

Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 5, 2025

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Gainbridge Fieldhouse

Washington Huskies

Tina Langley

Elle Ladine

Hannah Stines

Postgame Press Conference



Washington - 79, Minnesota - 65

THE MODERATOR: We'll start our first press conference of the day with the Washington Huskies with Coach Tina Langley and student-athletes Hannah Stines and Elle Ladine. At this time, we would turn it over to Coach. We would like you to make an opening statement, and then we'll open it up for questions for the student-athletes.

TINA LANGLEY: First of all, I just can't -- I don't even know where to begin to say how much I love this team, how much we believe in each other, we believe in these young women and the character that they show every day. It's a blessing to be their coach, to be a part of their daily lives.

So proud of them. I'm excited for them. They've been working incredibly hard. We're excited for what's ahead.

Q. For either of you, where Minnesota are at in the standings and how many teams are projected to make the NCAA Tournament, this game felt like it had big implications. How much did you feel that, or how much did it motivate you heading into this one?

TINA LANGLEY: I honestly believe this team has become very process driven. We prepared for this game the way we prepared for every other game. It was a quick turnaround, get on a plane, unpack, do a practice, go to a game. We've kind of been in that rhythm for a while.

I thought they were very normal and just prepared that way. That's what we want to be this time of the year.

Q. Elle, last week, exactly one week ago, you played the same team, and you had a big 26-point

performance and great efficiency. What did that game do for your confidence coming into today knowing that you're going to play the same team?

ELLE LADINE: Coach just really hit on it, but I feel like preparing the same way as I prepared last time gave me confidence in this game and doing the same thing like we always do.

Q. Elle, this is a hard place to shoot. Reggie Miller used to even say that in the day when he was back here, no background. You came out and shot the ball really well in the first half of the game.

ELLE LADINE: Thank you.

Q. What did you attribute that to?

ELLE LADINE: Oh, my gosh, just great passes. When you start off just making open shots, you kind of get a little feel for it. My teammates finding me, setting great screens, so I was able to shoot my open pull-up, and that helped me get a really good feel.

TINA LANGLEY: You guys need to give Hannah a hard one.

HANNAH STINES: That's okay.

Q. Tina, your team shot the ball really well all year long. You did it again today. What do you attribute that to? And when you came into here, Washington all year long shot the ball well. What do you think was the main reason for that today? You had some turnover issues, but still you shot the ball well.

TINA LANGLEY: I think it was probably the day after our season finished that our team was back in the gym. I don't know if they took a day off. We asked them to, but they were back in the gym. They love to play the game.

They're excited for what we're building at Washington, and I just think they own that and that responsibility. They're an incredibly talented and connected group of young women and just work. They're excited to work. So I attribute that



to the work they put in.

Q. The Big Ten is obviously really, really deep this year, and one of the toughest leagues in the country. How would you describe Big Ten play this year and just how deep it really is?

TINA LANGLEY: Really hard to describe, to be honest. Every night you're going out and playing like you're in the NCAA Tournament. Every team is going to give you a great game and a great atmosphere with tremendous fan bases and great venues and terrific cities. What a great experience it was for us to come into a new conference and see. It's historic.

There's so many tremendous, just historic teams and places to play. But really excited for the competition level the most.

Q. You went up big early on in the first, and by the second quarter they were able to bring it back and the deficit was only two at the half. What type of thing do you talk about at halftime to kind of squish their momentum and come out strong?

TINA LANGLEY: This is tournament play, and tournament play is going to feel like this when great teams play. Minnesota is a great team, incredibly well coached. They've had a tremendous season, so you know you're going to be in a battle for 40 minutes.

I think that's what we talked about even before the game began is that this won't be over at any point in the game until the buzzer sounds. I thought our young women went into the locker room knowing that, not surprised by it, and just ready to hear what we need to do next.

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Minnesota Gophers

Dawn Plitzuweit

Mallory Heyer

Grace Grocholski

Postgame Press Conference



we're in a good spot to continue to play on, and I think that's exciting for this program.

Q. For either player, when you're playing a team that's so efficient offensively, how much pressure does that put on your offense on the need to score to try to keep up with those guys?

MALLORY HEYER: Washington is a great offensive team, and they're really hot tonight. I think for us on the offensive end we just got a little sped up and we were just trying to kind of match them.

I think we just needed to slow down a bit, and we could have got a little bit better of looks.

Q. Obviously they've been doing this to everybody this year, they're one of the most efficient teams in the country, but is there a particular matchup, do you think, with that team that makes it difficult to defend for you guys?

GRACE GROCHOLSKI: I think the thing about them that makes them tough to guard is that all of their matchups are hard. They swing the ball around, and they -- every single one of them can shoot, and every single one of them can drive.

I think it's hard when every single person on their team is hard to guard, and that makes matchups hard.

