

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: Second Round - Tennessee vs Ohio State

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Columbus, Ohio, USA

Value City Arena

Ohio State Buckeyes

Kevin McGuff

Media Conference



We would drive it in and try to score around the rim over two and three people, instead of making the next pass to an open person. The way we started the second half, we did that.

So long story short, we shared the ball in the second half yesterday, and I think that's when we are at our best.

Q. Cotie and some of the players were talking about a text that Cotie sent to the team motivating them. Can you talk about how she's played the leadership role, especially with the new players on the team?

KEVIN MCGUFF: Yeah, I think coming into the year, I knew that was going to be one of our biggest challenges. We graduated one of the best leaders we've ever had in this program in Sheldon last year, and Cotie plays with such emotion and energy that people are going to naturally kind of gravitate towards her and kind of go with that flow.

So just working on her to really create positive energy out there, and I think everybody really feeds off that really well.

Q. Cotie said that was as close as you guys have been to playing a full 40 minutes maybe all year. How satisfied were you with the performance yesterday, and what do you specifically need to improve upon against Tennessee?

KEVIN MCGUFF: I thought we played a good 25 minutes. I think the first 15 minutes were very good.

I think 25 minutes won't win tomorrow. So we'll have to play even closer to 40 tomorrow than we did yesterday.

Q. With Watson, how difficult of a situation to be thrust back in right in the thick of the NCAA Tournament, and what were your takeaways of how she sort of got into the flow yesterday?

KEVIN MCGUFF: Yeah, it's hard. She's been out for a while, and to come in in an NCAA Tournament game as a freshman, especially when you have not played in a few weeks, is difficult.

Q. You are both teams that play quickly and Tennessee tries to push the tempo, shooting quick within the shot clock. How do you make the Volunteers adjust to your plan?

KEVIN MCGUFF: They played great yesterday. I was really impressed watching them live. We knew we have our hands full. Obviously we have to get back in transition and guard them and try to challenge them at the three-point line. They made, what was it, 16 yesterday? That will be a huge part of the game. They are also really efficient on the offensive boards, and lastly we are going to need to take care of the ball and make good decisions at the end of the press offense.

Q. With how closely the game was called yesterday for Ohio State, how do you balance expecting that again with also trying to press on defense and trying to slow them down on defense? What do you tell the team?

KEVIN MCGUFF: We've got to play our game. The games, sometimes, game-to-game are called much differently. It may not be an indication of what it is going to be like tomorrow.

Q. During the 24-0 run all your starters were hitting offensively and throughout the game, they all finished in double digits. How much of a better team is this when all the starters are --

KEVIN MCGUFF: Yeah, we are at our best when we have balance in our scoring amongst our top players. I think yesterday in the second half we got to a point where we were making the extra pass, which was leading to better shots, and that will be critical tomorrow because you know, if we don't turn it over against their press, we will be playing in advantage situations like we were yesterday in the first half.



Hopefully just being able to play yesterday and be on the court will help her get her rhythm back. I think she could be really instrumental tomorrow and with their style of play, we are going to interest to play a lot of people to try to stay fresh. Everybody is kind of all hands on deck. We need everybody should show up and be ready.

Q. Is there an update on Elsa's status, or are you hopeful?

KEVIN MCGUFF: She's day-to-day. But she looked good today so we are cautiously optimistic we'll have her for tomorrow.

Q. What they were able to do moving the ball and getting the ball to open shooters in that second quarter was kind of uncanny. You saw 29-9 they outscored South Florida. What do you do when they hit a couple to get that rhythm?

KEVIN MCGUFF: They played great in general yesterday. The second quarter, especially, was really impressive.

So we know that we have our hands full and we have got to challenge them at the three-point line. They got a lot of open ones yesterday, and if you give them too many open threes, they are going to make a high percentage of them. So it will be a challenge for us defensively to make sure we can get there and contest them at the three-point line.

Q. Obviously there's some differences in the way both teams press but just going up against a team that kind of is similar, do you like having a matchup like that where it's kind of similar?

KEVIN MCGUFF: Yeah, it's going to probably be somewhat entertaining. Their team is built for it. They have got a lot of depth and they have a lot of athleticism and they have got a lot of length, and so they are difficult from that standpoint to play against. And so we know, one, we are going to have to stay extremely organized against the press; when we do break it, make really good decisions at the back end of it.

And at the same time, we have to put some pressure on them; that they just can't -- part of the thing yesterday is they got the ball up the floor and kind of did whatever they want. Hopefully our press can have some effectiveness of not just letting them walk it up and do whatever they want.

Q. Cooper, what stands about her and game planning for a player like her?

KEVIN MCGUFF: She was trick yesterday. She played

really, really well. I was impressed with her. I've seen her on TV but to see her live and in person she's very impressive. She's got long arms and she has kind of a knack for tipping balls or getting her hands on the basketball as you are trying to go by her.

So we have to be real careful with the ball around her, and also somehow, some way to have to take her out of her rhythm because she looked really comfortable shooting the three yesterday.

Q. What do you expect from the battle on the boards?

KEVIN MCGUFF: They didn't have to be too many because she made so many shots. So hopefully we make them offensive rebound because we have to get them to miss first. That will be a big part of it, though, because they are a very efficient rebounding team when they do miss.

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