

March 26, 2013



Final Score:

LSU – 70
Penn State – 66

An Interview With:

PENN STATE LADY LIONS

Q. Mia, where did it get away from you guys the second half?

MIA NICKSON: I'm not sure of the exact time, but I think that they just came out second half with a little bit more firepower, a little bit more determination, getting off of the offensive boards, getting open looks, things like that. You know, around that six-minute mark, I guess, if I had to guess.

Q. How tough is it for the seniors for it to end this way?

MIA NICKSON: I mean, it's really tough. We worked really hard to get here. You know, the last four years have been great starting from where we were until now, where we are right now. Of course we wanted it to end better, but it's a tough one. It's going to be hard to swallow, this being our last game and everything. But we wish the team great success, and we're looking forward to what they're going to do next year.

Q. It seemed to be a game where both teams just went on big momentum swings either way. Did you feel it kind of slipping away towards the end when they started knocking down shots, or did you feel like you had another run in you towards the end of the game to kind of pull one out?

MIA NICKSON: I thought we did have another one. Like you said, it was a game of momentum. We just didn't have enough time. I

think that's what it came down to. They did what they needed to do in the 40 minutes, and we just didn't.

Q. At what point did you become aware that Kenney wasn't going to play for them, and as a coach, do you fear what they did, which looked like they rallied and they played with a lot of emotion, especially on their home floor? You feel you have an advantage but at the same time you think they might have one, as well?

COQUESE WASHINGTON: Regarding Kenney, I didn't pay any attention to whether she was playing or not until we got to the arena, and I just came into the game assuming that she would play, and when she didn't play, I didn't think that that was going to be a negative necessarily for them. I thought it would, like you said, be something that they would rally around. They've been a team all season that played through adversity and seemed to -- any kind of adversity, they kind of used that as fuel, and certainly that happened tonight, that they had some added emotion, and along with the home crowd, and that was fantastic, giving them an added boost of energy and adrenaline.

Q. How important do you think it was that they got off to that 8-0 run to start the second half after it seemed like you guys had taken the momentum into halftime?

COQUESE WASHINGTON: Yeah, that was pretty big. But I knew that we felt like they would have a run in the second half, you know, and we bounced back from that and were able to get a five- or six-point lead after that. It was a game of runs, and I thought if we had gotten off to a little bit better start, I thought we started the game, and we had our chances to go up maybe six, eight, zero, and we didn't knock those shots down, and it seemed to give this crowd life. We missed a couple of open shots that we had early.

Q. Maggie Lucas was obviously your best scorer and she didn't have a really good game today. Tell us what LSU did and how frustrating it was just to try to get her into the offense, especially late in the ballgame?

COQUESE WASHINGTON: Well, it wasn't frustrating at all, because she's had games throughout the season where she hasn't shot the ball well, and I thought she got some pretty good looks, and they just didn't fall down for her.

But some other people got going. I thought Nikki Greene had a very productive offensive night, Ariel Edwards was very productive offensively for us, Alex Bentley was very productive offensively. Certainly we wish Maggie would have made some shots, but I don't think that had anything to do with -- it wasn't frustrating, so to speak. She got good looks, she didn't knock them down, so that's basketball. That's the way it goes some nights.

Q. What did you think of Webb's impact in the game both offensively and defensively?

COQUESE WASHINGTON: Well, I thought her biggest impact was offensively. Yeah, I thought she hit some really tough pull-up shots, and I think a big momentum boost for them was she hit a three towards the latter part of the second half, and I think it even put them up one or cut the game to one. But I thought that was a big play, and it gave them a lot of momentum to close out the game.

Q. I think you had like three buckets over the last seven plus minutes. Offensively what made it tough for you guys to score over that stretch?

COQUESE WASHINGTON: Well, I mean, they did a good job defensively of trying to clog the lane. I thought we got some good looks in the paint that didn't go down, and that pretty much was it. You know, I thought -- I thought we got pretty good shots. We went inside, and stretches of the game it was good for us. Down the stretch we didn't -- we got some good looks for Maggie down the stretch, they just didn't go in.

But of more concern was the fact that we didn't get stops late in the game. You know, if we could get a couple stops, I mean, the last basket that they scored that literally posted Maggie up in the paint, that's a tough play. I felt like they got -- they made a couple -- a few big shots down the stretch, and defensively we've been better than that, and we just needed to be a little bit better

defensively the last three minutes of the ballgame. And we've done that throughout the year. We've had stretches of games or different games where we've held teams scoreless the last five, six, seven, eight minutes of a game, and we didn't do that tonight. Down the stretch they pretty much, when they needed a basket, they got a basket. So defensively I felt we could have been a little bit better.

Q. I guess now all the 3 seeds are out and this is probably an example of how cruel and surprising this game can be. You guys probably have a little bit deeper and more experienced team but not quite going as far. Can you comment on that?

COQUESE WASHINGTON: Comment on what?

Q. Just all four 3 seeds being out.

COQUESE WASHINGTON: I'm not quite sure where you want me to go with it. I mean, it's a tournament. People lose. Upsets happen. So I mean, it is -- that's part of the tournament.

Q. Can you talk about your seniors, what they've meant for you and your program?

COQUESE WASHINGTON: Yes. It's really disappointing for our seniors, because they have given so much to our program and they have given so much to their teammates. They are the reason that we're in this position and that we were able to reestablish Penn State as one of the nation's elite programs on the backs of Nikki Greene and Mia Nickson and Gizelle Studevent and Marisa Wolfe and Alex Bentley. And we certainly had hopes that we would be able to advance in this tournament for them. But it won't happen this year, but we will certainly carry their spirit with us into the future, and as we compete next year and the year after that and the year after that, the spirit of these five seniors will resonate through our locker room and carry us to great heights, greater heights than we've reached. They got the ball rolling, and now it's up to their teammates who are coming back, their future teammates who are still in high school right now to take what they started and to push it farther, higher, deeper, stronger, and that's the challenge, and that's what's great about being a pioneer and being women of character and women of courage to come to Penn State and to reestablish a

tradition.

And so their spirits will live with us long,
long after their days of wearing a Lady Lion
uniform. I couldn't be prouder of them.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports