they're just -- Maryland is really, really good, and their length, their pressure in half-court. I thought we did a better job handling the press, but just their size, their length across the board gave us some problems early on.

But we came out, we started well. The first quarter was good, and then just like last game, we played three solid quarters, but that one quarter really kind of did us in. Last game we played them, it was the third. Now it was the second this quarter. You can't score only 7 points and lose a quarter 7-21 against a team of this caliber.

I told our team we've got to understand, in order to take kind of that next jump and to be able to be like a Maryland, be like these guys that have sustained success -- we're not there yet. We're not there yet, and we'll get there. We've got to learn from this, and we've got to just continue to work and take things of, okay, this is what it looks like. This is what being a top ten team in the country looks like.

So I'm really proud of our guys. I challenged them at halftime to come out and just to compete and to play our game and not play timid, to shoot if you're open, and we did that. We won the second half by one.

We're going to learn from this. We'll improve. And we lost to a really good team.

Q. Just what does Maryland's length one through five do to cause you problems on both ends of the floor?

KENDALL BOSTIC: I think there's not a lot of teams that are kind of like long like them in every position. They're



WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

MINNEAPOLIS 2023

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very guard-like. They're very guard heavy. I think just kind of staying collected and calm and stuff, and I think sometimes as a team we get a little frazzled like when they ramp up the pace and the press and stuff like that.

I think it's just we've got to stay together within ourselves. Yeah, the length does make it a little bit harder, but their teams have different strengths. It's not something we can't handle, but it definitely does cause some problems every now and then.

Q. Genesis, your three-pointers tied and set the new single season program record for three-pointers made in a season. Just what does it mean to you and this team to break that mark? Secondly, what does it mean to you personally to have hit the three-pointers that break the program record?

GENESIS BRYANT: Yeah, I didn't know that during the game or before or anything like that. I think it's a testament to our style of play. Defend, rebound, and run. I feel like, when we run and we get out, we get good shots. They're good looks for us. That's just a testament of how we play.

Q. In Maryland's press conference, Coach Frese praised your team's just overall abilities and said that you guys were a team that had the potential to really make some noise and cause problems in the NCAA Tournament. For you two, what are some things that you guys are looking to do that, if you can capitalize on, will allow you to make some noise in the Tournament?

KENDALL BOSTIC: I think Coach Green always says at this point in the season, it's about execution. Everyone knows everyone's plays. Everyone knows everyone's strengths and stuff.

I think we really just have to come together and do the little things, like really work on the things we've been talking about all season, some of the things we struggle with, just locking in and focusing in on those because I think it will take us far. A missed box-out here and there, a missed shot, something like that.



Just having that maturity about us too, like the ones that have been to the NCAA Tournament before, we kind of know what it's like. Just having that confidence and being like, hey, this is how it goes. This is what you need to do. It's going to be nerve-racking at first, but I think we're excited for it.

Q. Just wanted to ask about their three-point defense tonight. Is it as simple as just getting a hand in the face, or did they do something to kind of try to close out and make that harder, run you guys off the line or something like that?

SHAUNA GREEN: I really don't think they did anything different. They were urgent. They got out there, and they had a hot hand, and they're long, right? So it's a little bit easier on a closeout.

I also thought we passed up some shots in the first half. I thought Gen had some open looks, Jada. I told Gen that at halftime. She only had 2 points at the half and ended up with 17. I just wanted them to take shots. That's the only time they'll hear me yelling at them is when they're not shooting them because I just know how great of a shooter Genesis is.

I don't think it was anything necessarily different. They're a good defensive team, and they're long, and they got -- I think maybe even their length kind of made us hesitate a little bit like, oh, shoot, I don't want to get blocked. I told them, I don't care if you get blocked. Shoot it.

But they're just a really good overall defensive team.

Q. This is going to sound like a dumb question, but Makira seemed, especially in that first half, to be able to get downhill. Is there things you've been able to do with her over the last month to get her more in a confidence mode, or has she just kind of been that way all year? Or offensively has she taken another step?

SHAUNA GREEN: With Makira, when she gets in that -- I think the bigger the moment, she rises to it. I've said this since the day that I start coaching her, she can get a shot off at any time against anyone in the country, and you saw that tonight because Maryland is a heck of a lot bigger than her and really good defenders, and she can get a shot off at any time.

That's special. You do not have a lot of women's basketball players who can do that, and she's doing that at 5'6". So I think it's her mindset. It's her mindset. And I'm constantly telling her, be the aggressor, be in attack mode. Have the confidence that you can score on anyone in the

country, and I think you've seen that the last few games. She's just really, really been the aggressor.

