

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - Murray State. vs Iowa

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Lloyd Noble Center

Murray State Racers

Rechelle Turner

Media Conference



pick them up whenever they need it, and she's just been an emotional leader for us. Her role has been immense, even though she hasn't been able to play.

Q. I don't know if this question's been asked. Curious to hear your thoughts on what you've seen from Iowa as you've prepared for them, the challenges you'll face.

RECHELLE TURNER: They're playing exceptional basketball. They beat USC, Michigan, Michigan State, took UCLA and Ohio State to the wire. So I would say she has them playing their best basketball respect now. What an historic, traditional program. We've got our hands full for sure.

Q. I asked your players this question as well and how important it is you have depth off the bench. How important is it to you to be able to bring in people off the bench and make them have an impact?

RECHELLE TURNER: The way we play and the pace in which we play, we have to be able to go to our bench because we play in shifts. Some of our depth was taken away with injuries this year, but our young kids have come and done a really good job for us. Pace is essential for us. It has to be up and down the floor for us to have an opportunity to win this game.

Q. Coach, this is your third year in the Missouri Valley. At what point did you know you had built something special and that you had a chance to make a run in March here?

RECHELLE TURNER: It's ironic. When we were on our away trip and played Drake and UNI, and we were able to overcome that obstacle, that has been huge for us in the first couple years of the conference.

We just got off that plane ride with a new sense of courage and a new sense of pride and confidence that we had to have. Obviously, Drake and UNI are one of the premiere teams. That helped us tremendously.

I actually thought this team could be special in June. When they got to campus and we got together, I felt like

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon. We'll have a quick opening statement by Coach Turner, followed by questions.

RECHELLE TURNER: We're grateful and blessed to be here. Have so much respect for Iowa women's basketball, Coach Jensen. The loyalty she's shown to Iowa for 25 years and they've shown back means a lot to us in the coaching community. And loyalty means a lot with our program as well, with Katelyn Young coming back for her fifth season and leading us to this moment.

Q. So you guys are obviously an incredibly high octane, high scoring offense. They're the same way. How do you feel the offense is going to stack up against Iowa?

RECHELLE TURNER: It's a lot of similarities. They play well in transition. They shoot the three extremely well. They're able to go inside-out. You'll see a lot of inside-out 3s, and they've got the ability to score in different ways.

Obviously, their size and length presents issues for us. We have smaller guards. But I really love the way they play. I mean, I would love for us to be able to build an Iowa-type program for the Missouri Valley Conference because they have great players and great individuals on their team and have one of the best fan bases in the country. They're definitely a team we would love to mimic.

Q. Tell me a little bit about how important it is to have Destiny Thomas with you and what her role on the team has been since getting injured.

RECHELLE TURNER: Obviously, when she went down, it took us a little while to adjust. That was kind of a lull we had in our season. But she's just energy for us. She's everybody's best friend. She's the person that's going to



they were built different, and they've answered the call every single time our backs have been against the wall.

Q. I know your thing is five minutes, five minutes, five minutes, and your players say it does help them a lot mentally on the court. So what was your idea behind five minutes, five minutes? Why has that become what you've preached to the team?

RECHELLE TURNER: Because I think moments can be overwhelming if you don't break them down. That's not only in basketball but in life. So we wanted to make sure we gave them eight five-minute segments. So we're playing eight five-minute games within a game.

If you don't do well the first five minutes, you have seven more chances to do well. I think that in big game situations, you have to make sure you make it as easy as possible for your players to understand the expectations during a shortened amount of time.

Q. You've played a couple of really good teams, SEC teams with LSU and Alabama, and the Missouri Valley is a solid conference as well. What is your message tomorrow going into the game where you all are an underdog, but you have experiences against the good teams this year?

RECHELLE TURNER: Do what we do. Again, don't let the moment get too big for you. Focus in and lock in on what we know it takes for us to be successful. They're outstanding. Olsen is an amazing player. They have so many wonderful players. Coach Jensen is a Hall of Fame coach. We can't focus on them. That's where you go wrong. We have to go in knowing the scout, locking in on what we have to do to be successful. The number one key for us to win is making a bunch of 3s.

Q. Coach, when you look at where you are right now, considering where you personally have come from, coaching high school at a small school in Murray for 20-something years and now you see the March Madness logo everywhere, we talked to players about being nervous in the moment.

For you, when you walk on that court tomorrow or today for that practice, what's going to be going through your mind and how is that going to be sinking with you?

RECHELLE TURNER: I think more than anything, just a sense of pride of what these young women have been able to do. I've said all along, this has been eight years in the making. Every assistant coach, every player, everybody, trainers, strength and conditioning, that have played a part in building this program brick by brick to get to this moment

should be celebrating in this moment.

This particular team gets to be the champions and gets to be in this situation, but this program wasn't built in a day. So just extremely proud of what we've been able to do and that we've been able to get to where we are so quickly and in very, very tough conference. The Missouri Valley Conference has great players and great coaches and great tradition.

Q. You mentioned the 3-point shooting, which is something you guys do very well with a number of players. Is there a number that you have in mind tomorrow where you feel like if we make this many 3s, we can potentially win?

RECHELLE TURNER: We may have to make more than normal. We always shoot for twelve 3s per game. That's one of the keys to winning the game. It's about volume shooting. We've got to get several of them up.

We know for us to have a chance to score, it's got to be extremely high. We're not going to win a game in the 60s. That's been proven when we played LSU and Alabama this year. We have to do everything we can do to get shots off and everything we can do to slow them down.

They're a tremendous offensive team, but I don't think people give them enough credit for their defense. They're exceptional on both end of the floor.

Q. So, obviously, you guys have a great senior class, especially Katelyn Young has well over 3,000 points. Does the idea that this tournament is the last tournament that you'll have this senior class, does that play into the motivation going in?

RECHELLE TURNER: You know, you often think about what it's going to be like when the ball bounces for the last time for such a historic senior class. We've got kids that have broken records all year long and put themselves on the map. The senior class has helped lead the culture of this team as well.

But I don't think you focus on that. I think it's, again, just another game. It's just another opportunity to play 40 minutes together, five minutes at a time.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.

RECHELLE TURNER: Thank you.

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