

Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 7, 2024
Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA
Target Center

Maryland Terrapins

Brenda Frese

Allie Kubek

Brinae Alexander

Bri McDaniel

Postgame Press Conference

Maryland - 75, Illinois - 65

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everyone. We'll start with the Maryland press conference. Opening statement from Coach Frese.

BRENDA FRESE: We're thrilled to be playing another day. Just really proud of this group for finding a way. I thought Illinois came in red hot, 8-for-9 from the field. We couldn't have had a colder start.

Credit Illinois and their veterans with their will to win.

Love that we flipped the script in the second, third, and fourth quarters. Nae, Bri, Allie leading the way for us says a lot about how this team dug deep and found a way to battle.

So really proud. I think this win shows we're an NCAA Tournament team. We have wins over Syracuse, three wins over Illinois, win over Penn State. Six wins over top-55 teams with a top seven strength of schedule and the toughest schedule in the Big Ten.

It should matter who you are playing night in and night out, and I think that type of schedule prepared us to never flinch, to be down 14 and to be able to come back and play the way we did today.

Q. Bri, let's start with you. What kind of adjustments did you guys make defensively after that first quarter? Because like you said, they started off hot, and it seemed like you guys kind of started closing that space on some of the jumpers they were getting. Then



you scored 24 points off of turnovers.

BRI MCDANIEL: Just playing together. I feel like it was little moments where we weren't sprinting back, and we had to fix that. So we just came together and told each other we've got to pick this up and be better on the defensive end. It starts on the defense.

So we just came together and put together a good game after we were down and just kept -- never looked back, yeah.

Q. Brinae and Allie, you guys had a great game from three obviously. Allie, you made two. It seems like you're uber efficient when you do shoot it from three. I know you passed up one and made the extra pass to her. How big was that turning point? Because you started missing a couple layups, and then to hit the two threes to bring the game close, how important was that?

ALLIE KUBEK: It was definitely important.

For me, I was not making any of my shots in the beginning, but I made two of my threes. It's definitely a confidence booster too, seeing that ball go in, and knowing Brinae is passing the ball because they both collapsed to her.

Credit to her because Brinae could have shot that and it probably would have went in, too.

Q. Question for Allie, third game of the season where you eclipsed 30-plus minutes. What's your mindset behind just always being prepared when your number's called?

ALLIE KUBEK: Yeah, like you said, just always being ready when my number is called. When I'm in there, just doing my best, whether it's scoring, rebounding, or playing defense, whatever my coaches need me to do and whatever my teammates need me to do. And just being there to do what we've got to do to win.

Q. Question for Bri. Today was your first career double double. Was there like something you noticed



when you were grabbing rebounds out there? Was Illinois not paying attention to you? Were you just being extra aggressive today?

BRI MCDANIEL: Just being extra aggressive. Coach B told me -- she pulled up our last stats from the game with rebounding, and she told me I've got to get on the boards more for her.

So just coming in and being the pest I am and going in and getting the rebound. So that's really what it was today.

Q. For any of you guys, Brinae, you haven't gotten to talk, so I guess this is going to be for you. In a tournament setting like this, can you explain to me what the turnaround is now? What are you doing in these next 24 hours to both prepare for Ohio State, get rested. Take me through the Brinae routine, I guess.

BRINAE ALEXANDER: I think the most important thing is fueling our bodies and also recovering well because this will be a game every day. So we'll have to play back to back. Like you said, it is a quick turnaround.

I think it's just really important that we lock in on that, because if we don't feel good, we won't play good. I think it's an emphasis on going back now, eating a meal, getting off our feet, doing recovery, watching film. I think the rest of the day is going to be a big mental day for us as far as locking in on the scout for who we have up next and just to lock in on our recovery.

Q. Brinae, this is for you. Can you take us through that 16-2 run in the third quarter. What was the feel out there? What were you guys doing so well during that stretch? And what are you guys talking to each other about it as you guys are starting to put some distance in between you?

BRINAE ALEXANDER: We know that Maryland basketball is getting out, rebounding, and running in transition. Also it starts on the defensive end, so I think we really had to lock in more defensively.

In the first half, we really didn't make them work hard for their shots. They had a lot of open looks. So I think we went in at half and made it a point to make them work for everything that they got.

Also, just be tougher. We talked about having that dog mentality. Also, it's not really how you start, it's about how you finish. I think we finished strong, and I'm proud of my team for that.

Q. Brinae, how much of it, since you can't see Ohio

State live, is like watching you guys' old games versus watching their recent ones. What are you guys doing?

