

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: Second Round - Oklahoma vs Indiana

Monday, March 25, 2024

Bloomington, Indiana, USA

Simon Skjodt Assembly Hall

Oklahoma Sooners Jennie Baranczyk Skylar Vann

Aubrey Joens

Media Conference

Indiana - 75, Oklahoma - 68

THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and get started with an opening statement from Coach and then take questions for the student-athletes.

JENNIE BARANCZYK: Obviously this is a really tough one, and I understand Indiana's a great basketball team, this is a great environment for the NCAA tournament. This is just a little tough for us to swallow at this time.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions for the student-athletes.

Q. This environment was ruckus and especially in that fourth quarter as Indiana began to come back there. Just what made it so tough to play in a place like this?

SKYLAR VANN: Yeah, the crowd was crazy, going into this we knew that the crowd was going to be really intense. I feel like me and my team I think we did a really good job just playing through it and I think we just had some shortcomings, but I mean we gutted it out. I don't think anybody can disagree with that. I'm proud of this group, so....

Q. It was a one point lead either way for a lot that have fourth quarter, and I guess just in the final minutes what do you feel like kind of decided the game?

AUBREY JOENS: I think that they were able to hit shots down the stretch and we weren't able to get stops, but I think that we worked really hard and did our best.



SKYLAR VANN: I agree with Aubrey, I think, yeah, they just hit big shots. I think we had great shot opportunities, they just didn't go in at the end of the game, so you can't be mad about that, nothing you can do about it.

Q. Aubrey, you had 16 points, you had three threes tonight, you brought the energy off the bench, just talk about what you were able to contribute in this game.

AUBREY JOENS: I think we prepared really well for this game. I know that my teammates and my coaches have given me a lot of confidence, so just knowing that I'm capable of that stuff and I was able to do it tonight.

Q. What can you take away from this experience of this weekend and especially tonight's game as you move into the off-season, for you, Aubrey, obviously the sort of confidence building performance for you, but just given everything that this team has gone through and everything that will come back, what do you take away from this moving forward?

AUBREY JOENS: Yeah, we're going to let it hurt first, because it does. Then we're going to get back in the gym and stay connected and keep working for next season.

THE MODERATOR: All right, we'll excuse the student-athletes and take questions for Coach.

Q. You talked about having to play against the crowd, I've asked this every year when a team's come here to play, do you prefer having the neutral, it be a neutral site for the men or do you like having the ability for the top four seeds to host as something you can strive for in the future?

JENNIE BARANCZYK: I would love to have hosted, to be honest. And we had some circumstances, too, in that. No, I think you want to play in front of people. I think we need to continue to grow our game. It is hard because there is such a home court advantage, especially here, but I think it's important that we continue to grow our game. Now I do think that more people are showing up to games, so those neutral sites it will be interesting to continue to see what Albany does, what Portland does, so really supportive of



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the way that the tournament's heading.

Q. You just mentioned it, especially here as far as the environment and the atmosphere, what makes Assembly Hall different?

JENNIE BARANCZYK: Well, there's people in it, so there's a lot of people. I think that. I think obviously they have a very good team. Yeah, I mean obviously we didn't shoot well, so that could be a part of it. I think you credit a team for that, you also sometimes credit the road for that. So that's something that -- no, I think people were engaged, and I think it was a crowd that -- the band's engaged, I think people -- I think the doors opened an hour and a half before, that's something that's unique to places. I think it's loud. I never felt like it was something -- I think Indiana beat us, it wasn't necessarily just the crowd that beat us, but I do think that the crowd -- you want to play in front of people, and I think Indiana's also a state that's obviously educated in basketball, so they see good basketball, so it's important for them to show up and to be able to see their great team that's here. And I think that makes it different. So I'm really impressed with the crowd.

Q. Your team did so many things to take Indiana out of their game. They weren't able to run --

JENNIE BARANCZYK: Yeah, we just fouled a lot.

Q. Yeah, the three-point game was not what it typically is. When you do things right and you still don't come up with the outcome that you want, how much does that hurt a little bit more?

JENNIE BARANCZYK: Well, it hurts because it's March, right, at this point, that's because it hurts. And it hurts because obviously you want to go, and there's a lot on the line in terms of getting to a Sweet 16, but it also hurts worse when you sit in the locker room with your team after and you realize that's it. I mean, this is a team that, we've gone through a lot. We've had a lot of, it's been a little bit of a roller coaster. But I'm proud of a lot of the things that we've done. We play really hard. It's hard when we don't put the ball in the hole or we put 'em on the free-throw line or we get down to two seconds and then we're fouling. I mean, there were a lot of those instances as well. So we just needed to do a better job, especially in that fourth quarter, of really just holding our ground. You can credit Indiana for that and also we got to get better. So, that's I think the hardest part is as a coach you just want to dive in and get better and you have a long time to wait before you get to really dive back into another game.

Q. There was a stretch in the season where your team lost 5-6 games early on. What is it about this team to

battle back, win the Big-12 championship, and advance to the second round?

JENNIE BARANCZYK: Yeah, I've been asked this question, usually I get a number of how many days it's been since we had a specific loss. Yeah, I think part of it is that we don't celebrate, we want our players to understand there's a process to things, right, and to stay in the process. But yet we only talk about wins and losses. And that's all that's ever thrown at them. So I feel like this team did a really good job of being able to separate and just say, okay, let's just keep focusing on getting better.

Q. You talked about it, Aubrey talked about it, just the hurt that y'all feel right now, but if you take yourself back for a minute, what will you remember most about this team and the way that they were able to fight through everything that y'all went through this year?

JENNIE BARANCZYK: I do think that we genuinely and passionately and deeply really care and love for one another. And we're able to fall on our face, we're able to get back up, we're able to crawl forward, we're able to help each other, even in the not so good moments. And it just really hurts and we've had a lot of these moments. But I think it's one of those things that if this team really -- I don't think the story's done, we have a lot of people that are coming back, we graduate Kennedy and obviously Jordan Moser, but if this team, if this can really fuel this team this might be one of those situations where it's, you know, not never, but maybe it's more of a not yet. So I don't know if the story's done. I don't know if you get to have a story like we've had in one season, I think it's going to be more than one season.

Q. In terms of Mackenzie Holmes, defending her, you guys kind of made her inefficient she was shooting the ball --

JENNIE BARANCZYK: Inefficient for you, for you and her standards.

Q. She missed a lot of shots early and then the fourth quarter kind of took over. What was your approach to defending her and what do you think happened in the fourth quarter where she was able to kind of get in a roll there?

JENNIE BARANCZYK: I think in the fourth quarter I think she, I think she got really deep position on us and so it was just a little bit easier. So, that was, I think, what we did a better job of in the first half was try to keep her guessing as much as possible in terms of what we were trying to do. But, you know, she's really good.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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