

Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Sunday, March 10, 2024

Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

Target Center

Nebraska Cornhuskers

Amy Williams

Jaz Shelley

Alexis Markowski

Natalie Potts

Postgame Press Conference

Iowa - 94, Nebraska - 89

THE MODERATOR: We'll start the Nebraska press conference with an opening statement from Coach Williams.

AMY WILLIAMS: This is heart wrenching and just a super disappointing loss in overtime here. Our kids came here expecting to win, and nobody else really probably believed that we would even be in the championship game, much less have a chance to win it, but we believed.

Our locker room believed. Our whole team believed. I'm so proud of the contributions we got from our entire roster this entire tournament. I am proud of the classy group of champions that compete the way they do that we have here at Nebraska.

Q. Jaz, just what was the mood in the locker room like after that one, just knowing you all were so close and played such a good game for most of it?

JAZ SHELLEY: I think everyone is still pretty down right now. We kind of just rallied around each other and just wanted to appreciate how special what we just did was.

Obviously it sucks because we really feel like we could have won that game, but we'll be good. It's going to sting for a little bit, but this team is special.

Q. Lex, what did you guys do so well to put you in a position to have a chance to play with Iowa and win the game today?



ALEXIS MARKOWSKI: This whole tournament, we really just played for each other, and I just feel that this whole game and this whole tournament we just believed. We believe in one another. We believe in what our coaches are saying, and belief can take you really far.

Q. I know it must be extremely challenging to get over this quickly, but it's not over. Now it's a new season, and I know this tournament starts a week before, but how do you guys just plan to regroup and rally around each other and get ready for the next tournament?

JAZ SHELLEY: I think we have to build off what we've just done. We played four games and an overtime, and I'm pretty sure we could go out and play another quarter if we wanted to, I think.

That's something that's going to be super important in the postseason, just to continue that belief we have in each other and that we can make a deep run in the NCAA and set ourselves up really well.

Q. Natalie, you pride yourselves on rebounding and defense. What allowed you to get active scoring today, and what set that up?

NATALIE POTTS: I knew I had to finish today and it was going to be a tough one, so I had to show up and play. I feel that just doing the little things today is what helped keep us in the game.

Q. For any of you, I know this isn't the result that you wanted, but what does it say about your group that you took Iowa to overtime in the Big Ten Championship game? What does that say about how difficult you guys will be to play moving forward?

ALEXIS MARKOWSKI: Not only did we take them to overtime, we played a whole 'nother game. This was our fourth game. This is their third.

We're just fighters. They'll go on a run, and we just come back. I don't know, we just are playing really well together. People are stepping up, making huge plays for each other. I wouldn't want to be part of any other program.



Q. Jaz, you guys kept rallying in overtime, hit a couple of big threes. I guess ultimately what was the difference in overtime period.

JAZ SHELLEY: I think our ability to be able to respond. We had the entire stadium against us, and we were able to silence the crowd. We were able to have freshmen step up. I've never seen that in any other program, to be able to have freshmen like we do.

Yeah, we just fell a little short, but I think we played a great game.

Q. Obviously it hurts now, but ultimately how will you remember this week and what you guys did over four days here?

JAZ SHELLEY: I think it's super special. I've never been a part of anything like this, and it goes to show the people that we have on this team, the incredible, incredible people. Like Lex said, I wouldn't want to do this with anyone else.

Q. Amy, similar question that I asked the girls. I know it's not the result that you wanted, but what does this say about your squad, that you were able to advance this far playing four games and the last one was in overtime?

AMY WILLIAMS: First of all, thanks for being here. We appreciate all of you guys that made the trip up to be here to support us as well and to cover our team.

I think that watching this team rally together and the way they've just really kind of taken on the mantra of playing for each other, they've just found ways to pick each other up and have each other's back and contribute in ways that we need them to contribute.

If that's Maddie Krull coming in and having two assists and no turnovers, if that's Jess Petrie coming in and spelling some kids with foul trouble, if it's Callin Hake coming in and giving us a spark and scoring punch or taking charges. Everybody has found a way to contribute and pick up their team. I'm just so proud of my staff and my team for everything they've poured into this week and putting ourselves into position to compete for a championship.

