

Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Saturday March 4, 2017

Brenda Frese
Brionna Jones
Shatori Walker-
Kimbrough
Destiny Slocum
Maryland Terrapins

Maryland - 100, Michigan State - 89

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Maryland head coach Brenda Frese and the student-athletes.

COACH FRESE: I thought both teams fought tremendously hard. And it was definitely a game of runs. I thought that we obviously needed all the 100 points that we got tonight. But I thought we were able to really kind of find in different runs who to be able to get the ball through, whether it was Tori, Bri, Destiny late in the second half.

So we just had a great sense in terms of what we were doing. I thought we got great minutes off the bench, when you talk about bringing Sarah Myers in and Steph Jones. They were tremendous for us. But Michigan State played hard and from our end we're excited about being able to move on to the championship game.

Q. Brionna, can you talk about your performance tonight -- 32 points, nine rebounds and six assists?

BRIONNA JONES: My teammates made it easier for me. Shatori hitting threes outside and Destiny attacking off the bounce, I think that just opened up the paint for me.

Q. The team gets to the line, I think, 16 times in the fourth quarter. What were the factors being able to get to the line so often?

BRIONNA JONES: I think just staying on the attack and just being aggressive and not letting up on our offense.

Q. Bri, you had a similar performance last time against Michigan State. Probably not quite as



good. Is there anything about them that you kind of like playing against or what is that?

BRIONNA JONES: They're a really physical team and I kind of embrace physical play. So I think that just gives me a little extra energy today.

Q. Destiny, how did you guys kind of weather the storm in the second quarter when -- or in the third quarter when Michigan State was kind of raining 3s down on you?

DESTINY SLOCUM: I think just sticking together and just playing together. We know how to come back from tough situations, and I think that's what's good about us is we're going to stay together through it. And I think that gets us really far.

Q. Shatori, when you see two freshmen, Kaila and Destiny, have 18 points and contribute to such a big win, your thought about young players stepping up in a big time situation?

SHATORI WALKER-KIMBROUGH: I forgot they were freshmen until you said that. They do not play like that at all. They give our team -- they're like our engine. They make us go. Kaila, defensively with her energy. Destiny with her tempo. They make us go and I'm blessed to have them as teammates.

Q. Can you talk about your team's ability to get runs at the end of quarters, you did that at the end of the half and then again at the end of the third?

SHATORI WALKER-KIMBROUGH: Yeah, Coach said it was important for us to keep pushing tempo, especially with them coming off I think it was day three or day four for them. Their legs are tired. We were only here -- this is only our second game coming in.

So we had really fresh legs. And continue in the same way. Like Coach said, Sarah Myers came in, gave us great minutes. Ieshia came in and Blair came in to continue to give us ways to put our foot on the pedal.

Q. Destiny, for you I saw at one point you talking to Shatori about a certain play, when you guys were coming down the floor. How important is communication in the game that you're all on the same page and that you're taking in input from your teammates as to what's working, and Coach?

DESTINY SLOCUM: I think between these two and

Coach B, they're so knowledgeable. And to not ask them questions would be me doing something wrong.

So anytime if I can go and ask them a question about anything even if I know the answer, to get them to talk back and just give me communication about anything is super important and is a big reason for our success.

Q. Kaila had her left hand taped up after the first quarter. Do you know what happened there; how she's doing?

COACH FRESE: I thought it was an injury that I missed. But it was a cut. So I guess we don't use Band-Aids anymore. We bandage them. It was a little -- she's fine.

Q. Brenda, did you come in expecting this offensive show, did you think you had to get 100 to win the game?

COACH FRESE: I didn't think against Michigan State, I know we're capable that we can play any style which is a beautiful thing. I did think Michigan State might be a little more tired on day three of legs, but I thought their grit and toughness was tremendous to watch. When they started banking in 3s, I knew it was kind of their night. So we needed every single one of those points.

Q. Destiny, you hit three big 3s late in the game. Could you talk about that? How big was that for your team?

DESTINY SLOCUM: I think it was big for our team. But like I wouldn't be able to get those shots without my teammates, and them giving me confidence to keep taking them even though I had missed three earlier, like, they gave me confidence to keep taking them, and that's why it helps.

Q. Coach, you mentioned in a lot of ways it was Michigan State's night with their 3-pointers. How did you weather -- what does it say about your team that you were able to pull it off?

COACH FRESE: You have to find different ways to be able to win, and obviously they were red hot from the 3-point line. You knew Jankoska wasn't going to go down without a fight. Tremendous player.

I'm proud of the fact -- I thought during the game just different flows and whoever had the hot hand, each player stepped up and played with a lot of confidence.

Q. You have a chance to win a third straight Big Ten Tournament title. Are there nerves at this point (indiscernible) or is it a calm feeling?

BRIONNA JONES: I think it's a calm feeling. I think just knowing we can prepare ourselves the best that we can, and going in there we're going to be the most prepared, I think that's going to give us the confidence

we need to go out there and play.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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Suzy Merchant Brannndais Agee Tori Jankoska Michigan State Spartans

Maryland - 100, Michigan State - 89

THE MODERATOR: The Spartans are here. Coach, an opening statement and then we'll go to the students.

COACH MERCHANT: I guess Michigan State and Maryland were not good games today for either side, mine or Izzo's. But give Maryland a lot of credit. I thought they played with great toughness and energy. Their size and their strength is usually what gets people in the paint.

We tried some different things, and we did the first time we played them. And it did open up some things, but I thought, you know, we kept cutting it. We just couldn't get over the hump. We'd get it to 5, get it to 7 and then they'd make a play or get a rebound putback.

It's difficult, the free throw disparity. Whenever you play them, it makes it difficult sometimes to kind of slow the game down enough to give you some points with the clock not ticking.

But they're a good team, really good team, and led by two very good players in Brionna Jones and Walker-Kimbrough and wish them luck tomorrow and in the NCAA Tournament.

Q. Tori, could you talk about your 3-point shooting there in the third quarter? I think you guys knocked down 7 of ten to get back?

TORI JANKOSKA: We're a good 3-point shooting team, I think, one of the best since I've been here. And when you're scoring 3s and they're scoring 2s it helps you get back in the game.

And we were moving the ball and getting open people and trying to get ourselves back.

Q. Tori, obviously 89 points is usually enough to win a game, you would hope. But they made a lot



of runs -- you would make a run and they countered everything. Was it just hard to guard them?

TORI JANKOSKA: We know they're a great team. They're ranked top 5 in the country. It's for a reason. They have players that can score from all angles. You try and double one person and you leave another McDonald's All-American wide open.

So it's tough. But there's some times where we just didn't get rebounds, defensive rebounds, when we needed them, and those are hard to guard. And they'd go on a run, and that's the sign of a good team.

Q. Tori, in this state there was a legend called Scott Skiles. And I had somebody sitting next to me that said you kind of emulated him a little bit today, your toughness and fierceness. Where was the drive at, your last game in the Big Ten, and comment on that, please?

TORI JANKOSKA: No, I don't think that's where it comes from. I think it comes from every game. I think that's pretty similar to how I play every single game. And when you play a team like Maryland, they're built on toughness and rebounding and packing it in the paint and driving. To be able to beat them you've got to raise your level of toughness, no matter what.

Q. Brannndais, you've been good at this tournament for a long time. You had a really good solid game today. Talk about what it was like facing Jones, Shatori, people like that?

BRANNDIAIS AGEE: It's always great to play a top-ranked team. We fought hard we just didn't come out with the win. It's always good to play a good team.

Q. Suzy, tough in the moment, obviously, but to take away from these three games, even there's a loss, you guys played well against a top 5 team. Is there something you can spin forward to the NCAAs here?

COACH MERCHANT: I think so. I think we've been doing a good job of having multiple people score the ball. There was times earlier in the season where we'd struggle with that. And these two right here have been the most consistent and really come on, and we've got Taya playing really well. I think Jenna's starting to come around a little bit.

We have kids that sprinkle in a little bit. It's nice to see Coco have some confidence and play well yesterday. That really helps. Sometimes it's Taryn and Kennedy helped us win a couple of games when we played Penn State. It's been nice to see us kind of come together.

I like how we share the ball. We had 23 assists on 34 field goals. So I think that part's really good. But there's some areas we need to improve on for sure. But give Maryland a lot of credit. Like B said, they're a very good team. We played them in the championship game last year. And we all kind of had that feeling of wanting a little revenge and get a chance to get back at them. But to their credit -- I think the Slocum kid is the difference. I mean, she had like eight in that fourth quarter, whatever. When we would get to a hump, she'd hit two 3s. And the one at the end the quarter she was at like 28 feet. She's a heck of a player, and I think she gives them a head to a monster that they really haven't had.

Q. (Question off microphone)?

COACH MERCHANT: Yeah, I think so. They deserve it. We've been going pretty hard. And just the way the season is a little bit. So I'll give them a couple of days and we'll regroup and let their bodies heal a little bit, and then we've got to get back at it. The thing is you don't want to get too out of rhythm. We're playing really well.

Coming in here, we won four of our last five and won a couple here. We're playing good basketball. I don't want to lose that either.

But there's some things we can work on, improve on, and keep their legs fresh and stay mentally fresh at the same time. But we'll give them some time, for sure.

Q. Brionna Jones, 32 points, nine rebounds, what was she doing to give you guys fits?

COACH MERCHANT: Can't stop her. We tried to double her. Last time we didn't double her and she didn't score that many points.

I really don't know how to guard the girl. I thought, oh, we're going to double her and she's going to struggle. And she had 32 points. We couldn't keep her off the board.

She had six offensive rebounds. That's the other thing. When you play Maryland, it isn't the play -- Tori, I think you were trying to box her out. And Tori boxes her out and she gets the foul. So, I mean, the kid is just a beast around the bucket. There's not a better post player in the country as a true 5.

Maybe the kid at South Carolina, is a little more mobile,

but in terms of efficiency, kid shoots 70 percent from the floor, makes her free throws. She's just a load to move. And if you double her, she's learned how to pass it out. That's the thing that earlier in her career you could get her on. She was a left-shoulder-only kid as a freshman.

Learned to be able to do a little bit more in her sophomore year. Started handling doubles late sophomore, all of her junior year. Now as a senior, she's a point guard down there. I give her a lot of credit for improving her game. She's lost a lot of weight and committed to her fitness level.

I don't know. I thought we could double her and make a difference. But clearly it didn't matter, it didn't work this game.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.