

Penn State Women's Basketball
Head Coach Carolyn Kieger Postgame Press Conference
vs. Pittsburgh - December 5, 2019

Opening Statement

Thanks everyone for being here. I thought our team absolutely got better tonight. We obviously have to fix our second half and our third quarter, but overall, I am pleased with our execution tonight and obviously, Kamaria [McDaniel] with the 40-point game. It's unbelievable. Third in program history. I don't think there is a team in the country that can stop her when she plays at that pace with the ball in her hands. It was something special to watch so kudos to her and the team for finding her and sharing the ball in the way that they did. Obviously, we have to fix our rebounding. I thought our turnovers were better tonight. We have to get more assists, but pleased with our team handling that and weathering that storm in the fourth quarter and like I said, can't say enough about Kamaria in the way that she is learning and adjusting and really latching on to teaching and the way that she has been growing. It is very impressive.

Q: I'm just curious, you guys came out and had a great first-half defensive performance, just how do you instill that into your players to come out and maintain energy for full 40 minutes?

A: Well I think we might stop going into the locker room, you might just see us doing shooting drills. No, it's something obviously we need to fix and solve. I don't know if it's an anxious thing or an anxiety thing, but we have to solve it. It's happened to us a lot and we just got to move past it and not make it a thing. We just have to focus on 200 feet, one possession at a time. You know, I thought they weathered that storm tonight and other games you know, we didn't. I'm going to make sure that we focus on that and obviously look at our shot selection and the defensive possessions that we're doing to figure out why that's happening to us.

Q: So, as we stated before, there's been some instances where some teams have crept back in the third quarter and the second half. I was wondering how the team deals with this in a way where it doesn't become a mental block in the later games in season?

A: Well, you guys could stop talking about it. No, just kidding. We all just have to lock in. We call timeouts and we take deep breaths and we try to just focus. Our mentality all year is 200 feet at a time, don't look at the past, don't look at future, just stay locked in. I think we just have to keep doing that with a young team and a team that's trying to play a different style. We're not going to over concern this or over talk about it, we just have to talk about one possession at a time.

Q: Coach, how did that run by Kamaria [McDaniel] at the end of the half change the feeling going into the locker room as to what you told them?

A: I mean, it's funny how I was just talking to Kamaria after her 27-point game that she had last game, I said 'what, why settle for 27, I thought you passed up some shots, go for 40.' Clearly, she's very coachable. She did that exactly. You know she's just so powerful when she's going downhill with the ball in her hands, it's really hard to stop her. I think obviously tonight people were feeding off of that and we have to get the other people to catch up with her and play that same pace. I think the other guards obviously are forcing to get more rim runs and play that style. The more we get used to it I think you'll start to see more people playing with that downhill face.

Q: Coach it's your ninth game here, you know your first season, just kind of a small sample size but how have things shaken out so far for you?

A: I guess right now myself and my staff are really just focused on teaching. This is a group that needs a lot of it. So, we're pouring in our players, right now we're just focused on every single day giving them everything we have. I can't say enough about the community and how people have rallied behind us and been supporting us. Administration, everybody, so far so good. We just have to keep getting better and keep learning every day.

Q: What do you feel like your team did the best of over the last two and a half quarters of the game, just finding their footing on the offensive side of the fork?

A: We're getting good shots even when we're missing a lot of layups, and a lot of bunnies as I call them. We need to go stronger up to the rim, but I thought our shot selection was pretty decent tonight. I think that's something that we've been talking about watching film. I know turnovers have been something that we've been really paying attention to. So, those possessions when we don't have live ball turnovers and we get the shot it's obviously going to help us down the line. So, I think the biggest thing was our shot selection tonight and our spacing, it's been something we've been working on in practice and knowing when to cut to the gaps and flashes. Everybody's going to zone us right now, so, we have to get better on our zone execution.