

**December 28, 2013**



An interview with:

## **COACH BLUDER**

COACH BLUDER: I feel good about our record going into Big Ten play. We know that we have a first pass against an unbeaten on the road and that's a big challenge, and we're going to start worrying about that in about 30 minutes. But right now we're happy with the victory over North Dakota. They came in winners of 5 of the last 6; probably one of the bigger teams that we've faced inside in the post area. We had, again, great balance, six players in double figures including two players off the bench. Ally (Disterhoft) and Alexa (Kastanek) both shot the ball very well; nice to see that firepower coming in off the bench.

Glad that we outrebounded. This was a team that was outrebounding people by nine and we got them by three. We did a good job of crashing the boards in the second half. We had eight offensive rebounds in the second half, so that was good to see. I thought our fast break got us going. The first 24 minutes of this game were really good. I thought we were on our way to a great game. I told the team we played a good game, but we were on our way to having a great game and didn't quite pull that off.

Kind of had a lull in there for a while where we got kind of stagnant and thought the game was over at that point. Obviously, we can't have those lulls against Big Ten competition.

**Q. What kind of sparked you there? With about six minutes left in the first half you're still behind and you guys just went crazy offensively there for the rest of the half and then five minutes in the first half. What kind of changed there? It seemed that the tempo really got going for you?**

COACH BLUDER: Yeah, well our defense created the offense. Our defense got us going because we were able to get our fast break going.

When we get our fast break going, I think we're a really hard team to defend. I think Sam is so good at attacking the basket. She's so good at finding teammates open for shots if they take away her drive. But it really begins with the defensive end, and we were getting stops all of a sudden. I think that got the momentum going a little bit for us.

**Q. Besides the lull, is there anything that you want to see your team do going into Big Ten play improvement-wise?**

COACH BLUDER: There is always a list every coach has, isn't there? They want to get better at different things. Definitely I want to watch the film and evaluate what we need to work on. But rebounding was a point of emphasis going into this game for us, and I thought we did a better job of that. Now I still think we can do better. First half we had less than 20% offensive rebounds. That's not good, but second half was better. We need to put those things together. There are always ways that we need to clean up our offense and some of those things. That 1-3-1 gave us a little bit of trouble, but it's not like we've seen a lot of that so far this year. They haven't run even a lot of it this year, but it was pretty good against us.

**Q. What are the good things in the first 14 games you want to see continue now?**

COACH BLUDER: I love our balance that we have on our team. Again, I think any person can hurt you on any night. So I love the balance. I think it makes us really hard to guard. They can't focus on one player on our team. I like it when we get out and push. I think we're a very good offensive team. I think our zone defense has done some good things except for the rebounding part of it, so we need to get better at that.

I think our zone defense has been pretty darn good. So lot of good things. But I think every coach has a check list that they can go to.

**Q. I know it's really preliminary, you haven't seen any tape or anything like that. But what have you seen or heard of Indiana's doing**

**really well at this point?**

COACH BLUDER: They're putting up a ton of points. It's a team that's scoring an unbelievable amount of points right now. So the thing is that their competition maybe hasn't been as good as what we've faced, but anytime you are 12-0, you have a lot of confidence. You're playing on your home court and really when Curt went there it was a culture he had to change. When you're not a team that's used to winning, you've got to change the mindset of those kids. He's accomplished that now. So that alone makes them more dangerous, especially on their home court.

But what I've seen from the box scores, I'm impressed with how many points they're scoring.

**Q. What is the biggest difference moving from non-conference to conference? Is it intensity? Do the games matter more?**

COACH BLUDER: Yeah, it's all of that. You know, there is more at stake. Just the intensity level does rise because every game does matter as far as the tournament and your seed at the end of the season for the Big Ten tournament. We have high aspirations in the Big Ten. That is the big ruler and the measuring stick, really, how well you do in the Big Ten. So I just think it intensifies a lot.

Obviously, the competition level grows immensely right now. Every team in the Big Ten is extremely good. I think we have five teams right now in the RPI top 30, and we have, I believe, four or five teams in the top 30 rankings as well. So it's a good league.

**FastScripts by ASAP Sports**