Q. Last time out your perimeter defense held Maryland to 0-for-17 from the three. Today you held them to 4-for-16. They really couldn't get much going from beyond the arc. What is your perimeter defense? What have you been able to do from that aspect against a Maryland team that has a lot of good shooter to contain them in that area?

SHAUNA GREEN: I think Maryland just shot it bad last time. I don't know if it was anything special.

Just kind of what you asked about -- I think it's the same thing Maryland does. We just preach, you know your shooters, you know your scout. There's awareness and urgency. And being there like our whole -- what I always say is we've got to be there on the catch. So it's a game within the game. You leave on the flight of the ball, there's awareness, and then there's urgency.

And the game within the game is being there on the catch with the hot hand. If you do that, again, more often than not in our game, those shots, those percentages are going to go off a little bit. If you give people at our level open shots without a high hand, percentage goes up. So that's just our philosophy defensively. I don't know if it's our defense or just a bad day for these guys shooting.

Q. Similar question that I asked the players, but this team has obviously achieved a lot, milestones, records, accolades. But what does this record mean to have the most three-pointers made in the season, especially your fondness for the three-pointer?

SHAUNA GREEN: If you would have told me that -- there's a lot of things I've said, but if you would have told me that, I'd say you're crazy. That was probably one of the biggest ones. If you'd have told me at the beginning of the year we would be -- we were No. 1 in the nation in three-point percentage for a while, and I did not think we were that great of shooters, to be completely honest.

So I credit our players for repping it and getting in. Also like Gen said, I think our style, we don't take a lot of threes. We're shooting a high percentage, but we're not jacking threes. Our threes come out of rhythm, they come out of inside out, so now our percentage is going to be higher. We're just not a team that's going to shoot a ton of them. Like some teams in our league are known for shooting a ton of them. That's why I also think our efficiency has been higher because we take good threes and rhythm threes and threes out of our offense.

Q. Kind of a two-parter, similar to what I asked. What are some things you'd like to see the team tighten up to potentially wreak some havoc in the Tournament? And maybe for Maryland as well, what is something they could do, maybe tighten up a little bit to elevate themselves?

SHAUNA GREEN: For us, it's just consistency in really our core values of our defense, number one. There's too many lapses today in what we want -- and we're very simplified in terms of our defensive philosophy, so we can't afford to have lapses.

I thought we did a better job, our focus on Diamond tonight was much better, because she killed us last time with 31. I thought we did a better job with scout specific stuff. So I think defensively that area. And rebounding, like boxing out. Like it's just so simple. We're small.

We're one of the better rebounding team, but that's because of the discipline and the technique of boxing out, and there's times we go on these lapses where we're just not physical enough. That's what I think for us going into the Tournament.

Then for Maryland, I think they defend. Their style is conducive to make runs because if you're not going to defend, you're not going to make a deep Tournament run. I'm a firm believer on that, and you see that with some of these teams that get knocked out early. So I think Maryland has that. They obviously can score. I think the one thing maybe is, when they're making their threes, like they're impossible to beat. Like they're really, really hard to beat. So we were in the game at home because, yeah, they shot oh-fer. That's not going to happen that many times. Even tonight they only hit four.

I watched them against some other teams. I don't know what they hit against the Iowa game, but I just felt they were making a lot of threes. I'm watching that game like literally how the hell did they not have a three against us? Because they're draining them all in that game.

If they get hitting from three, they have the ability. They have all the pieces that you need to make a deep run in the NCAA Tournament, and I'll be pulling for them. I want our league to win, and I'll be their biggest fans rooting for them.

Q. Even in the A-10 tournament in your history, you've had the six, seven, eight-day break before selection night. What's the plan of action for you guys as you deal with an NCAA Tournament bid that's coming?

SHAUNA GREEN: For us too, with kind of our status with our team with being injured, with not being deep, we'll take

some time to just get some rest and see if we can get some people healthy.

So we have a lot of players that play 40 minutes a lot of nights, and we need some rest. But then this week, like this is a fun week, and for me -- you know, a lot of times you're kind of in that -- again, I'm probably going to jinx us because I'm saying that I think we're in the Tournament, but there's times where, if we didn't win at Dayton, like I'm freaking out the whole week because we're a one or two-bid league.

So I think that I want our kids to enjoy this. For this being -- we're in a different spot for us right now than a Maryland going into the NCAA Tournament. Let's just call it what it is, right? I want our kids to enjoy this. I want our kids to learn from, okay, this is where we want our program to get to, but I also do think we can go and win.

So we're going to work. We're going to enjoy the practices. We're going to get rest, and then we're going to see what happens at the selection show.

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