

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - Kent State vs Notre Dame

Friday, March 22, 2024

South Bend, Indiana, USA

Purcell Pavilion

Kent State Golden Flashes

Katie Schumate

Bridget Dunn

Media Conference



what has this week been like for you guys?

KATIE SHUMATE: I would say there's definitely more distractions going on. There's a lot more people talking to you. But I would say more than anything, we were just excited and we got some energy going into this and we are going to try to use all the energy we got from winning the MAC Tournament to go into this game and just play with confidence and know that there's people watching us and supporting us.

Q. What do you guys think it will take? I know Coach is probably, one game at a time, right. So what will it take for you guys to come out and win?

BRIDGET DUNN: I think we just need to play our best basketball for 40 minutes. That's kind of been our mindset. We take it, you know, in chunks at a time. But just focusing on that and not getting ahead of ourselves. Just, like you said, like take it one game at a time. I think that's our -- that's what we're going to do.

Q. For both players, like Notre Dame, you suffered a significant injury this season losing a point guard. What went into overcoming that and then going on to win the MAC Tournament and how did you adjust from there?

KATIE SHUMATE: Well, a lot of it is thanks to Dionna Gray. She prepared for this moment. She always work really hard. She was in the gym after hours. She put in the work to be able to step up in the way that she did and obviously we just adjusted as a team. We're playing a little bit faster now, but that's only worked in our favor, and thanks to Dionna Gray and the ability for the rest of us to adjust around her.

Q. You referred that your team has strong depth. Notre Dame does not have that. Is there an advantage to be had in that regard?

KATIE SHUMATE: Oh, yeah, there's a big advantage of that if we are able to take advantage of it and that would be to try to get their players in foul trouble. Maybe if they have less girls than us that have seen the floor with experience, I

Q. Can you talk a little bit about the strengths of this team and what will enable you to have success?

KATIE SHUMATE: Yeah, so we're a team with a lot of depth, and even though we have young girls, we play together and our halfcourt defense is really good. I think we're pretty strong in transition, as well. And then our post play, we have some depth there as well. So I think we have multiple areas where we're strong.

Q. Can you talk about the challenge of playing in a non-neutral site, and how do you prepare for that?

BRIDGET DUNN: You know, we kind of go into every game with the same mindset. We've just got to lock in. Obviously they are playing at home, so you know, some people, home-court advantage-type thing. But we've just got to play our game and do our best.

Q. I've asked you about this before during the season. You've had seven games with double-digit rebounds. What has gone into being so effective on the glass the last three games?

BRIDGET DUNN: Rebounding has been a big emphasis for us recently, limiting team's second-chance points. Just helps us overall.

So you know, it's just kind of -- Coach Starkey always says rebounding is who ends up with the ball, so that's kind of just my mindset. You've got to go get it sometimes. But yeah, we just focus on that and it helps us win games.

Q. Coming off of winning the MAC Championship and just the excitement of that, how has this week and preparation, now that you know, playing, getting into it,



think that can only work in our favor if we play the game the right way.

Q. With this being your third year, the next game will tie Young for all-time games-played leader in Kent State Women's Basketball history. What makes her game so special and how fun is it to play with Katie?

BRIDGET DUNN: Playing with Katie has definitely been one of the highlights of my three years here so far. She's just one of a kind. She gives everything she has. She's gritty. She's not afraid to go after a ball that some people might be like, ohhhh. She just plays with her heart and it's just been so much fun playing with her these last three years.

Q. Can you just talk about the challenge of playing against Hannah Hidalgo, is that one person's responsibility to deal with her, contain her, or is it more than one person? How do you handle that?

KATIE SHUMATE: It definitely doesn't fall on one person. I think that the whole team, we're going to have to play together. We're going to have to stay connected, make sure we have each other's backs. It's not going to be done with one person.

Yeah, it's exciting to play against someone on both ends of the floor that is as good as she is, and I think maybe some of our games in the non-conference before the season and additionally some of the players that we got to play against in our conference will help us with that.

THE MODERATOR: I'll go ahead and ask a question, actually. Katie, your brother and sister both played the game at a really high level. How competitive was it growing up there and how much basketball was played at your house?

KATIE SHUMATE: Yeah, I don't think anyone would believe the amount of basketball played at my house and we were always super competitive, and not just with basketball. That's where it started. Anything we did, it was competitive, and that's just what was instilled in us from our dad. We would be in the backyard playing all the time and they are both a little bigger than me, so I think they have -- they are a big reason why my game is the way it is.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports