

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - Missouri State vs Ohio State

Saturday, March 19, 2022

Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA

Ohio State Buckeyes

Coach Kevin McGuff

Jacy Sheldon

Taylor Mikesell

Media Conference

Ohio State 63, Missouri State 56.

KEVIN MCGUFF: We can go right to questions. Thank you.

Q. What's going to be the biggest adjustment that you're going to be able to make for Monday's game?

JACY SHELDON: Yeah, I think we didn't play our best basketball today and I think that came down to effort there at the end. We're going to get back in the gym, watch some film, and play as hard as we always do. But I think we kind of got that game under our belt, and it's been a while since we played so I think it was good to get back out there, and we'll play even harder next time we're out there.

Q. Jacy, were there jitters at the beginning? You had not played -- Ohio State had not been here since 2018 and Missouri State had played a first game, so they were comfortable at least. Were there jitters at the beginning and how did you get over there?

JACY SHELDON: Yeah, I think it was more excitement. Like you said, they had a game under their belt and we hadn't played in a while. I think we were excited to get out there and it showed a little bit. Maybe the nerves showed. But I think once we got out there, we started playing as a team.

Q. Jacy, with that three-pointer you were able to hit, I believe it was in the second quarter, how much of a confidence booster was that for you and the team as you guys went down the stretch there?

JACY SHELDON: Yeah, it's always good to see the ball



go in, but I think me and T-Mike, no matter whether it's going in or not we're going to keep shooting. Like you said, it was definitely something we needed at that time, but we're always going to keep shooting.

Q. For both Taylor and Jacy, in the game, in the second quarter especially, you're forcing six turnovers in the last couple minutes of the half. How big is that for momentum, and what do you tell each other at halftime to keep that momentum going because right into the third quarter the same thing happened to start it off?

TAYLOR MIKESELL: Yeah, I think that was a huge momentum shift for us. I think just in the huddle we were talking about starting the offense with our defense, and I think we definitely did that at the end of the second quarter, got a nice little run going into halftime. And I think it gave us momentum coming out of halftime, and I think the message coming out of halftime was keep doing what we're doing and keep forcing them into tough twos and making them take tough shots.

JACY SHELDON: Yeah, I would agree. We relied a lot on our press and we executed there towards the end of the second quarter and then to come out in the third, too. But we also had to rely on our half-court defense there at the end, and we executed really well there and it definitely helped us win the game.

Q. What does today's game say about your team's growth throughout this season?

KEVIN MCGUFF: Well, yeah, I'm really proud of our effort and our ability to stay together and execute down the stretch. Missouri State has got a great team. They played extremely hard today like they normally do. Their defense was very good and they made us earn everything we got. But I think it speaks to just our leadership of our captains and our upperclassmen for them to kind of keep us -- one, keep us in the right frame of mind when we got off to a bad start, and then, two, to really keep us together down the stretch where we had to really make a lot of plays on both ends of the floor to win the game.

**Q. What does it mean to you to get this win?
Obviously it's been four years.**

KEVIN MCGUFF: Well, I'm really happy for our players because most of the team had not been able to participate in the NCAA Tournament. Really happy for them to get a chance to experience this in general, but then to get a win and be able to move on to the second round is really special. Regardless of who wins, it'll be a good opportunity on Monday against a great team.

Q. Jacy had a huge game today, obviously. She was leading the team on the court there. But in the second half especially, Tanaya Beacham came off the bench and had some pretty big moments, especially there in the final minute where she's jumping out of bounds to keep the ball in possession for Ohio State. As the season has gone on towards the end of the year, she's really stepped up in those big moments. What do you say about her game today?

KEVIN MCGUFF: You know, she plays with such great intensity and our team really feeds off of that, and she's really got great competitive character. She always plays hard, and you're right, she had some huge plays down the stretch with her defense and her rebounding, and we needed all of it.

Q. In the early stages of the game, did you view the slow start as kind of some jitters on your side, or was it kind of Missouri State's defense or just a little bit of both? Where did you view that slow start?

KEVIN MCGUFF: A little bit of both. Their defense was very good to start, and really it was good throughout the game, so they kind of put us back on our heels. And I didn't think we reacted real well to it until we got to the second quarter and we kind of turned up the press, the full-court press, which we turned them over and we were able to get some easy baskets in transition, and I think that kind of helped settle us down.

Q. The issues you had on the boards, if somebody had said you would be out-rebounded by 18 and still win, how surprised would you have been and how much of an issue was that?

KEVIN MCGUFF: Yeah, I would have told you we're not winning if that was the case. One way to kind of offset rebounding differential is turnover margin, and I think ultimately that's where we won the game.

Q. Throughout the year the offense has really been a big part -- top 10 scoring in the season. Does a game like today where scoring really isn't there, the shooting

is probably less than you were hoping for the team, do you see that as motivation within the roster for Monday's game?

KEVIN MCGUFF: Yeah. You know, we didn't shoot it well, but a big part of that was Missouri State's defense was really good, and so give them credit there. I did think that we did miss on some opportunities that we did get on some shots that we normally make.

At this time of year, you're going to have to win in different ways, and today was more of our defense down the stretch that gave us a chance to win. Although I will say that our kids executed some really good offense when we needed it down the stretch to get some big baskets because it was so hard to get baskets that we needed those ones down the stretch, and they did a good job with it.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports.