



2009 NCAA Women's Volleyball Championship

Championship Press Conference • Penn State

Dec. 19 • St. Pete Times Forum

Head Coach: Russ Rose

Student Athletes: Alyssa D'Errico, Alisha Glass, Megan Hodge

Head Coach Russ Rose

Opening statement...

"It was a very strange match out there. I thought we started pretty well. We had a nice lead in the first game and then we kind of froze up a little bit after having a nice lead in the game. Then, in the second game, we ran into a little problem with three missed serves in a row. Texas is way too good to give them multiple opportunities. It's not so much that we really regrouped in the intermission period. I talked and I think they understood what was necessary. They needed to play harder; they needed to give the crowd a little better glimpse of what we felt was one of the hallmarks of our program. In the middle of the third game, we kind of caught fire and started showing some emotion, making plays. I thought Cathy Quilico did an unbelievable job of digging balls in the middle back. When it gets into a fifth game, anything can happen. This is one of those examples where you don't win the statistics war, but we found a way to win at critical times.

"Certainly Texas had a great season and has a great team. We feel like we played two great teams here in the Final Four that really were great representatives of their conference and the sport of college volleyball."

On Texas' Destinee Hooker...

"She had 34 kills and she had 38 of 88 points so, I was disappointed that we didn't do a better job getting the tip because you'd like to think that was something you could get, but she just hits from such a high contact point and has such a fresh attitude about competing. She kept going hard all the time. The scouting report indicated that she was going to get hers, we just need to limit other people so they didn't have big nights as well. The superlatives about her are endless. She really embraces the offensive style of play. I thought she did what we thought she was going to do, but it's a team game and we had some ideas of what we thought we needed to do to have success. I thought Cathy Quilico really came up big for us defensively."

On if Saturday's match was the closest match he has ever coached in...

"I don't think it's the closest because we were lousy in game two. It was a very important match. We've lost a number of matches in the Final Four and finals of the national championship in five. We're appreciative of the fact that we were able to get to the final four and beat a great Hawaii team and beat a great Texas team. I don't rank things like that – the stats are for other people to talk about. Our seniors left an incredible mark on our program. I told them they would be judged by the end of the season, not their careers to that point. I had a few words for Megan [Hodge] and Alisha [Glass] a few times. I kept urging them they could still do it. Megan [Hodge] and Destinee [Hooker] are different players. Megan could have certain nights where she could have those sort of kills, but Megan passes half the court for the entire season. She's also our key blocker."

On Texas' demeanor after losing the second set...

"The demeanor was bad after we gave up the lead at 22-19 in the first game. We gave up six points in a row and lost the game. Then, we were flat at the beginning of game two. Texas is a great team. You don't go 29-2 and advance to the finals without being a great team. I also knew we could play better than we were playing up to that point in time. Fortunately, we were able to steady the ship and get the job done in the end. I know how Texas feels because I've been there more times than I'd like to talk about."

On if the pressure increases with every win and national title...

"The competition gets harder and harder, I don't think the pressure does. What pressure will we have next year with nine new freshmen coming into our program? The pressure will be to keep the program at as high of a level as we've been at. The [102-match winning] streak is made up of a lot of players that are gone. Only one team ends a season with a win in the end, unfortunately. There are so many great teams and so many great coaches, we don't take it for granted."

Alyssa D'Errico, Junior Libero

On Destinee Hooker on the attack...

"She attacks from such a high contact point and the trajectory of it is something similar to what Megan (Hodge) has in practice. Something that we see in practice but is difficult for any defensive player to dig. She has a variety of shots and was mixing it up with tips, roll shots, hitting both sidelines and deep. It's definitely something that is really tough to defend when she can hit all the shots and she has such great vision from a high contact point. Our block did a good job of stepping up and taking away some of her stronger shots so



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they could funnel it to where we were defensively. That way, Cathy (Quilico) and I were in the right spot when it came down to it.”

Alisha Glass, Senior Setter

On winning three straight championships and 102-match win streak...

“It’s something that is gonna be hard to describe. It’s something that you look back on and just look and think it is amazing. It has been amazing for us to be a part of it. This was our goal. This was what we wanted from the beginning of the season. I think you saw that in the match. We just would not let it go, so we are really happy that we came out here and got what we wanted.”

Megan Hodge, Senior Outside Hitter

On the feeling after the final spike to win the match...

“Blacked out. I was asking everyone what happen on the last play. It was unbelievable, I think we have done a lot of silly things throughout the year as team and did not step up the way we should have. I think tonight we knew that the one thing we would have to do with this team is to play hard.”

On the style of play between her and Destinee Hooker...

“Destinee (Hooker) played a great match; she really took over the match and did a great job with her team. I guess I would say she physically controlled the match. People want to make that comparison between us and I think her athletic ability is all world. You don’t see anything like her ability every day. At the end of the day it took our team to play tough defense and passing to win.”



