

Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 6, 2025

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Gainbridge Fieldhouse

Illinois Fighting Illini

Shauna Green

Kendall Bostic

Adalia McKenzie

Postgame Press Conference



Nebraska - 74, Illinois - 70

THE MODERATOR: We welcome the University of Illinois, Coach Shauna Green, Kendall Bostic, and Adalia McKenzie.

Coach, we would ask you to make an opening statement.

SHAUNA GREEN: This game just comes down to, again, the fourth quarter and really our last five minutes again. It's something that we've struggled with the last few games. We were leading going into the fourth. Then we give up a seven-point run there in the fourth quarter. Their best scoring run's in the fourth. That can't happen.

We gave up whatever it was in the fourth, and then again, everything we've been talking about was finishing plays, getting those rebounds. It's why we lost really the Michigan game, and we did the same thing tonight. We got stops, and down the stretch could not get the rebound. You just can't win in March when you're doing those things.

So those are controllables for us. It's what we hang our hat on. Just too many mishaps in the last five minutes that cost us the game.

Q. Kendall, what are you seeing or feeling on the floor in those final five minutes? Did you think maybe you had gotten that addressed in the last four or five days?

KENDALL BOSTIC: I feel like it's just like a lack of awareness. Like I feel like we're all -- like we're locked into the game and we're playing hard, but it's like the IQ things, like getting a boxout. That's a basic, fundamental thing. It's not like running a play or stopping a play. It's a basic boxout. We have to be able to do that.

We work on rotations every single day. We have to be able to rotate. We have to be able to guard out of bounds. We've been preaching that all year long because last year we weren't very good at it. Last couple of games they've gotten a lot of points on the baseline out-of-bounds plays. They had a wide open layup with a minute or two left, and that can't happen. It's uncontested open layups.

It's just a lot of little things we have to clean up. That's just us on the court. There's no excuse for it, there's no reason for it to happen. We have to be able to lock into that and say we've got to do it. We have to have all five on the floor. It can't be four of us or three of us. It has to be all five willing to do whatever we need to do to win.

Q. If I'd have told you Alexis Markowski goes for just 9 and 4, I think you probably thought you were going to win. What did the other interior players do that was different that maybe you saw on film?

KENDALL BOSTIC: Additionally with Markowski, we talked about taking up her space a little bit more. Last game I gave her a lot more space. We've been working on it all week long with our practice players and stuff. So I think that was executed well.

I think a couple times I kind of slacked off on their other bigs coming in to try to take a break, which can't happen. It's the Big Ten; everyone is capable. I think we cleaned up that in the second half a little bit.

I think they also took advantage of our 4s a little bit like size-wise, and they really went in, especially when Berry was in there.

I think we made the adjustments from last game, but we've just got to carry that over to the entire position, not just the one player.

Q. Adalia, I wanted to ask, last few games in general as the season has closed, really good teams, but obviously not the results you wanted. How do you guys shake the last few games as you enter the final phase of the postseason?

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ADALIA McKENZIE: You can't do anything after the game is done, so you've got to focus on the next one and the next opportunity that we have. We do a really good job of bouncing back. Unfortunately, we haven't done what we need to do to bounce back fully, but we will.

It's just all about staying confident and really learning, like KB said, the little things, boxing out. We keep preaching it. Everybody has to do it collectively.

So just keeping our head high. Us seniors don't want the season to end, so we're going to fight to the end. That's something we keep talking about as well. A lot of learning and just a lot of focus just carrying over.

Q. Adalia, you had 10 assists, but you and KB had it going really good there in the first half. Was that a part of the game plan to get the ball inside to KB?

ADALIA McKENZIE: Yeah, that's every game plan to feed KB and get her going. She does a good job of just driving and being strong, and I see her most of the time.

It's fun playing with KB, and she did a really good job today.

Q. Shauna, given how the final five minutes have gone, are you all surprised given how cohesive it was during the winning streak, and being a veteran team, it's kind of shaky right now in those stretches?

SHAUNA GREEN: This team has always really learned from mistakes, and we've been working on it and preaching it. A little bit, yeah. I thought today, I thought we kept talking about it even in the timeouts that I would bring up, okay, the Michigan game, this happened, and we're going to learn from it. It's not going to happen today. Just really trying to be positive mindset and get them to believe that we're going to make those plays today, and it just didn't happen.

That's what's frustrating is for me and for them is these are things we can control. We can control boxouts. We can control our baseline out-of-bounds defense. We have not executed. To win in March, it's all about who executes at a higher level, and we did not execute.

