

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: Regional Semifinal - Ohio State vs Texas

Friday, March 25, 2022

Spokane, Washington, USA

Veterans Memorial Arena

Ohio State Buckeyes

Kevin McGuff

Jacy Sheldon

Taylor Mikesell

Sweet 16 Postgame Media Conference

Texas 66, Ohio State 63

THE MODERATOR: Welcome to Ohio State. Questions for our student-athletes.

Q. Jacy, they got it to 10 in the fourth quarter, you hit two big buckets, what were you telling your teammates in the huddle?

JACY SHELDON: That was a big momentum shift for us, I think. We were playing as hard as we could that whole game. We got a few plays that went our way. At that point we were just telling each other, we've still got a chance to win it, and we fought it to the end.

Q. Jacy, congrats on a great season. Rori, what makes her so effective as a defender?

JACY SHELDON: She is a really good player, offensively and defensively. Their whole team is a great defensive team. They played a great game. They disrupted us at times and at times we handled the pressure, but she is a great player.

Q. Kevin, the last play quite a bit of happened as time ran out. What was the play call? What were you trying to get there?

COACH MCGUFF: Obviously we needed a three, being down three. So we had an action on the backside, but they did a great job of defending it. We weren't able to turn the corner to try to skip it across the baseline.



Q. Jacy, when you look back at just this season as a whole kinda what are your emotions and kinda how do you feel like this season was in terms of success or failure for the Buckeyes?

JACY SHELDON: It was a really fun season, every single person on this team contributed to what we were able to do. Despite everything we've been through, we've proved we're one of the best teams in the country and we will be back here is and we're excited. Gotta be excited for the offseason now, but it was a great season for us.

Q. Jacy, with Texas defensive press what challenges did that present to you guys and how do you feel that you were able to handle that throughout the game?

JACY SHELDON: Yeah, they pick us up quick off the made basket. That was difficult but I think just kind of communicating with each other throughout the game and kind of being able to, like you said, handle that and be composed was the main focus there.

Q. Coach, you played two big teams in the nation. You know, it was a close, close loss. What does this say about your program, where you're going for next year?

COACH MCGUFF: Yeah, tonight was a great game. Texas I thought did a great job. They play really hard. They're very well coached and one of the best defensive teams in the country.

So give them credit. I really am incredibly proud of our kids and our fight and really probably the biggest thing, where we were in November to where we ended now, we were a significantly different team and that's a credit to their competitive character, their commitment to getting better and the leader championship we have with our upperclassmen

I hope that given the fact that we didn't go to Tournament because of COVID, we had a postseason ban next year, disappointed that we didn't take this next step now, but I'm hoping that this experience at this level at the second

weekend in the tournament will give us a chance to learn and grow and put us in a position to do something like that in the coming years.

Q. Taylor, does it make it difficult in the second half to have to shoot from distance when there aren't a lot of shots being taken in the first half, let alone made?

TAYLOR MIKESELL: No. Honestly. I think it's just the way the game was going in the first half. It wasn't really a three-point game at the beginning of the game. But I think things opened up just with how we crashed the boards, and I got a couple of tip-outs and then Rikki got a couple tip-outs so just how the game shifted in the second half.

Q. Taylor, I'm sure this loss is still fresh, but looking back on your first season coming to Ohio State, did it meet your expectations, and have you made a decision about coming back next year at all?

TAYLOR MIKESELL: I would say this is the best decision that I made, coming here. Kind of like what Coach said, just how I guess grew since November. If we would have played them in November we might have lost by 20. That's just the honest truth of it.

I think how we grew, and how close I grew with my teammates. Honestly, going to take the next couple of weeks to decide, but this is the best decision I made to come here.

THE MODERATOR: The student athletes are excused. Questions for Coach?

Q. Coach, they get to 10. Jacy hits a couple big shots. What were you telling them in the huddle?

COACH MCGUFF: We've played in enough games this year where we have had to stay together and make a comeback. So we were kind of -- I was just drawing on that experience. Hey, we've been here before. We know what it takes to get back in the game. Stay together, stay within the offense, stops, fight like hell to get the ball back and come the other way, and we did that.

I'm proud of our fight, proud of the toughness we showed down the stretch, and we came up short against a great, great Texas team.

Q. Kevin, you were talking a little bit ago about getting the experience of playing in the second weekend will help for next year. Seems like a lot of your roster is set to come back. How do you feel about next year and where you can be moving forward?

COACH MCGUFF: Yeah. We're going to graduate Braxtin and Tanaya, two kids who committed a lot to the program. They were great leaders who set a great example of how to play the game the right way, and we will miss them, but I am excited about the kids that we have in the program and the ones that we are bringing in.

In 2022 I'm sure there will be some turnover on the roster; that usually comes with every spring nowadays, which is fine. I'm happy and confident that we've got a really strong culture in place, and we've got the right kids in the program and more of them coming, so I think the future is very bright for us.

Q. Kevin, when Rori goes out with two fouls in that first half, how does that change the calculus for you guys when you are expecting her to be a big part of the game plan and she is off the court for most of the first half?

COACH MCGUFF: Yeah, she is a fantastic player and has such an incredible future at Texas, but when she went out I thought that hurt them a little bit, quite frankly. She sets the tone for them defensively, playing 94 feet, and certainly bothered us with that. And I thought we handled it well early but then we got worn down and sloppy and had some turnovers that really hurt, but her going out of the game was certainly a significant part of us being able to make a run on them at that point.

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