

March 26, 2013



NCAA 2013 BASKETBALL
CHAMPIONSHIP
DIVISION I WOMEN'S BASKETBALL
FIRST/SECOND ROUNDS
LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY, HOST

Final Score:

LSU – 70
Penn State – 66

An Interview With:

LSU LADY TIGERS

NIKKI CALDWELL: Really proud of our team and what they did tonight without one of our leaders in Jeanne Kenney. It was just a courageous effort on these seven young ladies, and coming away with a great win against a very, very tough Penn State. But I'm so proud of the two ladies sitting to my left. They deserve this. They have worked extremely hard, and we've still got some more basketball to be played.

Q. How much did you think towards the end of the game of the Tennessee game when it was so close, how much did that cross your mind?

BIANCA LUTLEY: I wasn't really thinking about the Tennessee game, I was just thinking about what I need to do to make sure that the game ended the way that Coach Nikki and I'm pretty sure everybody in the gym wanted it to end, and a lot of people didn't believe in us, but we came out and did what they were supposed to do.

ADRIENNE WEBB: I'll add to what Bianca said. Tennessee's loss was not really in the back of our mind, but what was in our mind is this is our last game here, and we have to take care of our house really. We just came out there and said that we're going to buckle down. We don't want a repeat of what happened last year. We wanted to give our all in our last game. We had to do that. And everybody just stepped up.

Q. Adrienne, maybe I just noticed it because it was happening right in front of you,

but it seemed like you were trying to make your way to one spot on the baseline and trying to take all your shots. Is that your spot and is that what led you to putting up 29 points tonight?

ADRIENNE WEBB: I would say my favorite shot is the baseline shot, either side, but I mean, it's really coming off the dribble, getting around the ball screen was what I really had to do for us to win. Just shots were falling during that time.

Q. Adrienne, I think it was a career high for you in points in what would have been your last game had you not won, and I wondered if you could just talk about the mindset, the assertiveness and what you learned about yourself in this game, and then for Bianca, talk about playing with four fouls for the last 12 minutes and coming up big in the end.

ADRIENNE WEBB: I came into this game thinking that as a senior and being one of five -- two senior upperclassmen that I had to play my hardest in our last game because it's do or die. And it's winner advance or loser go home. But I really had to assert myself trying to come to the ball and finding open gaps when my teammates were either penetrating or someone doubled on (indiscernible).

BIANCA LUTLEY: When I picked up my fourth foul and went to the sideline, everybody was just telling me keep my head up and help my teammates from the sideline, and once I got back in, I adjusted how the ref was calling, and I was just making sure that I wasn't then trying to pick a ball from a big man, just playing smart.

Q. After the sluggish end of the first half you came out in the second half and went on a run. Did coach tell you anything that led to that spark?

ADRIENNE WEBB: Coach fired us up in the locker room at halftime, really talking about how we got our lead in the first half and also how we lost it. But what it really came down to was our

heart and our effort on both ends of the floor. So we really took to heart what she said and came out and executed at the beginning of the second half.

Q. Adrienne, great defensive job against Maggie Lucas. What was your mentality, and was that important to you not just to slow her down but to hold her to nine points? That's something right there.

ADRIENNE WEBB: Well, Maggie Lucas is a great player. She's a threat in the three-point areas and coming off ball screens and inside the screen knocking down that shot. So my goal was to keep her from catching the ball, and whether that's going under the screen or fighting over that way, she has no -- the passer has no angle to pass her the ball. And the coaches really pressed upon that in practice the past two days.

Q. Adrienne, I know you guys this year and last year got used to playing through adversity and injuries. But still, to not have Jeanne tonight, for her not even to be here to cheer you on, can you just talk about did that rally you guys? How were you able to deal with that?

ADRIENNE WEBB: We did not want our last game to be played with seven players. All seven of us got together and really came together and played for our fans which were out there and everyone who had supported us, and we also played for Jeanne, because for me Jeanne has really been a leader for us on the court, vocal, getting stops on defense, coming down, taking charges, and I wanted to see her play one more game. That was my motivation at the beginning of the game, that I wanted to play this game and have Jeanne Kenney out on the floor with me.

BIANCA LUTLEY: I think without Jeanne, everybody was missing her, but at the same time we knew that we had to come out and get the job done so Jeanne would be able to travel with us and hopefully she would be able to play with us on Saturday. We miss her.

Q. The whole time, the last few days, were you preparing not to have Jeanne, and what did it do to your game plan?

NIKKI CALDWELL: We prepared not looking at Jeanne not being with us, but with the seven that we knew had to go ahead to play, what we had to do. We also talked about being in this situation before where we only had seven active bodies. There's been times we've only had six in

the course of a game. But this team found a way and they stayed together when they were making their run at us, and we were able to weather the storm. Once it got to late game, their play calls were where they needed to be, ours were, and we were able to get the stops we needed down the stretch.

