

# Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Wednesday, March 5, 2025

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Gainbridge Fieldhouse

**Minnesota Gophers**

**Dawn Plitzuweit**

**Mallory Heyer**

**Grace Grocholski**

Postgame Press Conference



we're in a good spot to continue to play on, and I think that's exciting for this program.

**Q. For either player, when you're playing a team that's so efficient offensively, how much pressure does that put on your offense on the need to score to try to keep up with those guys?**

MALLORY HEYER: Washington is a great offensive team, and they're really hot tonight. I think for us on the offensive end we just got a little sped up and we were just trying to kind of match them.

I think we just needed to slow down a bit, and we could have got a little bit better of looks.

**Q. Obviously they've been doing this to everybody this year, they're one of the most efficient teams in the country, but is there a particular matchup, do you think, with that team that makes it difficult to defend for you guys?**

GRACE GROCHOLSKI: I think the thing about them that makes them tough to guard is that all of their matchups are hard. They swing the ball around, and they -- every single one of them can shoot, and every single one of them can drive.

I think it's hard when every single person on their team is hard to guard, and that makes matchups hard.

**Q. You guys were down by two at halftime. What would you say shifted for the team in the second half of the game?**

GRACE GROCHOLSKI: I'd say I think right off the bat we weren't executing what we wanted to be executing at the start of the second half. That doesn't give you momentum continuing the game, especially into the third and fourth quarter. I think I'd just say execution.

**Q. You guys got to wait now a long time to find out exactly what your next step is going to be. How hard is that going to be for you guys to be patient during that time, and how do you think you'll use that time to**

Washington - 79, Minnesota - 65

THE MODERATOR: We are joined here by the Minnesota Gophers, head coach Dawn Plitzuweit and student-athletes Mallory Heyer and Grace Grocholski.

At this time, Coach, if you would make an opening statement, we'll turn it over to the student-athletes.

DAWN PLITZUWEIT: First of all, I'd like to say I'm just really proud of our young ladies for the season we've had thus far and the work that they've done. Certainly being shorthanded has been really challenging, but I think their fortitude and resilience that's been something really special.

They've given themselves a chance to continue playing on after this tournament, which is something really special for our program. That's the first thing.

I think today's game, Washington may be the hottest team in the country at this point in time. I think they're firing on all cylinders, that they played extremely well. We had a hard time disrupting them. With all that kind of being said, I thought we also struggled when we did -- last time we played them, we weren't really able to get the ball around the rim consistently. I thought today we were able to do that.

Unfortunately, we weren't able to capitalize on a lot of those. I think we scored at the rim at about a 50 percent clip, and our goal is to score at about a 75 to 80 percent clip at the rim. Credit to them.

Again, I thought our young ladies competed and tried to put ourselves in a spot to not only compete today, but I think



## **get better for whatever opportunity you do get?**

MALLORY HEYER: We do have a while until the Selection Sunday to see what tournament we're going to make, but I think that's just a great opportunity for us to get back in the gym and work on the little things, work on scoring around the rim, passing.

And just like as a team all together just getting back on the court and just really working on those little things that are going to make us better going into tournament time.

### **Q. After the way you guys battled back at the end of the first half to get it to be a close game, how crucial in your mind was the first few minutes of that second half?**

DAWN PLITZUWEIT: Really important, and we didn't come out with execution that we needed. Again, I would say this, and I've told our players afterwards, it wasn't from a lack of wanting to do the right thing or to get the ball where we want to get it or get stops, but sometimes when you want something so bad, you kind of force things or rush -- maybe rush is a little bit better way of putting it, probably rush things a little bit.

It felt like -- they're not necessarily a team that speeds you up, but we were sped up at the rim. Again, not for any other reason than I think our young ladies are in the spot where we really haven't -- we weren't last year, we haven't been necessarily, and so they want it really, really badly.

### **Q. Coach, could you go ahead and just address the absolute outstanding depth in this league of quality teams and how you prepare your team night in and night out and what are maybe some of the things that you see to make sure that they're always understanding that every night is going to be a monumental challenge?**

DAWN PLITZUWEIT: The scope and the landscape of college athletics is different than it's ever been. They have an 18-team league where there's a chance that whatever it is, 13 teams that hopefully would get into the NCAA Tournament is something that has never ever happened before in the history of Division I women's college basketball.

When you're looking at that, I think the farthest game, there was 13 teams that were in the top 43, 46 of the NET. Didn't look at it today, but it's an incredible, incredible league on the women's side.

There are no -- everyone says you don't have an off-night, but this is at a whole new level. This is something that has

never been seen before. It's really special to be a part of it, and it's going to help us continue to grow and develop because I think we understand things now at a much different level than we did before being in the Big Ten season.

### **Q. You and your team are kind of in quite a precarious situation. So how do you and your team kind of stay focused not really knowing what necessarily is next? How do you stay locked in for that?**

DAWN PLITZUWEIT: The good thing for us is we have young ladies that understand -- they understand what it takes in terms of from an effort standpoint, from a fundamental standpoint, and now we have a chance to go grow in some of those fundamental areas while we focus on us for the next whatever the course of time is. I don't know, I haven't looked at it exactly, in terms of the number of days, but it's a good stretch of time.

So we can spend this time really focusing on us and improving us individually.

### **Q. Real quickly, how would you describe what Washington is able to do to get so many open looks? Is it ball movement? Is it really efficient screening? Is it because you guys go into rotations because so many people can score? What is the biggest challenge with them?**

DAWN PLITZUWEIT: I think the biggest challenge is their spacing. They really have the floor spaced incredibly well, and then it's one screen action, but then every kid who catches it has the ability to make really good decisions with it in either a handoff or a ball screen, but it starts from their spacing.

Then every kid has the ability, like Grace said, to hit a shot or put it on the floor. They don't get sped up typically. So your job is to try to speed them up and disrupt them, but that's easier to say than it is to actually do.

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