We missed some easy baskets, but like I don't usually get on them about that. I'm more about the defense and the rebounding. We knew that was what it was going to take down the stretch to win. It's why we lost against Michigan, and we didn't do it.

At some point, you've got to step up and you've got to

make those plays if you want to continue to have your season going, or you're going to be done real quickly.

Q. What did they do differently to limit Kendall in the second half?

SHAUNA GREEN: They didn't do anything. Kendall had 19, so they didn't do anything. She missed a couple of those jump shots, but we didn't execute.

Q. It was mentioned earlier in a previous press conference about this conference, and you guys are in that group of 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 in the seedings and all that. The toughness and competitiveness every night of everybody just kind of beats up on one another. Kind of your thoughts on that?

SHAUNA GREEN: You're right. That's why this conference is the best conference in the country, and I firmly believe that. I think we've shown it.

There's so many teams. The top two have kind of held their ground, but everyone else, literally anyone can beat anyone on any night, and it's hard. Then you throw in a neutral court in those type of games. We just played Nebraska a week and a half ago or whatever it was, so you know each other so well.

It's so hard. Every night is just so competitive. You're right, we just sit there and beat up on each other. We could get, what, 12, they're saying 13 teams in the NCAA Tournament. That's unbelievable.

Q. 22 points for Nebraska coming off the bench tonight. Everybody talks about this time of year, getting hot at the right time. How do you go about guarding a team who's got that depth on their bench to be able to put points up on the board and also not know who's going to have the hot hand going into each matchup?

SHAUNA GREEN: They obviously have a lot more players than we have to put in there, so that's a nice thing that Amy has the luxury of.

We did a great job on Markowski. Petrie made some really big plays. That three that she hit was the dagger.

Then 44, I'm going to totally ruin her name, so I'm not going to say it, but she made some really nice plays. That's why I told KB, you're doing such a great job on Markowski, like she made reference to, you can't take a break when these other guys come in because they keep coming.



We're just not deep and we're not that big, so they took advantage of it, so credit them.

None of this takes away from, again, this team. I'm really proud of them, what we've done with the adversity we've had this year. Are they running out of gas? I don't know. I'm never going to say that. I told them in the locker room again there's no excuses. We're never going to sit here and talk about that.

Nebraska made more plays down the stretch than we did, and we've got to figure out how we need to execute and rebound and be physical down the stretch and make winning plays down the stretch. That's what we're going to attack in this week off and leading into the NCAA Tournament.

Q. Last year, if you remember, we were over at Hinkle Fieldhouse, and J.D. was even there. We were talking about after the Villanova game, and you said, this is really nice, but I don't want to be in this position again. What changed your team from last year to be one more of the elite Big Ten teams this year?

SHAUNA GREEN: That's a great point. I actually talked about that just in the locker room. I said, remember what our mindset was last year and how mad we were up in Minneapolis. We had a complete change of our approach, and we were going to go into this WBIT, and we were going to win it. If we're going to be in it, we're going to win it. So I said we need to have that same approach going into the NCAA Tournament.

What we went through last year, there's no way we deal -- we're able to deal and have the success we had this year through the adversity we faced -- losing two top players, an All-American, First Team All Big Ten -- we don't accomplish what we accomplish this year without the adversity we went through last year and without the WBIT championship run.

That stretch in Indy last year to win that really changed this team and the trajectory to be able to go out and compete night in and night out and to get 11 wins in the Big Ten. We were on an eight-game winning streak in the Big Ten, the consistency, that no doubt about, was from that run last year and really prepared and propelled our team to now.

And now we are going to be in an NCAA Tournament, and that's what our goal was when we cut down those nets last year about a month from now.

Q. We kind of asked you this a couple days ago, but you've got the better part of ten days now before Selection Sunday. How do you want to go about using

that time with this group?

SHAUNA GREEN: Rest, we need rest. I'll give them a few days off. Even KB, her back today, she played 40 minutes and kind of tweaked it. I mean, that's toughness right there.

Gen -- shoot, I forgot Gen went down in the first quarter. We just hold our breath, and Gen battled back through on a sprained ankle and fought and played the rest of this game.

We're just going to take rest. We're going to try to get everyone healed up and tape them all together and get out there and really enjoy.

I told them, I want to enjoy this next week. This is a special group that, yeah, it didn't end the way we wanted it to end. We wanted to win today obviously. But this group is special, and I want to enjoy the rest of this journey with them, and we're going to go, and we're going to fight like hell in the NCAA Tournament.

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