Q. You guys were down by two at halftime. What would you say shifted for the team in the second half of the game?

GRACE GROCHOLSKI: I'd say I think right off the bat we weren't executing what we wanted to be executing at the start of the second half. That doesn't give you momentum continuing the game, especially into the third and fourth quarter. I think I'd just say execution.

Q. You guys got to wait now a long time to find out exactly what your next step is going to be. How hard is that going to be for you guys to be patient during that time, and how do you think you'll use that time to

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THE MODERATOR: We are joined here by the Minnesota Gophers, head coach Dawn Plitzuweit and student-athletes Mallory Heyer and Grace Grocholski.

At this time, Coach, if you would make an opening statement, we'll turn it over to the student-athletes.

DAWN PLITZUWEIT: First of all, I'd like to say I'm just really proud of our young ladies for the season we've had thus far and the work that they've done. Certainly being shorthanded has been really challenging, but I think their fortitude and resilience that's been something really special.

They've given themselves a chance to continue playing on after this tournament, which is something really special for our program. That's the first thing.

I think today's game, Washington may be the hottest team in the country at this point in time. I think they're firing on all cylinders, that they played extremely well. We had a hard time disrupting them. With all that kind of being said, I thought we also struggled when we did -- last time we played them, we weren't really able to get the ball around the rim consistently. I thought today we were able to do that.

Unfortunately, we weren't able to capitalize on a lot of those. I think we scored at the rim at about a 50 percent clip, and our goal is to score at about a 75 to 80 percent clip at the rim. Credit to them.

Again, I thought our young ladies competed and tried to put ourselves in a spot to not only compete today, but I think



get better for whatever opportunity you do get?

MALLORY HEYER: We do have a while until the Selection Sunday to see what tournament we're going to make, but I think that's just a great opportunity for us to get back in the gym and work on the little things, work on scoring around the rim, passing.

And just like as a team all together just getting back on the court and just really working on those little things that are going to make us better going into tournament time.

Q. After the way you guys battled back at the end of the first half to get it to be a close game, how crucial in your mind was the first few minutes of that second half?

DAWN PLITZUWEIT: Really important, and we didn't come out with execution that we needed. Again, I would say this, and I've told our players afterwards, it wasn't from a lack of wanting to do the right thing or to get the ball where we want to get it or get stops, but sometimes when you want something so bad, you kind of force things or rush -- maybe rush is a little bit better way of putting it, probably rush things a little bit.

It felt like -- they're not necessarily a team that speeds you up, but we were sped up at the rim. Again, not for any other reason than I think our young ladies are in the spot where we really haven't -- we weren't last year, we haven't been necessarily, and so they want it really, really badly.

Q. Coach, could you go ahead and just address the absolute outstanding depth in this league of quality teams and how you prepare your team night in and night out and what are maybe some of the things that you see to make sure that they're always understanding that every night is going to be a monumental challenge?

DAWN PLITZUWEIT: The scope and the landscape of college athletics is different than it's ever been. They have an 18-team league where there's a chance that whatever it is, 13 teams that hopefully would get into the NCAA Tournament is something that has never ever happened before in the history of Division I women's college basketball.

When you're looking at that, I think the farthest game, there was 13 teams that were in the top 43, 46 of the NET. Didn't look at it today, but it's an incredible, incredible league on the women's side.

There are no -- everyone says you don't have an off-night, but this is at a whole new level. This is something that has

never been seen before. It's really special to be a part of it, and it's going to help us continue to grow and develop because I think we understand things now at a much different level than we did before being in the Big Ten season.

Q. You and your team are kind of in quite a precarious situation. So how do you and your team kind of stay focused not really knowing what necessarily is next? How do you stay locked in for that?

DAWN PLITZUWEIT: The good thing for us is we have young ladies that understand -- they understand what it takes in terms of from an effort standpoint, from a fundamental standpoint, and now we have a chance to grow in some of those fundamental areas while we focus on us for the next whatever the course of time is. I don't know, I haven't looked at it exactly, in terms of the number of days, but it's a good stretch of time.

So we can spend this time really focusing on us and improving us individually.

Q. Real quickly, how would you describe what Washington is able to do to get so many open looks? Is it ball movement? Is it really efficient screening? Is it because you guys go into rotations because so many people can score? What is the biggest challenge with them?

DAWN PLITZUWEIT: I think the biggest challenge is their spacing. They really have the floor spaced incredibly well, and then it's one screen action, but then every kid who catches it has the ability to make really good decisions with it in either a handoff or a ball screen, but it starts from their spacing.

Then every kid has the ability, like Grace said, to hit a shot or put it on the floor. They don't get sped up typically. So your job is to try to speed them up and disrupt them, but that's easier to say than it is to actually do.

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