

Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 6, 2025

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Gainbridge Fieldhouse

Oregon Ducks

Kelly Graves

Peyton Scott

Deja Kelly

Postgame Press Conference



quarter, 23-11, that's essentially the game. We played them pretty close. We won two of the quarters, and the fourth, I mean, it was pretty close.

I think just coming out, mentally I feel like we weren't locked in with what we were supposed to do, and we just let them be the aggressors.

Q. Deja, tough game for you from the field. They were really blitzing you when you got to that mid-range. What were they kind of throwing at you that was maybe making it tough to get shots off?

DEJA KELLY: I think obviously they were being a little more aggressive whenever I had the ball in my hands. I think from the jump we were just pretty stagnant overall and didn't get a lot of movement. I think we overall took some tough shots, I took some tough shots.

I think we weren't really definitive with what we wanted to do on the offensive end until late. So I think once we dug ourselves that hole in the first quarter, kind of first half, we just couldn't really find a rhythm from there.

Q. Last two years you competed in two of the best conferences in the country, night in and night out you're facing outstanding competition. What was it like to make the switch this year, especially where you had a situation where teams are competing to get here in the postseason and you're getting everybody's best effort night in and night out?

PEYTON SCOTT: I think it's a little different for both of us because neither of us had the opportunity to play in the Pac-12, but I know Deja, coming from a Power 4 conference already. You've got to bring your best. There isn't going to be room for you to shy away from the moment or for you to not be at your best, or for you to not show up.

So I think that's what it's really showed me is you've got to be at your best and you've got to show up when your number's called. When you don't, other teams are going to take advantage of that.

DEJA KELLY: I think this is obviously a great conference.

Indiana - 78, Oregon - 62

THE MODERATOR: We welcome the University of Oregon to the dais. Head Coach Kelly Graves, student-athletes Peyton Scott and Deja Kelly.

Coach, if you could go ahead and make an opening statement.

KELLY GRAVES: First of all, I want to congratulate Teri and her team. They earned it. They deserved it. They played better than we did today. They played harder. They obviously appeared that they wanted it a little bit more than we did. They're a really good team.

I'm disappointed in perhaps our overall effort today. I thought we'd be a little bit better, but we could just never -- we got off to such a slow start, a lot of those early turnovers, and just never really got into a rhythm offensively. I think we let the way the game was flowing affect us in a negative way, and this was the outcome.

When you look at the stats, typically we're on the plus side of the turnover battle, and unfortunately tonight, we were minus 6. We just never got them uncomfortable, and that's why they shot it so well tonight.

Q. Peyton, what do you think kind of led to those early struggles? They jump out to a double-digit lead. You guys had seven turnovers. Was it something they were doing differently, or do you think it was more on you guys?

PEYTON SCOTT: I think it's just how we started. They came out just the aggressor, and we kind of fell to that, as you see in those turnovers. I mean, you look at the first



For us to get the seed that we did, we fought for it. I think, yeah, once postseason comes, it's a gauntlet. It's a gauntlet all year, but postseason you don't have any room for mistakes, you don't have any room for slow starts. It's just a snowball effect.

I think from experience, having to come out punching, you have to be the aggressor, and we weren't tonight. We got punched early, and we never knew how to fully respond and recover.

We're hoping, and we think we will hear our name called come Selection Sunday, but we just all have to know, especially with having a lot of people not have made it to postseason before, yeah, like what Peyton said, we just have to bring it every single night. Everyone has to bring their piece because you can't win with one, two people. Everyone has to bring their piece no matter how big or little that is.

Q. From a coaching perspective then, your first year in the Big Ten, you go through the regular season, you come through the tournament, what were the bigger challenges in transitioning to this conference?

KELLY GRAVES: There's been a lot. The positives first: As a coach who's been in the game for a long time, I actually enjoyed going to some places that I've never been before. Not everybody in the Pac-12 draws like they do in the Big Ten, so to be on the road and play in front of a lot of people actually is exciting and fun. There's some positives.

The travel is real. We never made it an issue. We traveled more than anybody. Four trips across the country is real, and it gets to you. One of the things, the two days in between, I actually enjoy. In the Pac-12 we always played on a Friday, Sunday. You'd have one day in between games. It was a quicker trip and then a shorter trip.

But with the two games in between, it really stretches it out, and that's a lot of nights in a hotel room and really bad food at the buffet in the morning and things like that. And with the temperatures that we see -- like when we played in Minneapolis and Lincoln, I don't think it got above zero. So it's not like you can go outside and do anything, you just live in the hotel.

I think that wears on you, and that's a real thing. We never made it an issue. I can say it now because the season -- the Big Ten part of the season is over, but there was far more good than bad really.

Obviously great competition, really deep league. You've got to bring it every night. There you go. Those are my

impressions overall.

