

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - Florida State vs Alabama

Friday, March 22, 2024

Austin, Texas, USA

Moody Center

Florida State Seminoles

Coach Brooke Wyckoff

Makayla Timpson

Ta'Niya Latson

Media Conference

Alabama 82, Florida State 74

BROOKE WYCKOFF: Just first of all, as always, I want to just say how proud I am of our team and our players and these two sitting next to me just gave every last ounce that they had today to battle and make this a really great basketball game.

I also want to just congratulate Alabama who has a very good team and was able to pull this win off without their best player.

We struggled in the third quarter. I think that was the difference in the game. But we battled -- again, these players never said quit. They never do. We made it a great game. Really, really proud today.

Q. What was kind of the mindset of the team as y'all were trying to come back in the fourth quarter and rally?

MAKAYLA TIMPSON: I would say just knowing what we do best, which was attacking them and going and getting buckets at the rim. That's what made us get back into the game, but we fell a little short with not being able to defend them as well as we needed to.

Q. Makayla, obviously I know you would have preferred to have a win but you did set a record tonight. You are now the Florida State leading scorer in blocks, rebounds and double-doubles. I know you would have rather had the win, I think, but just to be able to do that and have the season you had, how good does that feel to know that you made some



history here?

MAKAYLA TIMPSON: It feels amazing knowing my teammates and my coaches trust me. I've got to get the ball somehow to get the double-doubles, and the rebounds, they come from missed shots, or missing my own shots. Just being able to be consistent throughout the year and having the year that I had has been amazing. Just keep going next year.

Q. I know you guys have some time here still, but there's people like Sara or Alexis whose time finished out there on the court. Can you both talk about what they mean and what they bring to this program because they both really left it out there on the court tonight.

TA'NIYA LATSON: Yeah, Sara and Tuck, they're amazing teammates. I feel like even though it's sad we couldn't pull it off for them, I feel like they're going to have a great future. Sara brings the energy and she's such a kind soul. I'm just happy to see where they end up.

MAKAYLA TIMPSON: I'd say the same for me. We're going to miss Sara so much, the dancing in the middle of our huddles. But that leadership that they brought, as well, being the older kids on our team and just being there for us anytime we needed anything, and I hope their future is bright, as well.

Q. For either player, you're a confident team; when you made that run and you got close, did you think you had them, like you were right there?

TA'NIYA LATSON: Yeah, we were so close. We've had plenty of games like that where we were just right there and we couldn't get it done.

That's where our growth comes in. I feel like that's going to help us into next season and just knowing how to close out games start to finish. Yeah, that's going to be our focus next year.

Q. How will you use this loss to propel you and motivate you going forward in your basketball



journey?

MAKAYLA TIMPSON: I would say just we had a lot of close games throughout the season, and with this one being close, as well, we know what we have to improve on and we know what we've got to do better at offensively and defensively. We're going to be able to head into our next season ready and prepared to close these games and be able to win instead of lose this one.

Q. You guys talk about that wanting to be your focus, but if you could take a second to reflect on the season that you did have, to be able to make it here and to look at the teams that you have upset and you have taken down. When you walk away from this season, what is it that you're going to remember or what is it that stood out to you guys from the season because although this wasn't the place you wanted to be, I still think there was a lot of highs to take away?

TA'NIYA LATSON: I feel like the takeaway from this season is that we're capable. We're definitely capable of beating bigger teams or higher ranked teams. I feel like, like I said, just our focus on start to finish, playing through a whole 40 minutes, that's going to be our focus, but I'm very proud of my girls. We play hard, and I feel like going into next season that's going to give us motivation.

MAKAYLA TIMPSON: Yeah, I would say the same thing, as well. We had a lot of ups and downs in our season and knowing that we could have been in a better position instead of the No. 9 seed, just cleaning up some things early in the season where we could have won the games that we lost and being able to be higher in the seeding would give us a way better advantage.

But just playing through what we had in front of us, we did a good job, and I'm proud of my team and all the growth that we came over this season.

Q. Coach Brooke, obviously I know you guys would have liked a better result. We talked about that in the press conference before this. But to stand here and to have been in this position and to battle back, how proud were you of your team's fight until literally the very last minutes of this game?

BROOKE WYCKOFF: Yeah, we talked about it all week in preparing for this tournament was that we don't ever stop believing, trying, fighting until the buzzer sounds. As Ta'Niya said earlier, we've been in that position before where we're down going into the fourth quarter, and we've found ways to come back and win, or we've found ways to get it close.

I never had a doubt that they were going to give in. You could just see it in their eyes. You can see it in a team's eyes when they're gone, they're done, and these girls weren't. So I am, I'm so proud of the fourth quarter that they put together and just all the things they just said right now. It's exactly how you want your players to respond.

I just feel so fortunate to be their coach.

Q. Specifically to hear Ta'Niya say we're capable and we want to be back in this spot, what kind of fuel does that give you as you start to put the season away and look forward?

BROOKE WYCKOFF: Yeah, it's huge, again, to hear your players speak with such confidence but at the same time the self-awareness that they show out of your two leaders. It's an amazing feeling knowing that -- it just makes you want to fight for them, makes you want to just get back after it tomorrow and start getting better for them for next season.

We learned a lot this season and just we'll be ready next season just to put them in a better position. That's the job of us as coaches is to put them in the best position to be successful, so we'll definitely get better at that. But just to hear these two, knowing that they have another year together coming back, it's exactly what you want to hear as a coach, and it gets me fired up.

Q. Coach Brooke, obviously not the result that you wanted going into today's game. Describe what is Florida State basketball, and for those who are thinking about coming to Florida State, what do they need to have for the future?

BROOKE WYCKOFF: Well, I think the answer is that these two players that Makayla and Ta'Niya just gave is what Florida State basketball is. It's just being humble. Those two are the most humble people you'll ever meet. Very self-aware but just good people that you want to fight for every day, that they want to fight together. That is Florida State basketball. It's just great people that are willing to come together for a common goal.

As long as we have that as our foundation, all the rest will fall into place. No matter the highs and lows of a season, when you have great people and you're surrounded like that, you can get through anything.

Q. Coach, adversity, just talk about that for this year.

BROOKE WYCKOFF: I mean, every team battles it. We had our fair share, and I'm just so thankful to be able to battle with these people. I had my own personal adversity



that I battled through, but I never once felt anything less than 100 percent encouraged. I had the energy to go through everything because of the people that I was surrounded by, encouraged by and able to battle with.

I'm so thankful for all of that and just really proud of this team for just pushing through no matter what.

Q. I wanted to take a second to ask you about Sara and Alexis. I know they both shared wonderful things about them, but I know Sara gave you a pretty emotional hug at the end as you guys were walking off the court, and Alexis, although the stat sheet might not reflect it, it seemed like she poured her all out on the court. When you look at the run that they've had here at Florida State, what is it about them that made them so special, and what are you going to remember the most about the two of them?

BROOKE WYCKOFF: Yeah, it just went back to, again, two people that were in their final year with our team, but they were about the team. It wasn't about them. It was about what they could do to help us win.

That's not an easy thing to do, especially when you know the clock is ticking and this is it, and they both -- as every player on the team, they had to make sacrifices. So that's what I'm most proud of is the way that they continued to push through anytime just to be able to do what they need to do for the team.

So I loved the games that both of them had today. I'm so proud of them for going out with those types of performances and just really, really thankful for the time we had with both Sara and Tuck, as we call her.

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