

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

Saturday, March 22, 2025

Norman, Oklahoma, USA

Lloyd Noble Center

Murray State Racers

Rechelle Turner

Ava Learn

Katelyn Young

Media Conference



was a little different but I was proud of the fight that we put up because we knew it was going to be a rough game. We knew it was not just going to be handed to us, and I was definitely a little like, oh holy cow, Kate is down. I stepped up and did what I needed to do.

It was definitely very hard for me when I had to come out when I fouled out. It wasn't how I wanted to end but hey, I went down fighting is what I can say.

Q. Coach Jensen from Iowa said they did a good job trying to game plan for you in the post. Could you feel that on the court and they were playing you extra hard on defense?

KATELYN YOUNG: Yeah, they were denying me everywhere. I tried to get post ups, touches at the elbow and things like that, and they were denying, probably not like they usually do. Yeah, the game plan was definitely try to keep the ball out of my hands.

Q. How is the ankle feeling right now? I know you tried to run on it. Didn't really go too well. How are you doing right now?

KATELYN YOUNG: It's all right. I'm able to walk, so that's good.

Q. Tell me about your emotion when is that final buzzer hits. You are also a senior and had a great game. Tell me about those emotions.

AVA LEARN: I think all my emotions came out when I fouled out. It was very hard for me but like Kate said I would not wanting to out any other way. This team is unbelievable. I love them all so much. The connection, and like Coach Turner always says, no one really cares whose game it is, what's happening, as long as we're winning together that's all that matters. And I could not have finished it in a better way because that's my favorite type of basketball is when you're playing with your best friends and your sisters because I also think that's when you play the best basketball. I was so grateful for that.

Q. What does it mean that Katelyn has finished her

Iowa 92, Murray State 57

RECHELLE TURNER: Wants to congratulate coach general son and Iowa. Their defense is underrated for sure. They took us out of everything that we tried to do. Made everything hard. Her and her staff just do a great job. We just want to wish them luck going forward.

They have got a really good team. They have got inside, outside; Olsen can get to her spots at will, and they have shooters that can knock it down as well. They have an opportunity to make a big run.

Q. You've had a great career and this is your final game. What are your remarks after your career?

KATELYN YOUNG: Yeah, it's pretty sad coming to an end but I'm glad I came here. It was the best decision ever.

Coach Turner and the rest of the staff do a great job putting the players in a great position to succeed and just know what the team can do good and just continue to push that.

I've had great years here. All of my teammates are amazing. I love them, and I'm glad I went out on this year. This team has been awesome this year. There's just really no regrets.

Q. Ten rebounds in the first half, and you had to step up when Katelyn got hurt. How do you feel with your career coming to an end?

AVA LEARN: Obviously I wish the turnout of the game



career? What are your initial thoughts?

RECHELLE TURNER: Exactly what I told her when I finally got to her and bent down, I said, "You don't me another minute. You don't owe me anything. You've given this program everything." That's truly how I feel about it. I mean, she really changed the projection of this program, and she stuck with us when it was hard. We did a system change, and she agreed to that, and she fought through that.

And then the ability to go make money. She had ability this year, but she never wavered. She said, "I want to come back. I want to win a championship."

The special young lady that she is, is what I'll always remember, but she played her best basketball this season and got her jersey retired. Just an exceptional career for an exceptional young woman.

Q. Katelyn is now done, and Ava is now done and Trinity is now done. I know that's hard for you. We know the end is going to come, but how confident are you that you can keep the great level of play up without this great senior class?

RECHELLE TURNER: Ava and Trinity along will be difficult to replace. I'm be forever grateful those two chose Murray State and came and gave us their best two years of basketball.

I don't think you replace people. I think you have to figure out a way to replace their productivity, to replace their efficiency, and I think those three kids gave us so many things, sometimes not even in the stat sheet; that it's going to be difficult to say, well, we'll replace them with this person or that person or that type of player. They are a special group. Special group of seniors that have led us to this point.

It's exciting that we have our guards back. Obviously it's a guard-dominated game. So to be able to have Halli and Haven back, to kind of start the punch of leading us; to have Briley back, she'll be our only senior next year. But we've got a lot of work to do and the work begins now as far as getting better individually.

Obviously there's a portal. We have freshman that we're really excited about that have already signed with us coming in but we want this to not be just the one highlight. We want this to be the beginning of a highlight reel. So our goal is to put ourselves back in a position to be here again next year.

Q. What was Iowa able to do defensively to eliminate

you? What did they do well on the defensive end?

RECHELLE TURNER: Well, I knew we were in trouble at the end of the first quarter. Just because I know our analytics, and we were not getting out in transition. They did an outstanding job stopping us in transition. They were keeping us from getting into things that we wanted to get into very quickly, and we weren't making shots.

So all the credit goes to them. Like I said, people don't give them enough credit for their defense. But I thought they really got after us. They really game planned well to try to keep Katelyn off balance, and then again when we are not making shots it, makes it difficult for us.

I felt decent at 35-30 and then about 11 seconds later, I think it was a 12-point game. But that's what they can do. I mean, they have the ability to do that. They have so many players that can make plays. They had kids step up and make shots today that they don't even normally make. But that's what makes great teams; when kids can do things and step up and help their team win.

People might want to make the narrative, well, if Katelyn had not gotten hurt. We were beat before Katelyn got hurt. Let's not take anything away from Iowa in any way, shape or form. The game analytically was not going the way we needed it to. The pace wasn't anywhere where we needed it to be, and the three-point shots weren't going in.

So want to make sure everyone understands that they won the game and they did a great job.

Q. Seemed like y'all were playing a slower pace today. Was that the game plan to go a little slower? I know you guys have been fast-paced all season long in the semifinal against Drake in the Missouri Valley Conference tournament, and you slowed it down and said it might be too soon. Did you want to play up-tempo or slow it down?

RECHELLE TURNER: No, the game plan was not to slow it down in any way, shape or form. Iowa slowed us down. We couldn't get out in transition or our early post touches like we normally do. They just took us out of what we were trying to do. And then when the game slows down, then you have to be very efficient and that means make shots and get stops, and we weren't able to do that, no.

We knew the game, we knew we would have to score 80 to 85 points to even have a chance. All the credit goes to them. We were not able to get the game at the pace that we needed to.

Q. Can you just give a message to Racer Nation? You



guys turned a lot of heads and made it like, women's basketball is fantastic. What are your thoughts on how this season has gone from the fan perspective going forward?

RECHELLE TURNER: Just really, really proud of our community and Racer Nation for the love that they showed our team all year long. They just kept showing up. And that ten-game winning streak, they were our sixth man.

It just seemed like every night, there were more and more people there. And to be able to win the Championship in Evansville with half of Murray there made it extra special. We went out today, we're in Oklahoma and we had a great number of fans.

As a coach you want your women to know that they are loved and appreciated and Racer Nation did an outstanding job of showing our young women just that this year.

Q. You had a year that you can celebrate. Is it a celebration going home for the team and the season?

RECHELLE TURNER: Absolutely. Our team and program is not defined by this 40 minutes. There were lot of big moments and a lot of big minutes throughout the year. That's the first thing I told these kids: This game does not define you.

It just wasn't meant to be today. Iowa is a better basketball team today. That's basketball and that's sports. So we will definitely celebrate this. We will celebrate them individually and collectively, and we will make sure that they all know how much we appreciate what they have done for Racer Women's Basketball.

And we hope to use this platform in recruiting. We hope to use this platform to shine a light on Murray State University as a whole. We have great ambassadors in that locker room, and I'm extremely proud of them.

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