BRINAE ALEXANDER: I think it's pretty much an array of games. It's our last games, which obviously we lock in most importantly. But we do watch other scouts to see player personnel and what their tendencies are. This will be the third time playing them, so it's not like we're not familiar.

But I think it will be very important to know your personnel, and it really comes down to one possession at a time, and those possessions matter.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Bri, Brinae, Allie.

Q. Brenda, from your perspective, what did you guys start doing better defensively after that first quarter?

BRENDA FRESE: When you look at the stats in that first quarter and just us not guarding, I really thought we were going to play more zone in this game because we had the first two games. I thought the switch defensively when we went all predominantly man, we just got a lot more aggressive, dialed up, and made them have to take difficult shots.

So I thought it started with just getting a lot more aggressive on the defensive end.

Q. I want to ask you about the role players, kind of Allie, Brinae, even Faith had that big layup to increase it to 6. Shy fouled out, and Jakia wasn't as efficient as she has been. How important that they showed their scoring punch?

BRENDA FRESE: It's huge. You've got to have that in tournament play. Timely plays. I thought Faith with that O board to put back, she was ready when her number was called, especially when Shy went out, and we had to have the points and the rebounds we were able to get.

I just love the resiliency. I thought Allie started slow, but to come back and kind of hit those threes, I thought was big. That really boosted our team with confidence.

Q. Hey, Coach, it was around this time last year when we really started to see these glimpses of potential from Bri, and now a year later she's getting her first career double double in a tournament game. What can you say about her growth as a player over this season?

BRENDA FRESE: She's put the time in behind the scenes. She put her head down and went to work. I love



being able to see it pay off because she's put that time in and has prepared herself for this moment.

Q. Just a quick one on Ohio State. What do you guys got to do a little bit differently especially now that you've got them on a neutral site at this point?

BRENDA FRESE: Finish it. Both times we've been right there. Got to get a few more stops on the defensive end. They're a great team. They can all score the basketball. So from our end, it's finishing the 40 minutes.

Q. Kind of similar to what Kareem asked and what I asked the players, what does your process look like for now these next 24 hours? How much are you going to scout this game versus go back and watch Ohio State? What are you and your assistants going to do?

BRENDA FRESE: They've been working behind the scenes. They always do a terrific job. For us, it's get the team ready for the scout against Ohio State. From us as coaches, we'll meet and talk about our game plan and then watch film the rest of the night.

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Illinois Fighting Illini

Shauna Green

Kendall Bostic

Genesis Bryant

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Maryland - 75, Illinois - 65

THE MODERATOR: The Illinois press conference will start with an opening statement from Coach Green.

SHAUNA GREEN: Obviously came out a great start. Loved our start, 24-10. Executed on both ends of the floor, did a great job in terms of game plan and execution of that.

Then obviously we knew Maryland's really good, so they're going to make a run. But then I thought the difference maker was obviously they had 24 points off of turnovers and the rebounds. We held them to zero O-boards in the third, and then there was seven in the fourth when it was still a possession or two game.

Give Maryland credit. They executed. They made plays when they had to. We were still right in there. We just didn't make plays when it came down to it and gave up too many offensive rebounds. In order to win big games this time of the year, you can't do that on the boards.

Q. Kendall, this one's for you. It looked like you got hit in the eye late in the game. I just want to know, are you okay?

KENDALL BOSTIC: Yeah, I'm good. I got scratched right across the face. I'm good, though. Thank you.

Q. It seemed like the fans behind the bench were pretty loud, even as the game kind of ebbed and flowed. I know the fan support this year has kind of been a big talking point. How would you assess their support today and just throughout the season as well?

KENDALL BOSTIC: We definitely appreciated it. It's cool



to have a lot of people come up to this game, especially since it's in Minnesota, and just having the band, the cheerleaders, all of them come up. We had a little walk-out this morning, so it was pretty cool.

We appreciate their support through the ups and the downs. It was nice to have a good solid fan base here today.

Q. For both of you, Shay and Gretchen kind of provided big minutes today. How would you assess their growth and evolution as they've kind of adapted to those roles throughout the season?

GENESIS BRYANT: Just a feel for the game. They're both young. Shay is a sophomore. Gretchen, of course, is a freshman. They just learn the game as they go, but the more minutes you get, the more you get comfortable, and I feel like they get really comfortable.

Q. Genesis, it looked like there were a few times where you were really able to get to the basket successfully. What were you seeing from them defensively that made you get more aggressive at points in the game?

GENESIS BRYANT: Just being aggressive. I feel like on screens they were switching aggressive. So really just one-on-one I'm trying to get to the basket, and I feel like I was very successful.

