

Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Friday, March 7, 2025

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Gainbridge Fieldhouse

Indiana Hoosiers

Teri Moren

Yarden Garzon

Shay Ciezki

Postgame Press Conference

USC - 84, Indiana - 79

TERI MOREN: I'm extremely proud of our team today. I thought that they battled for 40 minutes. We asked them to do a lot defensively, change up some coverages and whatnot throughout. I thought that their focus was really good.

Once again, we put JuJu on the free-throw line way too much. The 11 offensive rebounds really, really hurt us, I thought, because they were timely, and then the back-to-back 3s -- I think we pulled within two -- were back breakers for us.

Really proud of our group. I know this about these guys. They can play with anybody in the country, and we're disappointed that we don't get to play another day, but as a staff, we're really happy, not -- we're not -- we're disappointed that we lost, but I'm really happy with our effort and our toughness today.

Q. When you guys took the lead in the third quarter, it was really tight back and forth for a stretch, were you thinking you could pull away, something you saw that made you think we could go now and finish them off?

YARDEN GARZON: We came into the game to win the game. We didn't say that maybe. We were very confident in ourself to win this game. We thought we could pull it out and win this game, and that was the whole purpose of being here.

If we wouldn't think we could win this game, I don't think we would be here right now.

Q. Shay, when you look at this season kind of in the



big picture, it's obviously been an up-and-down ride for you all. What lessons are you hoping this team learns from the regular season and takes with you for the rest of the way?

SHAY CIEZKI: I would just say learning from our losses. We had some early ones at the beginning of the season that I thought that we really learned from and grew from. It shows when we play these bigger teams.

We should have had this one. We had it right down into the stretch, but I would just say, yeah, just growing from it, growing from the losses, and just getting better out of it.

Q. For either of you, not many teams in the country can say that they went wire-to-wire with USC, not only once this season, but twice. Despite the loss what do you want people to know about this Indiana squad heading into the NCAA Tournament?

YARDEN GARZON: I feel like we want everybody to know we are tough. Every game, no matter who we're going to play, we want to win the game. No matter what's your name, what you have on your chest, we're going to want to win this game.

Q. Yarden, the cliché is that you want to be playing your best basketball as you go into a tournament. Two pretty good performances here in Indy. How close do you feel like this team is to playing their best basketball now that the games really matter the most?

YARDEN GARZON: I feel like we all give everything we have. I feel like we left everything on the court. That's what our Coach is asking from us every day. That's the most important thing.

Once we do that -- I mean, like Chloe's awesome on defense. She's one of the best defensive players in the country. I think she did an amazing job. I think Lexy did an amazing job on defense. I feel like as long as we go out there and give everything we can, I believe in us a lot, and I believe we can beat everybody.

Q. Shay, they really pressured the ball a lot and forced



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you to kind of start your offense from further out. How did that affect you offensively and especially you guys' ability to shoot as many 3s as you usually do?

SHAY CIEZKI: It was pretty tough. It's not easy getting pressured, especially full court, like a lot of our guards today. But we just need to find other ways to offset our offense, to initiate it, to keep playing fast. That's just something we're going to learn and just grow from it.

Q. Teri, Sydney said she'd never fouled out with so much time left in a game. How does that kind of throw a wrench into what you're trying to do at that point? How do you balance it? You try to send her back in, but then she gets the foul right away. What are your impressions of what occurred?

TERI MOREN: Again, I trust Syd, just like I trust Yarden, those seniors and Chloe that have been doing it a long time to get in there and just understand that they can't pick up any of those cheap fouls.

The one that fouled her out was -- you just can't do that. You just can't do that. She knows that. She knows how important she is to have on the floor. I know that she's disappointed. Syd's a smart kid. She knows that her being able to stay on the floor was going to be really important for us.

Again, Lex had to come in and battle in spite of not having Syd. We were right there. It's just we came down, and like I said, we had a coverage. We were trying to -- I think it was blitz JuJu, and they got the ball out of it, she got the ball out of it and swung it to the corner, and 55 hits the first 3. Then the second 3 was just JuJu rising above, over Lex, and sticking the shot, which is hard to do.

Again, going into March, it's a hard lesson, but Syd will understand that she needs to be able to stay on the floor.

Q. You just talked about JuJu's offensive capabilities, but it seemed like, especially in the third quarter, any time you guys were starting to make a move, she made a play defensively to kind of reel things back in. How tough is it to play against somebody like that who has a whole bag of tricks?

TERI MOREN: You were talking about her defensively or her offense? Again, Kennedy Smith, I think, is such a great defender for a freshman. We can talk about JuJu defensively. It's amazing how often -- what I think she does such a good job of being able to get to the free-throw line.

We had some timely turnovers, there's no doubt about it.

Whether it was Kennedy, whether it was JuJu making a play on the ball, I'd have to go back and look, but I think where JuJu really puts pressure on you, how she kind of leans into that shot, right? We're telling Chloe to be vertical, show your hands, and I thought Chloe picked up two kind of cheap ones with JuJu being able to do that.

Nonetheless, she gets fouled 11 times, and I don't think anybody else was close to that. I think one of the recipes in trying to beat a really good USC team is keeping her especially off the free-throw line.

