

Penn State Women's Basketball
Head Coach Coquese Washington Postgame Press Conference
vs. Illinois – January 12, 2019

Opening Statement:

I thought we had a better second half. We came out with a lot of energy. Our defense's intensity really went up a notch, and I think when it went up it helped us get going offensively. I just hope we can build on that as we get ready for Ohio State.

Q: Coach, some of that second half energy started at the end of the first half 10-0 run to end the half and take the lead. What did that boost help you going into the locker room and to start in the second half?

A: Again, I think it started with our defense. I felt like they got a little too comfortable early in the game offensively. So, we kind of cranked it up a little bit defensively. Also I think it helped us. Earlier in the game we were getting good shots that just didn't fall down but we made a concrete effort the second half to try to look for and make better shots which I thought we did in the second half and were able to make more baskets because we were hunting better shots.

Q: From what we've seen this season, it usually seems that you win the turnover battle, and usually come out with more wins than not. Is that something you've been emphasizing as of recent?

A: We definitely talk a lot about taking care of the ball, and finding the right person, the right team at the right time. Sometimes we take some risk that don't work out, and so we have been really talking about the timing and place to take some of those risk and using more discretion about it.

Q: You talked about consistency all season. Did you see what you were looking for consistency wise in the last two games?

A: The consistency is getting better, and we are growing to the point where I have pretty good idea of what to expect. Consistency does not mean perfection by any stretch, but we have to know coming into the game what we can expect from every player so that the adjustments we need to make, we can make those. But yes, the consistency is growing when you have a player like Smitty (Alisia Smith) that can make a double-double. When you have Teniya [Page] who can come out, even on a bad night, she going to make 15-18 points. So, we are growing, and I am confident it's going to improve.

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Alisia Smith | F | So./So.

Q: Alisia, you had 14 points and 11 rebounds, another double-double for you. A lot of that came in the second half and on a night where Teniya [Page] was not scoring as many as she has in other nights, what was that like for you to be so efficient on the offensive end?

A: It felt good because I knew my team was counting on me to score down low and get the offensive rebounds and things like that. It was in the flow of the game and I knew I had to step up.

Q: Alisia, in that first half the guards struggled to score a little bit. Do you feel you have a little extra responsibility when you guys are struggling a little on the perimeter and have to carry the weight down low and find ways to score easy buckets?

A: I feel it is a responsibility that is put on my shoulders because down low we need a lot of paint touches that helps our offense going inside out sometimes. I think it is a lot of responsibility on me.

Karisma Ortiz | G | Fr./Fr.

Q: Karisma, it seems like you had a big impact on the defensive end with a career high of three steals tonight. What was that like for you to help force all of those turnovers of Illinois and make that impact on the defensive side of the ball?

A: I think it was just a major emphasis to make sure that we were doing our job and I knew my job in particular was to make sure that they were not getting any open boards and just making sure I was getting a body on Alex Wittinger. We know she is a great offensive rebounder so I just had the mentality of do my job and everything else will fall into play. It definitely was a big role to take on, but I trust in my teammates to do everything else.