

Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Sunday March 4, 2018



Brenda Frese Kristen Confroy Kaila Charles

Maryland Terrapins

Ohio State - 79, Maryland - 69

BRENDA FRESE: You know, I told them in the locker room, man, I'm just so proud of this team. You know, everything we've been through, you know, you saw the character of this team. Our fight. A lot of teams after that second quarter would have given up, and I think you continued to see just the character, the culture in our locker room that we're never going to quit fighting for each other.

Just obviously Ohio State had more possessions. They were better than us tonight. They're a tremendous team. This conference prepares us for what's out ahead with so many talented seniors, Kelsey Mitchell taking over.

But blow for blow, I thought our second half was very indicative of who we are and how we want to play.

Q. Kristen, how can you take any -- if there are any positives from this tournament from tonight's game that you can take into the tournament once you find out where you're headed?

KRISTEN CONFROY: Just our progression. I think every game we grew up, and that's what it's about this time, it's March, getting better, survive and chance. Now it's just continuing to take the lessons we learned, obviously a four-second quarter came back to bite us, so finding that consistency throughout the game I think will be taken into March.

Q. Kristen, you struggled a little bit in the first two games. What was working differently for you and how did that help propel the team?

KRISTEN CONFROY: You know, I wish I knew the answer to prevent it from happening again. But realistically it was such a great team that I didn't need to score the first two games for us to be successful, and I kept telling them I was saving up for this game, and it worked out, the ball started falling, and they did a

great job of finding me. That's something special about our team is we find the hot hand and we keep it rolling from there.

Q. Kristen, you mentioned the growth you guys went through during this tournament. Obviously you, Leshia and Kaila who have been here before came up big. How much of a difference does that make when you're going against a really veteran team like Ohio State and you guys have two starters who have never been in this position yet?

KRISTEN CONFROY: Yeah, I think it's just continuing to know what you've been through and what it takes. I had the pleasure of learning from Shatori and Bri, and now it's my pleasure to pass it along to them, and I think team has something to prove what it tournament is younger players grow up this tournament March is about, so we're hoping to take that into the NCAA Tournament, where it really counts.

Q. Coming into this tournament, how much focus was put on getting four titles in a row?

KRISTEN CONFROY: I think we took it one time at a time, truly. I know that's kind of a buzz word, but like I said, we have a young team, so we're really trying to get better every game and play our standard, and for three quarters we did that tonight, and for one quarter we fell short, and it came back to bite us.

Q. Kaila, on defense when they did go on that run in the second quarter, was it something you guys were doing on defense or was it that they got really hot?

KAILA CHARLES: I think it was a mix of both. They're a great team, but we knew we had to play together team defense and have each other's back. Once we figured that out, that's when we were able to come back in the third quarter and the fourth and make a good run.

Q. In the second quarter when Ohio State went on that run, it started pretty much right exactly when Brianna went out with her second foul; how significant was that?

BRENDA FRESE: Yeah, very significant. I mean, those first two games, I thought Bri had really grown up and done so many positive things for us. I thought Ohio State did a phenomenal job at understanding she was an X factor for us and went at her aggressively

even to go get that third -- obviously we were trying to stop the bleeding, we put her back in and then they isolated her to go get her third foul. Tremendous play call on the other end, but tough night for her, which impacted us, I thought, significantly in that third quarter.

Q. Ohio State didn't even attempt a field goal until the 6:49 mark in the second quarter. What was the defensive switch-up that you guys did to prevent them from getting the ball up?

BRENDA FRESE: Well, I mean, you just saw our energy really pick up, and we were just so much more aggressive and just the toughness factor, we changed up some of our defenses full court, but I just thought our mindset defensively and on the glass were a big difference.

Q. Similar to what I asked Kristen, you guys don't have a player who's lost a conference tournament game until tonight. How can you, I guess, spin it and keep the mentality positive moving forward now?

BRENDA FRESE: I told Kristen she's greedy. Hey, we've had a lot of success. You know, sometimes it's just not your night, and credit goes to Ohio State. I mean, they had hungry seniors -- what did they have, five or six, that have been waiting for their turn.

You know, we've had a lot of success with Kristen and everything she's brought to the table, and for this team -- nobody expected this team to be in this position this year, and with everything we lost, and then you talk about going down, losing Blair -- you know, this has been a rewarding year, when you talk about how this team has bought in, the inexperience we have right now and how they played tonight and through this tournament is extremely rewarding.

Q. Kind of picking up off of that, just with the injury that you guys had with Blair and losing the two players at the beginning of the year, do you kind of remind your players of that after games like these, after the three losses at the end of the season to put it in perspective?

BRENDA FRESE: You know, no. I think they would use that as a crutch, but I think it's a healthy perspective to have as a coach. But we're going to continue to push them to standards that we know, that we want to push them to, that they're going to be -- but no, I think that perspective for them is after the season and everything that they accomplished.

If you would have told me at this point we would be 25 and 7 competing for a title in the Big Ten Tournament after what we lost last season and with Blair, you know, really just really proud of them.