

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - Drake vs Colorado

Thursday, March 21, 2024

Manhattan, Kansas, USA

Bramlage Coliseum

Colorado Buffaloes

Coach JR Payne

Jaylyn Sherrod

Quay Miller

Media Conference



team and we know that pretty much they're going to be who they are and we just have to be able to match up with that.

QUAY MILLER: Just really excited to play a team we don't often see, so I think that within itself will be different for us because we're used to knowing our opponent before having to play them and being more familiar with their style of play and who they are.

Q. You guys had a losing streak towards the end of the season. You feel like you turned things around and are ready to start winning again, or is there some doubt still lingering in your mind?

QUAY MILLER: I don't think it was ever a sense of doubt. We just sometimes was on to what we wanted to do, which was win too tightly. I think that with that being said, we realize that going forward that it's really us, like focusing on what we do, how we execute, our focus, and knowing that, I think that gave us confidence knowing that it's just minor tweaks and watching film and displaying in practice that we can attack these things.

JALYN SHERROD: Yeah, I don't really think it was ever a doubt about what was going on or how we felt as a ball club. I think every game we kind of went out there and got better and started playing better basketball around the end of the season.

So I think we're in a good place.

Q. It's your second straight year playing against a smaller school who won a ton of games. You guys handled it really well last year. Do you think that experience helps knowing you have to have your guard up from the opening tip Friday?

JALYN SHERROD: Yeah, I mean, teams are in the tournament for a reason, so you respect everybody that you go up against. Drake is a really good school and a really good team, so I think at the end of the day really -- and I know we said it a lot -- but it's about us.

QUAY MILLER: Yeah, like Jaylyn said, everyone who

THE MODERATOR: Joining us today are student-athletes Quay Miller and Jaylyn Sherrod.

Q. Tomorrow is likely to be sold out. Talk about what it's going to be like to play in front of a packed house.

QUAY MILLER: We've done it before in some of our games in Boulder, and it's just a wonderful environment to play in. I think that we enjoy playing in those type of environments, so personally I'm excited. I'm sure everyone is.

JALYN SHERROD: Yeah, I think it's just a great opportunity at the end of the day. We feed off that, so I think it'll be pretty cool.

Q. Your game tomorrow probably not going to be one-sided for you. If the crowd gets behind Drake for example how do you adjust to that?

QUAY MILLER: Just making sure we draw in closer with each other. Focus in more on executing and really just focusing more on us.

Yeah.

JALYN SHERROD: Yeah, at the end of the day it's about us. We played in hostile environments before in the PAC so it's nothing we haven't seen before.

Q. What does Drake create problems for you, how do they create problems for you?

JALYN SHERROD: Yeah, they're just a very systematic



made this tournament is very good, so definitely not underestimating anybody. Just, I don't know, just really looking forward to playing a different team, a new team from a different conference. Doesn't matter what conference they're from. They're in the tournament and everybody is trying to win at the end of the day.

Q. Jaylyn, I know you answered this on Sunday, but what is the sense of urgency look like for you guys and Charlotte and Maddie, the seniors, knowing any day could be it for you guys?

JALYN SHERROD: I haven't really looked at it like that. I really been where my feet are at this past week and just taking in every moment and really realizing that could have been my last practice back in Boulder, but I don't really look at it like that. There is always more to do.

But I think it's just kind of -- it is what it is. I know that's what I'm up against. I'm not paying much attention to it. Just ready to get out there and compete again.

QUAY MILLER: Yeah, what Jaylyn said, being where our feet is is a big focal point. Not just us as seniors, but what we're about as a program. Anything else we're worried about is outside of our control, so just focusing on Drake and being able to beat a team like that is where my head has been, and I'm not really focused on anything outside of that.

Q. There will be a ton of people here, probably seeing Colorado basketball for the first time this year. What would you say is the identity of Colorado basketball? What do you guys do best?

QUAY MILLER: What we do best, it's hard, because I play for them, so I feel like we do a lot, almost everything we do is our best.

But I would say that just our mentality. I think that we have the ability to -- I don't know, it's hard to explain. Early in the season we were the talk around a lot and I feel like now our backs are against the wall again, and when we're able to go back to that mode is when we're at our best, having our back against the wall and a big crowd rooting against us.

