

2024 NCAA Women's Volleyball Championship

Thursday, December 19, 2024

Louisville, Kentucky, USA

KFC Yum! Center

Pitt Panthers

Coach Dan Fisher

Torrey Stafford

Olivia Babcock

Semifinal Press Conference



Louisville - 3, Pittsburgh - 1

DAN FISHER: Congratulations to Louisville on an incredible season. They're playing their best volleyball at the right time. The city did a nice job hosting and certainly provided great support for them.

On our side we're hurting. It was one of the tougher losses in my career. It was tough because it was the best we've played since we've been in the Final Four. The worst set we had, we had .268, and Torrey and Liv played phenomenal. Emmy had 21 digs and passed lights out.

We beat them in transition by an enormous margin, but they were absolutely unstoppable on first ball, and we couldn't get enough of those. Then you guys all saw that what happened the second and third set. So that was hard for us to swallow.

It certainly feels like a missed opportunity, but the season does and I'm really proud of this group. They laid it all on the line and showed the Warriors that they are.

Q. Olivia and Torrey, what are the emotions in those final moments? Then as you guys head into the locker room, what's going through your head?

TORREY STAFFORD: I think we were just really trying to play for each other in that moment. I feel like we were trying to find solutions. I mean, we were just trying to play till the last point, go all out.

OLIVIA BABCOCK: I agree.

Q. For any of you three, it seems like things were a little bit out of sorts in that fourth set. What were some

of the challenges you guys were facing from Louisville?

DAN FISHER: Well, they hit .516, and we just weren't able enough to stop them on first ball and even on medium passes on first ball. Obviously digging ourselves in a hole didn't help. I think we were down 9-3, and it ended up 25-17. So we just never were able to dig out of that hole.

Q. Your team had big leads early on in the second and third set. What allowed Louisville to come back and make them more competitive than you thought it was going to be initially?

DAN FISHER: We were just one play short in this.

Q. Dan, Anna DeBeer goes down early in the last set, and they bring in a freshman who ends up getting a couple of aces and a couple of kills. What did you know about Payton Petersen, and do you think there was any kind of a letdown on your part when their maybe most acclaimed player goes out?

DAN FISHER: I don't remember what the score was when DeBeer went down, but there was already a letdown to start that set.

We had scouted her. We knew she was a strong passer. I think we showed a lot of fight. It was just we couldn't dig our way out.

Q. To all three of you, there were a handful of uncharacteristic defensive mistakes for you guys. There were multiple times where the ball just fell. I'm curious, what was the miscommunication, what was going on, because that's unlike you guys.

DAN FISHER: That was just in the fourth set. There was a lot of them in the fourth set.

OLIVIA BABCOCK: I think we were just -- in the fourth set we were being a bit passive with those plays. Normally we would have been more aggressive. I feel like their momentum was slowing us down.



I don't think we stopped fighting, but I think those plays, we were trying to rely on other people to do it for us.

Q. How much of an effect did it feel like playing this game in a road environment in the Final Four to you guys?

DAN FISHER: It helped them.

Q. I know they're not here, but can you talk about (indiscernible) and Rachel Fairbanks. It's their last match, and I'm just curious how they're doing and what you guys talked about before getting here.

OLIVIA BABCOCK: I mean, they're struggling right now like the rest of us. Leading up to this match, we really talked about putting it all out there. Just because we didn't get the result we want doesn't mean that we didn't do that. I couldn't have asked them to do any more. They put their entire heart on the court today.

Q. To all three of you, I know it's hurting right now, but what are you going to take away most from the season?

DAN FISHER: Number one, the relationships, the time we spent together. But the volleyball part is we feel that at least we went for it.

OLIVIA BABCOCK: I think Fish said it exactly. Volleyball-wise, we know we have what it takes. So the main thing we're taking away from this is the great relationships and the bond we had with this team.

TORREY STAFFORD: We just went for it. I think that's Pitt volleyball. We're going to go for it.

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