Q. Congrats on a great run. I just want to talk about quickly just what Logan did today and how much confidence she had because what she did today was truly special.

AMY WILLIAMS: (Crying). I'm so sorry. I'm trying to keep

it together up here.

What Logan did was special. What people don't know is what she's fighting through to be out here on this court, fighting with her teammates.

Watching her confidence, we saw it shine through early. We got a trip to Greece this year in the summer, and when we were prepping for that trip, we were in practice, and I'm telling you, the girls learned in a real hurry that she's a very confident shooter. She wants the ball in her hands, and she's not afraid.

There were a couple times where she missed a couple shots early, and maybe in the first part of our season, wasn't particularly shooting well. The girls were like trying to be there for her and encourage her, and say, hey, keep shooting, Logan. She said, oh, I will.

That's the confidence she's maintained this entire season, and in the biggest moments she shines like the bright star she is. I'm proud of the way she competes. She took a charge today. She wanted to be out there fighting for her team and just stepped up really big.

Q. The composure and toughness that your team showed every time they hit a shot or felt like they were going to get on a run and the crowd got into it, it seemed like you guys came down and answered it. Has that been a hallmark of your team this season?

AMY WILLIAMS: It kind of has been a hallmark. We've been preaching response, response, response. How do you respond when things go good? How do you respond when things go bad? How do you respond when there's adversity that comes through a season? How do you respond when there's adversity that comes through a game?

I'm just so proud of the way that they have responded. I thought they did. They shut out the noise, the outside noise, and just were able to lock in. Every single time it felt like we had an answer and we're answering runs, and I think that just shows their commitment to wanting to have a positive response and do the next best thing on every step.

Q. Specifically Natalie plays with kind of that fearlessness too. What has stood out to you about just her impact on your team this year?

AMY WILLIAMS: Natalie's impact has been huge. I think she's just a winner that knows how to win and wants to make big plays and finds ways to do it on both sides of the ball.

I can't ever predict really if it's going to come from scoring, if it's going to come from rebounding, if it's going to come offensive rebounds, if it's going to come defensive, deflections, blocked shots. I don't really know exactly, but I know she's going to impact games.

She comes from really successful programs where they expect to win, and she's brought that expectation right here to Nebraska.

Q. Just on that last possession in the fourth quarter and some of those late in overtime, what did Iowa do to disrupt some of those plays?

AMY WILLIAMS: I thought they picked up their defensive pressure. They knew that Jaz Shelley had a game winner against them at our place when we were able to knock them off. So I think they tightened things up that. I would have too.

She was making plays. She had 13 assists on the day, making plays for our team. So I thought they got a little bit more aggressive, got some deflections, kind of disrupted some of our timing.

From my standpoint, if we're able to score -- we tied them in the fourth quarter and then scored 12 points in overtime. We still offensively were doing the things we needed to do, just gave up a few too many there in overtime.

Q. What's your message to them after this one? They all seem really emotional and upset about it, but what do you tell them moving forward to turn the page onto whatever happens next week?

AMY WILLIAMS: I think right now I'm just going to let them feel the moment and really kind of soak this up. It's okay for them to have some time to really be disappointed because they put their heart and souls on the line up here. Nobody else did, but we expected to win.

So when you fall short of that, that's okay. With four games to go in the regular season, we had a little picture that put us in the double bye bracket. We cut it into a four-piece puzzle, and we had four games left. We said, let's put all four pieces of that puzzle together.

We fell a little short at Illinois against a really, really veteran, tough team on the road. We spent a lot of time as a team talking about how do you respond when you set goals for yourself and they don't happen? You just reset and find new goals to go after.

That's exactly what we will eventually get to, Amy. It's setting new goals for our team. We feel like we are

incredibly poised to make a run in the next tournament, and it's going to take every single soul on our team given just what they did up here in the Big Ten tournament.

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