I think our ability to play through that and stick together through that is our best attribute.

JALYN SHERROD: Yeah, I would just say we really are a team that prides ourselves on being hard working and disciplined and tough, and I know that's really our core, what we want to do and be every night.

And at the end of the day too, just going into a hostile environment in general, being underdogs, is a place we really succeed in because we like a challenge and we like to be the team that people kind of look over.

I think we're back in that position with how we finished the season. I'm really excited about where we are at.

Q. I want to go back to what you said about backs against the wall. You're like with K-State where you could have been a four or five. Bracketology said you guys might be a four but end up being a five. Do you think this adds to backs against the wall? Did that make you upset you didn't get the four?

QUAY MILLER: I think that it's just been a privilege and honor to be able to enter the tournament, whether we're hosting or playing. Just being able to keep playing and having everyone we started the season with be healthy enough to be in the post season with us.

Obviously we wanted to host. I haven't experienced that in my years. But I really am just grateful for the opportunity to keep playing with who I've started my season with.

Q. Jaylyn and Quay both just talked about being where their feet are this week in terms of not thinking about the end of their careers, the next game. Does that mentality come from you? From them? Where does that start on your team?

JR PAYNE: Yeah, I think it's a core identity of our program is we're trying to be great every day no matter what we're doing. In the weight room, conditioning in the summer, practicing, big game, don't have a game, our mindset is just to prioritize being excellent each and every day. I think it stems from that.

So if we're in Manhattan, Kansas playing Drake, that's all that matters to us. I think our team does a great job doing that.

Q. How are you guys feeling now that you're here, got to practice in the arena? What's kind of the vibe? You feeling positive?

JR PAYNE: Totally positive. Very excited. I think everyone is excited to be in March Madness. So happy that our men won last night. That was awesome. We got to watch that, celebrate that.

We kind of feel like it's our turn now to be able to put on a uniform and play. Yeah, it's March Madness. To most of us, it's the best time of the year.

Q. Talk about your expectation of the atmosphere tomorrow. If not sold out, very, very close. In your game it won't be quite as impactful unless you both advance and play K-State on Sunday. Just talk about coaching in an environment with a packed house.

JR PAYNE: Yeah, it's awesome. Every coach and every player wants to play in that type of environment. As Quay alluded to, we had some in Boulder, several in the Pac-12, and so we're very comfortable in those environments. It's awesome. I think it's what every kid grows up wanting to do.

To experience March Madness in a packed house is what everybody lives for. It's going to be really fun.

Q. Just your thoughts on playing the last season in the Pac-12, and then going to being playing in the Big XII the next couple days.

JR PAYNE: Yep.

Q. Just your thoughts on joining the Big XII next year.

JR PAYNE: Yeah, I'll start by saying just what an honor and privilege it's been to be a member of the Pac-12 conference. I believe that the Conference of Champions is the exact appropriate name for what the Pac-12 has been.

It has been exceptional academically, athletically. The support we have provided our student-athletes has been second to none. So I think all of us have really felt honored to be a part of that.

With that being said, we're going to keep playing this March Madness season as Pac-12 reps. I know the coaches in the Pac-12 are very united in that. We'll continue to support to each other all the way through the final game. After that, we are also equally excited to be a part of the Big XII conference.

It's been one that a lot of us have watched over the years and seen a tremendous amount of success across all sports. We were -- while we are talked about not being able to host we were very disappointed to not get to host in Boulder, but on the flip side it's pretty cool to get to go to a Big XII school and be able to see this environment and the community and start to get a little taste of what that's going to be.

Q. Go back to your seniors and not to think about the emotional side, but have you noticed a sense of urgency among them -- there are a lot of them on the roster -- that now any day can be their last?

JR PAYNE: I think our team has done a great job, our seniors in particular, of playing and training with that sense of urgency all year long.

So because it's part of our DNA to focus where we are and try to be great every day, I haven't really -- there is no difference. Like there as great today as -- or I expect them to be as great today in practice as they were at the end of July when we were in the weight room and conditioning and things like that.

Everyone knows this could be your last practice. Tomorrow could be your last game. Everybody knows that. I think our group has done a great job all year long of having that sense of urgency.

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