

Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Friday, March 7, 2025

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Gainbridge Fieldhouse

Ohio State Buckeyes

Kevin McGuff

Cotie McMahon

Taylor Thierry

Postgame Press Conference

Ohio State - 60, Iowa - 59

THE MODERATOR: Welcome Ohio State and Coach Kevin McGuff. We will begin the press conference with an opening statement by Coach.

KEVIN MCGUFF: I'll just let these guys fire away with questions.

Q. Cotie, in the fourth quarter you missed those two free throws that you had, but then you hit the two most important free throws. Can you walk through that moment and how loud it was and hitting those free throws and what you felt after hitting that second one.

COTIE McMAHON: Honestly, I didn't really hear anything. I was kind of cussing myself out, like if I don't make these free throws, then we're going home. So I just made them.

Q. Taylor, it felt like you really started to come alive in the second half. Can you just talk about your mindset going from the first to the second half and what kind of started working for you.

TAYLOR THIERRY: Yeah, I was struggling a bit in the first half. I tried to stay confident, tried to stay positive, not get in my head. Also my teammates were very encouraging and had a lot of confidence in me. So just letting the game come to me and have confidence in myself and find areas that I could contribute to this team so we could win.

Q. Coach, what did you see tonight from Iowa's zone defense that kind of made it difficult for you guys, and how did you break through towards the end to get the points you needed to come up with the win?



KEVIN MCGUFF: They played a lot of zone defense today which they hadn't played against us the first time but have played it more lately.

In the first half, I just did not think we moved the ball around too much ourselves or had a sense of urgency to do that. But as the game went on, especially late, I thought we got a lot better shots, and then we stepped up and we made some.

Q. Taylor and Cotie, can you talk about just getting a second win against Iowa this season. I know they're always a tough matchup and they're always a team that seems like Ohio State's excited to play against.

COTIE McMAHON: It felt good. Like we've said before, this game is always personal. So it felt good.

Q. For both of you as well, you guys were here last year when you were knocked down in the quarterfinals. Can you talk about how much you thought back to that feeling and how much you didn't want to repeat that.

TAYLOR THIERRY: Yeah, it's kind of easy. Simple as it sounds, we didn't want to lose our first game and go home right away. Again, just finding a way. This time of the season is hard to get a win, so just finding a way.

Q. For either of you, I guess what is the anticipation? I don't know if you saw this before heading on the floor, but going against UCLA tomorrow, how excited are you for that challenge against one of the best teams in the Big Ten?

TAYLOR THIERRY: Honestly just executing our game plan and trust our coaches and what they have for us to do. So I would say just execute our game plan, play our game.

Q. For Jaloni, she had a couple early fouls, and it seemed like she was kind of nervous to go into the paint until later on in the game whenever she only had two fouls in the last quarter. Is there anything you say to Jaloni? Because it seemed like she was kind of in



her head on going to the basket, trying to avoid picking up another foul.

TAYLOR THIERRY: I just tried to encourage her and stay positive and just not let things she can't control control her.

I think she did a pretty good job. Like I said, just try to encourage her.

Q. It felt like in the second half the defense was running -- it was kind of producing the offense. Can you talk about how important it was locking down on defense and getting that figured out first?

TAYLOR THIERRY: I think our defense kind of contributes to our offense. So we were just trying to guard the ball and not get driven by really easily but just executing defensively, making it hard for them to score, boxing out, getting rebounds. I think that's important for us.

Like I said, our defense contributes to our offense.

Q. You had Eboni playing a little more than you usually do today. Can you talk about that decision, how she impacted the game?

KEVIN MCGUFF: I thought Eboni gave us fantastic minutes off the bench. She's played in a lot of games at Ohio State. She really has a great understanding of what we do, and I thought her execution was at a little bit higher level with her on the court.

I was just really proud of her, happy she could come in. She looked like a senior playing in her last Big Ten Tournament.

Q. It just seemed like after you guys got off to a hot start, for the rest of the game it seemed like Iowa's defense gave you a rough go for the remainder of the game, even though you guys pulled it out. What is it about the defense that made your offense struggle a bit?

KEVIN MCGUFF: Credit to Iowa. I thought they played a fantastic game, and they had a fantastic run in the tournament here. They played zone defense the first time we played them, and we didn't execute real well against it, and that gave us problems.

Late in the game we got better shots, but for a while there, we just kind of stood around and didn't move ourselves, didn't move the ball very effectively. Finally got it right at the end, but Iowa played really great defense tonight.

Q. Taylor and Cotie and other players have talked over

the last few years about how playing Iowa is personal, how they felt disrespected the past few years. Do you see them preparing for a game like this any different than another game? Do you feel maybe more of a heightened sense whenever they're going up against a team like Iowa or a team they feel is more of a rival to them?

KEVIN MCGUFF: Iowa is a great program. They've won a lot of basketball games. They've won this tournament two years in a row. Give them credit. They've built something really good there. So we like the opportunity to measure ourselves against the best in this conference, and they're certainly one of those programs.

Q. Affolter, what does she add to the Hawkeyes offense and defense?

KEVIN MCGUFF: She adds a physical presence around basket. I thought she did a nice job getting good positions. She finishes real well. She's a great player. That gives them another efficient player that they can play in the paint.

So she's good. She hurt us tonight.

Q. It felt like Petty was playing well tonight but you took her out a couple of times. Can you talk about the decision to take her out of the game and put Elsa in?

KEVIN MCGUFF: I think their post players are really good. You've got to keep fresh bodies on them. So a combination of Petty, Elsa, and Eboni was kind of the formula. That's why we were trying to sub them, to keep them fresh.

Q. Free throws have been a difficulty for the team this year. Cotie has had games where she hits 50 percent or so. In the final quarter when she hit both of those free throws, what was going through your mind?

KEVIN MCGUFF: On the last play in general, we wanted to get the ball in her hands and create space for her to play in. She made the right play. She got fouled. At that point, you've got to step up and put yourself in position to make them, and she did. Really happy and proud she could do that for us.

Q. Lucy had 12 points in the first half, 2 in the second. It seemed like there was different coverage on her in the second half, like more double teams. What did you change from your game plan going into the second half to kind of limit her offensively?

KEVIN MCGUFF: We were trying to get the ball out of her hands, if we could. She's a great player, and she played



extremely well against us the first time. But it's tough too. She logged a lot of heavy minutes here for three games in three days. So we wanted to wear on her with the full court pressure and get the ball out of her hands in the half-court.

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