By the way, the 9:00 start, people in Eugene were drinking coffee this morning when we tipped it off, and that's real too. That's real. That's not why we lost the game, Indiana beat us, but that's tough. That's tough.

Q. They got loose, I think they hit 11 three-pointers, had almost 30 more points than when you guys faced off in Eugene. What do you attribute that to?

KELLY GRAVES: I thought they were comfortable. We never really got them uncomfortable. Right from the start, they go 5 of 10 in the first quarter, and that really set the tone. You've watched us every day. I think our last month or so, we haven't been the same defensive team. We haven't played with the same kind of fervor and toughness and intensity that we needed to and focus, and that showed up tonight.

We typically turn teams over, and we didn't. If they only have 12 turnovers, that means they were able to do kind of whatever they wanted.

Plus I think you saw the flow of the game. It was kind of difficult. When everybody's getting on you, sometimes we didn't handle the way it was called very well.

So I think there were a lot of things, quite frankly. Garzon, when we played them last time, wasn't shooting it real well. She sure did today.

And every time -- I give them a ton of credit, just little things like they only had five offensive rebounds, only. Now, they didn't miss a ton of shots, but only five. They scored on every single one of them, 11 points. So they made us pay for any mistake that we had.

We helped off a strong side three-pointer shooter, and Parrish nails it. You've got a freshman kind of making that mistake. To their credit, every time we made a mistake, they made us pay. At our place earlier in the season, they didn't.

We made a valiant effort, I think there in that third quarter. And then we just kind of either ran out of gas, or they responded in a good way. We just never recovered after that.

Q. Let's go back to something Deja said, that they never recovered from their errors. Talk about the unforced errors at the start of the game, and what do you think might have caused them? Indiana's defense? Lack of vision or what?

KELLY GRAVES: I can't enumerate all our turnovers. I think we had about seven at the first media timeout or at least in the first quarter. There were a lot of different things. A lot of it was inside, our footwork inside our post. They threw a double-team; we expected it. But sometimes when you speed up a little more than you should, you move your feet.

I think two of those were offensive fouls. Maybe a third was an offensive foul. Illegal screen or just kind of ran into somebody, those count as turnovers. Then just a couple of phantom passes. I would say you've just got to take a deep breath and relax a little bit, right?

I would say we were a little too tense and played too fast and just weren't on balance when we needed -- it wasn't anything they were doing defensively. I think it was more our lack of paying attention to the details.

Q. You guys are going to have a lot of time to ruminate on this between now and Selection Sunday on the 16th. Your thoughts are probably fresh on this, but what will be kind of the focus over the next ten days and hopefully hearing your name called?

KELLY GRAVES: Well, we're on a quarter system, so we have finals coming up. We're going to use a few days, I'm going to give the team off at least four days here in a row and let them rest and recuperate and get their studies in order. Semester schools don't have to worry about that for another couple months, but we're in the thick of our winter quarter exams.

Yeah, I'm not going to fret over Selection Sunday. We've had a nice year. We've had some really quality wins. We play in a great conference. We were the 8th seed in that conference tournament. I would like to think our résumé can stand up. But there's not a whole lot I can do about it now. I'm not going to go politic for it. Hopefully our conference will be doing that.

This conference is really good, and I've been around the game a long time, we deserve 12 or 13 teams. We really do. Hopefully that's what the committee will also agree with.

I'm going to take a couple days off myself, work on my tan a little bit, maybe go to the desert a couple days and see the family. We'll get right back up on the horse. We're disappointed now, but we'll get back.

Q. Real quick question here, when you first sat down, you said, maybe the Hoosiers wanted it a little bit more than us today. Is that tough to say, make that statement, knowing this was a do or die?

KELLY GRAVES: I think this time of year -- listen, I've won ten tournament championships. I've been around a long time. I know kind of what it takes, and I've lost a lot too. This is my 28th tournament. I always felt that teams that want it more this time of year usually win. They play harder. They get those loose balls.

We had some opportunities to get some loose balls, those rebounds, and they got them. Then they made us pay.

I'm not saying that we didn't play hard or anything like that. They just right from the get-go, it appeared that they were a little bit more dialed in than we were, and it took us some time.

I don't look like I run much, but I get out there and run a little bit. When you're going up the hill, it's harder. When you're down double figures, it's hard running up. You feel like you're running uphill, so you make a charge and another basket or two and you drop all the way back. We just seemed like we were treading water all night long, chasing them, running uphill.

Couldn't quite catch them, you know. We made a nice run. I think we cut it to five. I felt, if we could keep it tight, we've won a lot of really close games this year, I thought they were going to feel the pressure and we could pull it through. Then we just couldn't get over that hump. Then they hit a couple threes, and we went down ten.

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