

Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Friday, March 8, 2024

Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

Target Center

Ohio State Buckeyes

Kevin McGuff

Jacy Sheldon

Taylor Thierry

Postgame Press Conference



Maryland - 82, Ohio State - 61

THE MODERATOR: The Ohio State press conference will begin with an opening statement from Coach McGuff.

KEVIN MCGUFF: We can go right to questions.

Q. You both are just clearly very emotional right now. Can you just talk about the emotions of this game, not being able to pick up this win?

JACY SHELDON: Yeah, it was a tough one. We'll regroup after this, take a couple days off and then come back and get ready to go for even more hard games.

THE MODERATOR: Taylor, you want to answer that question as well.

TAYLOR THIERRY: Just kind of the same thing. This loss definitely sucks. It stings. We're just going to move on to our next game and fix up some of the mistakes we made this game.

Q. What do you think the biggest difference for your offense was this game versus the prior two against Maryland?

JACY SHELDON: We didn't make a lot of shots that we normally do. Credit to them, they played great, though. Really we got outrebounded. That was the main factor for us that we're going to have to be better at moving forward.

Q. This goes for either one of you. Obviously the season is not over. You guys will be playing in a couple weeks. How quickly do you flip that switch and just get ready for the tournament?

JACY SHELDON: Tomorrow. We have to. Like you said, it's not over. We have a lot to prepare for coming up. We have to shift our focus after today.

Q. It looked like Maryland was doing a really good job of slowing you guys down, and I know you guys like to play a fast pace. How badly did that hurt, not just on defense, but on offense too when you're missing those shots that you guys usually make?

JACY SHELDON: They did a great job of that. They pressed a little, and I think the idea was to slow us down. They played a great defensive game. Like I said, we weren't ourselves today. We didn't make a lot of shots we normally do. So credit to them.

Q. Jacy, you talked about you guys can flip the switch. Does being a veteran team that's had the success you've had in the NCAA Tournament help a little bit that you guys know you can get back to maybe being yourselves for the next tournament?

JACY SHELDON: I think so. Moving forward, everyone hates losing, especially this team. I think moving forward, people have been here before and have played in March Madness in that tournament before, I think that does help.

Q. Cotie's not up here, but I want to get your perspective. What do you think the biggest reasons were for her struggles tonight? I know she missed a couple she probably normally makes. Other than that, was it anything Maryland did? Was it kind of her? What do you think?

JACY SHELDON: She got a lot of good looks. Like I said, everybody had a lot of really good looks that didn't fall tonight. She's going to be fine. She's a competitor, man. Like I said, it will sting for us today, but we've got to move on and shift our focus after today.

Q. After the Iowa loss, you guys said it was turnovers and rebounding were two big factors in that loss. How big did that affect this loss again? It felt like there was a couple unforced turnovers that you guys had that led



to big runs for Maryland.

JACY SHELDON: That and rebounds. We are minus a lot on the board. I think moving forward that will be -- we didn't play our best game in that aspect. So we'll be working on that.

Q. I wanted to ask about the offense also. Was this one of those days where shots just don't go down, or was there something that Maryland was doing to make life a little bit more difficult on that end of the floor?

KEVIN MCGUFF: In general, I thought Maryland played a great game. They were really prepared. They played like a team that might have needed this to get in the tournament, and we played like a team that showed up as the No. 1 seed and everybody was just supposed to lie down, and that's not what happened.

Give Maryland credit, first and foremost. I thought they played -- I thought Brenda coached an excellent game, her staff, and I thought they played extremely well and they deserved to win the game.

More specific to your question, we had just played them a couple weeks ago, and I thought they played really well then too, but we played really well. We had to play a good game to beat them when we played them, and we didn't play well today. They played a similar game to what they did last time, but we were bad.

Q. You definitely got a little bit animated there in the second half. Can you just talk about some of the calls that might have not went your way and the officiating.

KEVIN MCGUFF: Yeah, once again, there was a whole lot I didn't agree with and a whole lot I don't understand, but it didn't impact who won the game. Maryland deserved to win the game. They were the better team today. So let me make that crystal clear.

But there's a whole lot I don't understand about the way the game is called.

Q. Half-court defense has been one of the biggest topics of discussion this season. You felt like the team has been improving. Today it seemed like Maryland just broke it down very easily. Can you just talk about what you saw was going wrong in the half-court defense?

KEVIN MCGUFF: I just think in general one of the things I think we've really hung our hat on this year is our competitive character. We've not lost a game this year where our competitive character hasn't been where it

needed to be, but it wasn't there today.

They wanted the game more, and you got to really fight on defense. You've got to fight to get rebounds. We didn't fight, and they did.

Q. Can you talk about what going forward in the NCAA Tournament you need to do rebounding-wise? That obviously was a big factor today. How do you think this group with their experience will react to this loss?

KEVIN MCGUFF: I think we'll bounce back because we've got great leadership with people like Jacy. It's really simple. You've got to hit them and grab the ball. We looked like a volleyball team out there for half the game just batting the ball around. Just hit them and go get the ball and grab it with two hands.

Q. In your guys' losses this year prior to today, Cotie is kind of -- struggles has been her theme. I think she averaged like 7 points in those games. What needs to be done to flip the switch, I guess? What did you see out of her today? Where were the struggles rising from?

KEVIN MCGUFF: Coming out of Christmas, she's played really well and just been great and been a huge part of us getting better as a team. She didn't have it today. It was kind of reflective of the whole group didn't have it, and she's certainly part of it.

We're not the team we're capable of being without her playing at a high level because she's such a great player.

Q. You've said in the past that the bench was going to be really important, especially late in the season. It feels like lately the bench hasn't been producing like it was earlier in the season. How big of an impact has it had in the recent struggles that you guys have had?

KEVIN MCGUFF: Yeah, I didn't really feel it at Iowa. Today like nobody was very good. So I don't think the starters were good, the bench wasn't good, I wasn't good, nobody was good. I think today it was less reflective of, is the bench, can they contribute, and more reflective of just we were bad and they were good.

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