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Head Coach Jerritt Elliott

Opening Statement

"First, I'd like to congratulate Penn State. They fought really hard and showed why they've been so good and so dominant for so many years. I'd like to thank the NCAA for putting on a great event and making it really special for our athletes to be a part of. I'd like to thank my administration and the University of Texas for all of the support they give to our female athletes in every aspect of their life. And most importantly, I'd like to thank my team for giving me everything they had. You go on a lot of journeys as coaches but this is probably the most special journey I've been on, not because we got to the finals, but because of the loyalty they showed to one another, the commitment they had to the university and the way they represented the university. There's nothing I wanted more than for them to win this championship. The ball bounces kind of a funny way sometimes; I'm just extremely proud of our team. They fought the entire way and they can walk away from this knowing the year that they had."

On Destinee Hooker's performance...

"She had a special performance. She's one of the best attackers if not the best attacker in the country. I felt like she's been special all year long. I felt she is the most dominant left side in terms of production. Those swings she took were excellent swings, created by Heather [Kisner] and Sydney [Yogi] and our defense that made it possible. So she did a lot of special things. She hurt them from the service line early in games one and two and she scored big points for us and made some big blocks. She's a special player that has a very bright future, should she decide to stay in this sport."

More on Hooker's performance...

"We wanted to have some balance. I believe it was game three, we set her too much and kind of got out of our rhythm a little bit to keep the balance. For us to win, Destinee has to have a big game. She's the one that's carried us. We had some great balance from other players but she performs at a very high level. Again, this is a game where we could be sitting here differently...it's an inch. One of the balls on the end line on that last swing and off the top of the block, I felt. That's the way the game goes. She performed at a very high level tonight and I'm proud of her."

About the closeness of the match...

"Can't get any closer than 15-13. I felt that both teams battled. It was a great display of volleyball and it's what everyone wanted, a fantastic finish and they got that."

About Penn State's resiliency...

"They've got some fighters. They've got, arguably, the best setter in [Alisha] Glass and Megan Hodge, who I thought we did a great job of containing; she only hit .137 on the night. But I think [Alyssa] D'Errico doesn't get a lot of credit. The kid's a fighter. She has a tremendous amount of passion and she kind of willed them to get on the road to competing. They competed great as did our team."

Rachael Adams, Sophomore Middle Blocker

On how good Penn State as is a team...

"Penn State was really great. My goal was just to get a touch on every single ball, and it's fun blocking."

On playing with her 2009 teammates...

"I love playing with this group of girls. They say you are going to remember this experience for 50 years, whether you win or lose. I will never forget the memories I had with these girls. I love them."

Juliann Faucette, Junior Outside Hitter

On Texas going into the locker room up 2-0 before dropping the next two sets...

"Going into the locker room up 2-0, you obviously have to know that Penn State is No. 1 for a reason. You can't let up, you can't relax and they definitely fought back and made some huge adjustments. Losing that lead and going to that fifth set is just a clean slate. It's just down to that game; that 15 points. It was obviously a battle. There was not one time where there was a two-point lead until that very last couple of points. I think it was just an all-out brawl and a really good match. It swings both ways and we just fell short."



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On what it felt like to play in one of the best national championship matches of all time...

"It's an honor. I think it's all about the journey. Like we've said before, this team had a bond that you couldn't buy. I think this whole journey – the ups and downs – have been amazing. To get to this final point, regardless of the win or the loss, is just about the friends that we've made – the sisterhood. Like Coach [Jerritt Elliott] said in the locker room, this feeling is not very good right now, but down the road, we'll realize how special it really is and that we got to this game and we fought. It's just an awesome feeling to really look at it in perspective."

Destinee Hooker, Senior Outside Hitter

On her career performance on one of the biggest stages...

"What was going through my head the last game I ever get to wear a Longhorn jersey was that you want to put everything out on the court. Like the seniors were saying in the locker room, go out and give it your all, and I'm glad to be able to play my last game with this group of girls. They're great."

On participating in probably the best NCAA volleyball final ever...

"It's a blessing really, just what Julianne (Faucet) said. We've had a lot of firsts this year – winning the Big 12 outright, winning in Nebraska, and actually beating Nebraska in front of 10,000 people in Omaha. It's just a blessing. I love this group of girls and I look forward to coming back and watching them in the final four and the championship game next year."

Ashley Engle, Senior Setter

On what was going through her head and if she thought about last year at all...

"I think we were playing pretty perfect. I think we stunned Penn State; they definitely weren't playing their usual match. We knew coming out of the locker room that they were going to be on fire at the things we were being successful with. They came out swinging; we didn't battle back the way we should have. They were throwing a lot at us; they are an amazing volleyball team. We fell short, we didn't battle back the way we should have and that's just the way it goes."

On the last point when she stared down Penn State and didn't back down when she was serving...

"This is the first match I jumped served all season and was excited to bring it out at the end. I hoped for the best. I think I would regret it the rest of my life if I didn't keep it in and serve hard. It is a great position to be in the National Championship game. Serving it means all or nothing."

On participating in the best volleyball championship match ever...

"It was great and you're right the finals the last couple of years have been 3-0 and not super exciting. I think we put on a great show. There are a lot of great volleyball players out there on the floor. We gave it our all and they gave it their all too. It didn't go our way unfortunately, but it's a match that I will never forget."