THE MODERATOR: Genesis, Kendall, you can head back to the locker room.

Q. Coach Green, two things. What can you take away from this game that you can build on for next season? And two, we talked earlier before the season about Adalia and her progression. Can you just assess how she did up through this season.

SHAUNA GREEN: We can take a lot away from this. Obviously we've learned a lot this year, and a lot of times we've learned from some adversity. I think just the consistency piece. You know, Maryland, what I've always loved about Brenda's teams are their toughness and their physicality and just that grit they have to them. You've got



to have that. You've got to have that for 40 minutes.

You especially need it in March, and I thought at times we just have to be more consistent with that. There's times they just drove us down, and we've got to have more resistance.

So just the consistency piece is the number one thing that we've got to continue to improve on throughout games and obviously game to game.

Adalia, she's had some really great moments for us this year, and today really wasn't her day, unfortunately for us and for her. But there was a lot of games where she made major impacts. When we started playing better, a big reason was because of her and her energy and the tenacity that she brings on both ends of the floor.

I think it hurt her a little bit. She sat with the foul trouble and couldn't kind of get a feel going in. Had some good looks, just didn't finish them. She's a major key for us, and she's helped us so much in so many different areas. It just wasn't her day today.

But there's no doubt she's a major impact and player on this team, and going forward we're really going to need her.

Q. You set the fifth best single season attendance mark at the State Farm Center. Today just to see the fan support and throughout the season, what has this support meant to you as you continue to try and turn the program around?

SHAUNA GREEN: Obviously I wasn't there before, but I've heard it was really bad, and there wasn't a lot of people at the games. So I think that now we're creating some buzz and some momentum and people enjoy watching this team play.

Obviously last year we had some really good turnouts and then this year. I thought Nebraska was a great turnout and a great sign for that, and hopefully people continue to come, because if we want to continue to try to make -- be in the top half of the Big Ten consistently, you need your fan support. You need a home-court advantage. They were that against Nebraska and really helped us get that win.

So I want to continue to grow it, and hopefully we can continue to have those numbers climb every year.

Q. Just wondering, you guys limited Brown-Turner and Sellers to some of their worst performances of the season, but the margin players, the role players -- Alexander, Kubek stepped up -- how surprised were

you or how much of an impact do you think that had that kind of the secondary and third options were almost the difference, I would say?

SHAUNA GREEN: Yeah, obviously they don't play many players. We don't play many players. So we knew their main guys who you have to take care of. But there's no way we're -- in our scout, in our prep, we're saying do not let Alexander get an open three. I mean, there's no -- that was not in our game plan to give her those open threes.

So those were some mishaps and not executing the game plan. She got a couple open when we were right there and too much space, and she's a really good shooter. Give her credit, she was 3-for-7. In that first half when we were up, if they got those three or four threes, where we could have maybe potentially -- even if they were twos, our lead is more than two points at half.

That stretch there when we started letting them get hot from three, we did a better job in the second half of that, but that was a really key point.

Then same thing, we knew that Allie can come in and hit shots. How we were supposed to guard her was run her off the line and don't let her -- make her put the ball on the floor. Obviously we didn't execute that on a lot of those pick-and-pops, and she got free, and she hit two threes. That changes the game.

I thought we did really, you're right, a pretty good job on Jakia and even Sellers. Faith didn't -- she only had five. McDaniel had a really good game, but some of their guys that don't normally score as much scored.

Q. With there still being the prospect of playing in the postseason, what do you focus on in the next week-plus given the unknown of what there is out there?

SHAUNA GREEN: That's something that I've got to watch and think this through. We've got to really just take a look in the mirror at all of us, and like what do we really want out of this postseason if we have the opportunity to play in it?

Do we want to go and try to, if it's the WBIT or whatever, make a run at that? What's our mindset? So I think right now we need a couple days to just reflect and to watch and to see, and then we'll address that as we move forward.

Q. In the first quarter especially, it looked like Camille was really dominant and you were going to her early in the post and early and often. Obviously Kendall had a double double. What did you see change from them that altered, made you go more perimeter based in the



second half?

SHAUNA GREEN: It was nothing. We were running the same stuff, same thing, running stuff to try to get the ball inside. They do a really good job of trying to front the post and take the post away, and then they bring in with the help side.

So when you're not hitting threes, they're able to collapse in even more. So I thought it was more an adjustment they made of doing a better job defensively because we were trying to run the same stuff and get the ball inside to K.B. and Hobby, and there's a couple times our guards didn't get the ball into them as well, and I told them that.

Really the game plan didn't change in terms of that. I think Maryland made an adjustment in terms of how they were defending us.

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