Q. Similar question I had for Yarden. Do you feel like this team made progress here in Indy in the two games? I mean, they were pretty well played. Are you where you need to be in terms of going into the tournament?

TERI MOREN: I think I said it, we've had some really good moments where we played good basketball prior to coming to Indy. I thought we played really well yesterday against Oregon. Certainly I thought our fight was there today against USC.

Again, it should give us great confidence. We can take a couple days here to kind of catch our breath and get off our feet. It's been a long season. Again, we can argue ACC, SEC, I think the Big Ten is just so good from top to bottom. It's been a grind of a season for all of us.

I think we're looking forward to maybe taking a couple days here, but once we get back to Bloomington and we get back together, it's going to be another week before we know what's going to happen, who we're going to play, and whatnot.

The great thing about being where we are is that we know that there's another tournament that we're going to be able to go in and play in, and probably for our kids, they're probably most excited about the opponent hopefully that we'll have we haven't seen yet. It will be a fresh, new opponent for us. I think there will be a whole new level of excitement.

Any time March Madness gets here and you wait for Monday and the selection show and whatnot. But, yeah, I think we'll take a lot of confidence from what we've been able to do the last two days.

I'm going to tell you, we're disappointed. Yarden said it. Our plan was to come in here, and we wanted to be playing on Sunday.

Q. Are you positive, feeling positive that you're going to be in the tournament?



TERI MOREN: Yeah, there's no doubt.

Q. You don't worry about it at all?

TERI MOREN: No.

Q. You mentioned how your team played well yesterday and then today, but one ended in a win and then today a loss. How do you compare and contrast the two performances yesterday against Oregon and today against USC?

TERI MOREN: Again, you have to go back, and I'll have to watch, like I said in my opening statement. The 11 offensive rebounds hurt us, the back to back. They were timely 3s that hurt us today. We were right there. And without a starter on the floor.

So a lot of really good takeaways from yesterday, but a lot of good takeaways from today. There's always things that you can improve and get better. We'll do that once we get back to Bloomington and get a look at both films and compare and contrast, what went well and what didn't.

Q. Even if it's just for seeding or positioning or whatever, what's the case for your team going into Selection Sunday? What's the committee and what should people know about your season you guys have had?

TERI MOREN: At the beginning of the season we were certainly without -- going into the season, Lenée Beaumont was going to be a big part of what we were going to be able to count on for us. She goes down with a knee injury in the summer, and we make the decision she's going to take the year off and not be available.

Then we go in and we don't have Lexy Bargar at the beginning of the season as well because she's nursing a foot injury. We played without her for a majority of the first half of nonconference.

I think the injuries played a part in it. Any time you lose a kid like -- an All-American like McKenzie and a great shooter like Sarah, and you bring in new players like Shay and Strip, it's going to take time for your team to learn how to gel and learn to play with each other.

Again, going down to the Bahamas, Columbia is an excellent team out of the Ivy League. Then we turn around right the next day and beat a good Baylor team. They're top 20 in the country right now. Syd goes down. We have another injury. Then come up short against -- real short against North Carolina for a number of reasons.

Then we have to play a majority, another string of games without a starter like Syd Parrish, and then we get her back. We are able to get some really good wins, whether it was Nebraska at home, some of those on the road that maybe we fell short on. We come home, we play UCLA, both UCLA and USC really close, come up short.

Then turn around, Nebraska, think about it, Ohio State, play excellent. Then finish off the season with a great win at Purdue but then come in here beat Oregon, who we had lost to.

Are we gelling at the right time? We knew the year was going to kind of be -- there was going to be ebbs and flows in it, but again, we've got a veteran team. We've got an experienced team. We've had some tough luck throughout. We've had some challenges. Whether it was some on the floor, some off the floor and some just things that aren't really basketball related but can disrupt what our normal is.

There's not even a case to be made. Based on what we've been able to do, the history the last ten years, with our experience. I'm not worried about trying to make a case. Our team deserves to be in the field.

Q. Teri, something that is, I guess, projected to be different is that you guys will likely have to be on the road wherever you go for the tournament. For the players that have not experienced that for you guys, just how do you expect to prepare them for those road one-and-done games?

TERI MOREN: It will be -- we're going to miss being at home. We're going to miss -- the last two years we've been the fortunate ones to be able to host some of those first rounds.

The fact that, again, it's March Madness, and wherever they send us, we're going to go, and we're going to put our best foot forward. It might be different, but that's sometimes not a bad thing. Just the fact that we're going to, like I said, take a couple days off, and we can look forward to the next tournament. That's the most important thing.

Who we play, where we go really don't matter. We know that the next tournament is kind of similar to this. If you don't win, you're done, right? I feel really good about our group as far as competitive energy level, experience, all of it. We'll be ready.

Q. Going against two All-Americans in Kiki Iriafen and JuJu Watkins, how hard does that make defending

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them on the other side of the ball?

TERI MOREN: They're challenging. Not to take -- I want to say this in the right way, but we've got a lot of teams that have been really challenging all year long. Both JuJu and Kiki are terrific, and we've got a tremendous amount of respect for USC and Lindsay, their staff and their players.

They're going to represent, just like we will, the Big Ten in their great way here in the next couple of weeks.

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