

PENN STATE POSTGAME PRESS CONFERENCE QUOTES

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Head Coach Erica Walsh

Opening statement ...

“Obviously I have a lot to smile about-- Penn State advancing for the first time in school history, but that team that I saw in Florida State tonight, I haven't seen a team like that in college soccer in a long time. The skill, the athleticism, the coaching, player for player I'm not sure if I've ever seen a team I've got more respect for, and the work that they put in this season so I just want to congratulate coach Krikorian and his staff and the job they did. They proved over the course of this season that they were the best team in college soccer, but if we knew before the game how the game was going to end we wouldn't play it and I thought the determination of our Penn state tonight was unparalleled and they obviously represented our university in a fine fashion and I'm incredibly proud of the three that sit with me here right now and our entire squad that played before you tonight.”

On the team's composure and coming back to get the victory after losing the lead with forty seconds left ...

“If you track this team over the course of the last 25 games you will see that we've faced all sorts of adversity over the course of this season and its led them with this belief that it doesn't matter what's been done to them. You just see their shoulders go back, they pause, they take a breath, and then Christine there steps up and leads the charge. When we went into overtime the staff got together and looked over and Christine's there right in the middle of the group looking them in the eyes giving them the poise, the composure, and all the confidence in the world to go into the overtime period and win the game and when you can turn it over to your players and they can step up in those big moments that's probably your proudest moment as a coach and your work is done because soccer is a player's game and when you can turn it over to them and they can step up, that's when your work is done.”

On the winning goal- if the team practices the unconventional play that Maya made...

“There is a lot of talk in Forward's Club which was made few years ago when we were struggling to score goals with Katie Sheppard and Andie Tony. Forward's Club was born out of that idea of training players the way the goal keeper coaches do with just a lot of repetition and Ann Cook goes out with these guys everyday and talks about keeping the ball on the floor. We don't have Abby Wambach in the box we have Mallory Weber and Maya Hayes and they are outstanding at what they do but keep the ball on the ground. So what Maya does and does so well is she gets herself to the end line and drives balls back and that's a finish that these players see every day because of the repetition that Ann Cook provides for them.”

On Maya's increased amount of touches in the second half and if an effort was made to get the ball to her...

“To the contrary, we felt like Maya was going to have limited chances tonight but we needed to keep her high and press on that back line in order to create those chances. I felt like Maya's determination and her ability to stay composed despite her lack of touches, I think that's a sign of a great player because many great players get frustrated if they're not touching the ball and Maya's discipline was outstanding tonight. She kept her head high, she knew she was going to get an opportunity it was only a matter of time and when she does she finishes and that's Maya Hayes.”

On the team's mental toughness...

"I can say that mental toughness is born out of a lot of training and we have invested time into leadership training we have worked with a lot of the professionals at Penn State and the athletic department has done a wonderful job not only in the past year but over Christine's four years in creating a leadership institute and bringing in speakers and providing them with experiences and role models in order to deal with these moments and obviously this past year at Penn State has been a challenging one but we've talked about it so many times and we've come out the other side and these players here, they were the ones on the front line and through it they've grown, they've grown together and it's been a great opportunity for the student athletes to grow into women."

On how big of a moment this is for the alumni of Penn State- being the first team from the Big Ten to make it to the finals.

"You have named a couple greats including Heather Tomko who lost everything in hurricane Sandy, literally everything including her house and her car. We got all the alums together to send us poems and sayings and I shared a little bit of a film in our highlight film tonight but I will share more with them over the next few days. I think I've heard from every alum in our program, almost every alum at our university which is the largest alumni association in the world. I came to Penn State to win a national championship and do it the right way and came to Penn State because I knew I would have the support. I walked on that campus and met our athletic director, president, I met all the people that have inspired me and it was the right place for me and these guys follow so there is no better place in the world to coach and as far as I'm concerned there is no better place to be a student athlete, but they can tell you otherwise."

Student-Christine Nairin, midfielder, senior

On the validity of the winning goal- offside?

"To be honest I don't really remember the play, the whole night I guess is a little blacked out. You know we had been trying to counter attack them I think Florida just played the ball forward and we just kicked it off higher up on the field to our goal and played the ball to Maya and she does what she does and Maddy Evans with the assist and thank god that she was running down the ball when she might not have gotten it and just trying to put the ball in frame to score obviously and I was in the right place at the right time. They did all the hard work I just tapped it in."

On doubting that the goal was offside

"Ya, I mean before I really celebrated I think I looked back and forth between the sideline ref and the official to make sure it went in and then as soon as I didn't get a response between those two I just kind of ran away, don't know where I went."

On the referee's regulations during the last ten minutes of the game...

"I don't think I could say exactly what I said. I think about where we have been and where we want to go, we come from the Big 10 conference which is not always the most pretty soccer and it's all about the battle and I think that's what took us above Florida State this game we might not have played pretty soccer like they said but we had the greatness we were diving all over the place defending. I think we played as a team and that's why we were successful. After they scored we were a little bit disappointed because there was 40 seconds left but we have been there before. My sophomore year we scored with 17 seconds left and we have a motto on the national team of playing until that last whistle. We have that in the back of our minds at all times- that we only need 17 seconds to score. We were in pain for a

little bit but we got in on straight after they scored we took it really good and got it back in the first or second minute.”

On the team’s ‘looseness’ during the second half- hugging, dancing, and having fun.

“That’s our team, we play best when we are having fun and some say it’s cocky but if that’s what gets us to play then we will do it. When we have smiles on our faces and look around and can bring a smile on another teammate that’s when we are playing out best so whatever we need to do.”

Student-Maya Hayes, forward, junior

On the winning goal- were you looking for Maddy?

“I think I remember going in on the left side and the defender who was on me kind of shut down the end line which is where I’d like to go I guess so my initial reaction was to look for a cutback and there was nobody there but I did see Maddy kind of further off and without a mark. Her closest mark was behind her so I kind of played it across and she ran onto it and she did a great job to drive it low and keep it low to the ground especially with the ground being slick and she did pretty good.”

Student-Erin McNulty, goalkeeper, grad student

On what was going through Erin’s mind during the last forty seconds of the game...

“I’m confident in the ten players in front of me and all the players that come in off the bench. As a goalkeeper it’s my job to keep the ball out of the net. I’m just confident in my team I was confident that we were going to pull through.”

On her emotional state during and now after the game after having played Florida State before

“I think I’m just as happy to beat Florida State as I would have been had we beaten any other team. I think that bringing any of my personal experience into it would be kind of selfish of me especially since our team has been doing so well, the attention should be on our team. Again, I’m just so proud of our team and getting to our first national championship I couldn’t be more happy.”