This was a great basketball game. It was fun to coach. Coach Washington has done a phenomenal job with Penn State, and again, we're just very, very proud to be able to get on the court again to play another game.

Q. Obviously Adrienne made a lot of noise with the 29 points, but probably more impressive were her defensive efforts. She was on Maggie Lucas like a glove for the majority of the game. Can you talk about what she did that make her so effective tonight?

NIKKI CALDWELL: Adrienne Webb, and I've said this before, is one of the hardest working players I've ever coached or been around, and her competitive spirit on the defensive end allowed her to really have the attitude that you have to have when you face a player like Lucas, who does a lot for her team. So it was going to be a battle of Webb versus Lucas, if you will, and Webb did what she needed to do. She stayed true to our game plan.

And then on the offensive end, because of her conditioning, she was able to really get some great looks and knock down some shots, but her mental toughness is something that she has fostered throughout the offseason, and so she's been training for this type of game, this type of environment, this type of situation.

Q. It seemed like this game had phases, and I'm sure if someone had told you that Plaisance was only going to score eight points you would have been quite scared, but it seemed like you had phases, you had the phase where Adrienne was going off and you had the phase down the stretch. How was this game to coach with just how kind of weird this game was with your top scorer not being on and their top scorer not being on?

NIKKI CALDWELL: Well, Theresa has commanded double teams, and we play out of them. If she sets great screens, then we can be efficient offensively, and that's what she did, she did some good things for us, although she wasn't

scoring the basketball, she did have some good looks.

I was proud of our two seniors for stepping up and making the plays down the stretch. That's what your seniors are supposed to do, and that's exactly what they did.

We didn't shoot the ball, Theresa didn't shoot the ball extremely well, neither did Ballard, but then when you can get our centers, Derryl and Shanece McKinney to step up and give you anywhere from 10 to 12 points, that makes up for a Plaisance. So everybody did their part tonight in picking up the slack where it was needed.

Q. What do you think are Jeanne's chances of playing on Saturday, and is it a concussion, and why did she not come to the game, or I guess it was better for her not to be here?

NIKKI CALDWELL: Yes, it was better for her not to be here. We want her to be symptom free. If we get the go-ahead for her to play Saturday, we'll do so. Again, we won't risk anything. But this team really has rallied around Jeanne, and like Webb said, they want to be on the floor with her. She's one of our leaders, and if they need that motivation come Saturday, if Jeanne isn't with us, then I'm sure they will use it however they need to. But we hope to have her ready to go on Saturday.

Q. I know it's way too early and obviously your emotions are high, but do you know anything about Cal, and what do you expect from them on Saturday?

NIKKI CALDWELL: Well, Cal has a veteran squad, and Kyra Dunn has done a great job for them being a leader, a guard that's really nice off the bounce, and then you look at their players inside, they've got some active, athletic players. Caldwell does a great job for them, and they've got a balanced attack. Their guard play is pretty strong as well as their post game. So we've got to be ready to, again, defend a team that can score inside and from the perimeter.

Q. Did Jeanne watch the game at home, and how crazy do you think -- I know she's hurt, but how crazy do you think she was going having to sit there and watch that at home?

NIKKI CALDWELL: Well, Jeanne, I'm sure she was screaming and yelling and probably shouldn't be. We just really have taken the

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necessary steps to make sure that she stays calm and not get herself too aroused, but how can you not be in a game like this. And I know that she is extremely proud of her teammates for the way they played, and I know that they -- like Bianca said, they miss her and we miss her on the bench. But again, Jeanne has left her print on this team, and they carry her with them in everything they do.

Q. Did the crowd fill in for Jeanne?

NIKKI CALDWELL: They did. They did. You know, when you have the support and the fans and how rowdy and loud they were, they gave us that extra energy, if you will, that we needed. Obviously we had to create the plays, but they brought it home for us.

I could see our team really taking in the atmosphere here, and it was a great atmosphere, especially for our seniors, knowing that this is their last game at home, and we just appreciate the fans who have stayed the course with us and who continue to believe in us when things looked a little bleak. But this was an unbelievable crowd.

Q. You've been at LSU for two years and you've already racked up an impressive number of wins. Talk about the possibility of this being the game that you look back on that really helped build and solidify your program.

NIKKI CALDWELL: Well, you know, each game that we played this year has helped us get to this point. When you play a team like Penn State, playing in the SEC, you're going to see great guard play, you're going to see great post play. This game is definitely going to be one of those memorable games because of how special it's been, the journey thus far with this team. The other thing I'll say about this year is that when you lose five seniors a lot of people talk about you're rebuilding, you're going to be young, and this team has really just relished around the idea that the game does not know their age. We had three returning players that saw quite a bit of minutes last year, and everybody else is new.

You know, that says a lot about them as basketball players. But again, this game, it's March, and anything is possible, and as long as these young ladies keep going out there and putting it on the line and laying everything they have out there.

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