

Women's Soccer: Penn State vs. Duke
November 23, 2012
Duke Postgame Quotes

Coach Robby Church and Senior Nicole Libb

Opening Statement from Coach:

Congratulations to Penn State. Congratulations to Erica and her staff. They do a fantastic job. They played hard and their opportunity and chance to go with it too. I thought we played well. I don't think we could have executed our game plan any better. We created a number of opportunities, but the name of the game is to be able to finish on your opportunities and we didn't do that. It's a heartbreaking loss for us; we played hard. We competed the whole time and the kids did everything we asked them to which was to come up here in this environment and this field. But we wish Penn State luck as they move forward to the Final Four.

Coach Church

Q: Can you talk about Penn State's defense and how tough it was to get the ball into decent striking position?

A: I think we had some great shots at moments. But they're good in the goal, they're good in the back, they're good through the midfield; they're a great team from the beginning of the year all the way through.

Q: Why did you think it was so hard to get a goal behind Erin McNulty?

A: I don't think we did a good job of finishing. The opportunities we had we played them up high where she could get to them and she was able to knock some balls down. We just didn't finish well. We played some balls low in the corner, but she's a good player, she's an experienced player. She came out and covered angles really well, but we didn't do a great job of finishing. But she caused that too.

Q: There were really difficult conditions weather-wise with the wind and all. Do you think that changed the game at all?

A: No, we created a second half and we still created opportunities in the second half. It was part of having a great season and being able to play at home. You get that advantage with that and they earned the advantage to play at home. They had a great regular season and you have to play in these environments across the country.

Q: How did the crowd affect you guys tonight?

A: We had a great crowd. What a great crowd, they were enthusiastic. They didn't really affect us; I mean we play against great crowds all over the country in the ACC. It's great for the sport to see the crowd and how enthusiastic they were and how supportive they were. I thought it was great and they supported their team well. It didn't affect us, but I'm sure it energized during the courses of the game when we

were really pressing. It helped energize them (Penn State) to get them through. It's great to see that support at women's college soccer game. It's a lovely place; the field is in great shape. It's a great place to play with great enthusiastic fans. So again well done for Penn State and we wish them the best of luck.

Q: Given the two highest scoring teams in the country would nothing surprise you?

A: I actually had a feeling it was going to be a low scoring game. Couple media picked 4-3, but there aren't a lot of goals when you get this late in the tournament. Everyone is tight defensively and I thought both teams defended really well. We didn't get a lot of great looks. It turns out that way sometimes and in that kind of contest. Once they scored, they changed formation and went a little more defensive formation. Got more people behind the ball, but it's more interesting when you do have 1 and 2 because you don't have 1 and 2 placed against each other a lot. When you have 1 and 2 in the country with 1-0 game, but it's a penalty kick.

Nicole Libb

Q: How tough was it out on the field? Trying to place passes and shots?

A: The wind was definitely a factor, but I still felt like we were able to play our game for the most part. It probably affected some of our shots. We weren't able to keep them as low, but it was definitely something to consider. But we played through it.

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Q: What's going through your head right now? How's it feeling?

Korie Chapic: Maddie Evans just said it the best: "It's like a feeling of numbness through our entire body." It's almost unbelievable...But all of that hard work that we've put in since December of last year; everything is just all coming together now. It's just a great feeling.

Q: Christine [Nairn], can you talk about your team coming together at the end defensively and all coming together to hold off one of the best offenses in the country?

Christine Nairn: Duke is a great team. They definitely had a lot of the ball, especially in the first half and parts of the second. But as a defensive unit, we have Korie and [Whitney Church] who were stringing us along and keeping us all together. You kind of have the best of both worlds. You have Whitney Church, who is mentally one of the smartest people on our team. And Korie Chapic, who is the muscle. And then [Corey Persson] is coming in off of the bench if we need her. I think that it's all just coming together at the perfect time. We were a bit lucky at times, but I think that we were pretty organized. And Erin McNulty came up big. So, all around, we stuck together throughout the game.

Q: What kind of adjustments did you guys make at halftime?

Coach Walsh: Not a whole lot. I just have so much respect for that Duke team and what they've done this season. And their offense, I felt like they were all over the field. I felt like there were 15 of them at times. Christine said it well, "We would bend at times, but we never broke." And they put us under a ton of pressure, probably more pressure than we've seen all season long. Perhaps combined. It's just a testament to the courage and the willingness of this team to accept a challenge. I've seen it all season long. They've gotten to the point where it's just another wrinkle; it's another challenge in their day and they face it all of the time.

Q: They brought back 10 or 11 starters from last year. Could you guys sense that this was a team that had played together a lot? How hard was it to defend them?

Nairn: I think that they have their strengths, and they play to them very well. You have Mollie Pathman up top, as well as Kelly Cobb, and those are two National Team players. They were on our scout and I thought that they played very well. Like [Coach Walsh] said, they gave us a wrinkle or two to fix and we were lucky at times, but we've been preparing for them all week. When it's all said and done, it's just who wants it more, and I think that we had the heart and the drive...maybe not the soccer game, but sometimes isn't always pretty and a win is a win.

Q: With your big shots and big penalty kicks, especially today's, how has that helped out?

Nairn: It's not favorite thing; it's a lot of pressure. But if my team needs me in that point, I'm glad to step up and put my team ahead. But like I said, it's not all about me. It's about the team. If Emily Hurd doesn't get that cross in or if Maya Hayes doesn't get that little touch, then we don't get that foul. So, it's a team effort and they're the reason why I've gotten these penalty kicks. I can't thank them enough. It's easy to step up there and pass in the goal. It's just them putting me in that spot to succeed.

Q: Coach, talk about your confidence in Christine.

Coach Walsh: One of the things that I appreciate about both of these two players is that if they're not up to the task, then they're smart enough to pass it on. Depending on how you feel in a match, there are moments you feel it and other times you don't. When she's ready, she steps right up. But she's also smart enough and knows herself well enough to say, "Here you go [Raquel Rodriguez]." Or, "Maybe it's someone else's turn right now." That's when you know that a player has arrived; they're smart enough to know when it's their turn and smart enough to know when to pass the baton to somebody else. And tonight was her night.