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Big Ten
CONFERENCE
WOMEN'S BASKETBALL
TOURNAMENT
INDIANAPOLIS

Iowa – 79
Minnesota – 64

An interview with:



THE MODERATOR: All right. We're going to open it up with a statement from Coach Lisa Bluder, then we'll take questions for the student-athletes. So Coach.

COACH BLUDER: I'm happy in the way we won this game, once again with balanced scoring. Almost five people in double figures. We shot the ball well. We rebounded well. Won the rebounding war and only had 11 turnovers.

So pretty happy. We had some defensive breakdowns, but overall I thought it was a nice game for us.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Wendy, what does this win mean now looking back at the last minutes of the game?

WENDY AUSDEMORÉ: This is a huge win. We beat them at our place earlier in the season and then we went one-on-one with them and they beat us on their home court. So it was nice to get them again on a neutral court.

I thought the team did a really good job coming out ready to play today.

Q. Wendy, you scored that foul on that layup at the free throw and you took the lead for the rest of the game. Can you talk about holding on and blowing away at the end also?



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WENDY AUSDEMORÉ: Again, I just think the team really stepped up and got some defensive stops when we really needed to. I think they got within 10 down the stretch, but just the balanced scoring throughout and just people stepping up.

Q. Kristi, just talk about the way you guys were able to pull away in the beginning of the first half and keep the lead this time.

KRISTI SMITH: We really just stressed before halftime, trying to get the momentum, to take that into halftime with us. And all throughout the second half, you know, we really stressed they're not going to go away and we need to keep getting stops on defense and keep up the intensity.

Q. Kachine, you played really well inside tonight. What did you do to maintain that position?

KACHINE ALEXANDER: I tried to come out hard. I knew a lot of people know I'm a pretty good rebounder and just tried to read the ball. And my teammates got me the ball pretty well today and I took it hard to the hole.

Q. Kachine, you were slow to get up. How are you feeling and what happened?

KACHINE ALEXANDER: My head hit the floor once, and then she sat on my head and it hit again. I think I'm okay. I just saw the doctor. But just take it easy. And they didn't check on me, so we'll see. A really bad headache, but I'll be all right for tomorrow.

Q. Minnesota is one of your bigger rivals, how did it feel to beat them after they beat you last time out?

KACHINE ALEXANDER: Great. We thought about it before, but coming from Minnesota it's always good to beat the Gophers. I told them at halftime, this is the second half; we're going to come out hard because this is probably going to be

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the NCAA berth if they win.

It was great. I'm having a ball.

Q. Kachine, a lot of your baskets were taken of course off the dribble getting to the hole. Can you talk about -- had a couple of lefty layups?

KACHINE ALEXANDER: I just pretty much read the defense. A lot of the team try to get off of me. I try to take them off that way and attack their hip, and it seems to be working. Just keep doing it. Coach tells me attack, no matter how they're playing me, attack and get my teammates open.

Q. Wendy, can you talk about your shooting performance, 4, 5 from 3 and the percentage?

WENDY AUSDEMORE: Well, it's good to see them go down. I think in years past I've had a couple of rough times in here. So it's good to see them go down. But give credit to my teammates for getting the ball to me when I was open.

Q. Kristi, you know Emily Fox well from growing up. What's it like playing her?

KRISTI SMITH: It feels really good. Emily and I have always -- we had a good rivalry growing up and it's kind of odd that we play each other here, but it's fun and I always enjoying playing against her and she's a great player.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, ladies.
Questions for Coach.

Q. I think right before Wendy's big 3-point play in the first half you had said drive on them because they've been driving on you effectively. How happy were you to see that?

COACH BLUDER: That's an important part I think of our game is that we have to penetrate hard. A lot of good things happen to us when we attack and penetrate. I felt Minnesota was beating us at our own game a little bit. So it was time to turn the tables, and they did.

Q. Coach, a few times during the season you guys had leads, kind of let the other team get back in. Tonight you held that lead and extended it at the end. Can you talk about that?

COACH BLUDER: Very happy about that, and we talked about how Minnesota had been kind of a second-half team. They played better in the second half. You know, we had the lead up at

their place, and then they came back. We had a 6-point lead with a couple of minutes to go.

So when those things happen to you, I think it was never let down. I thought our team was very focused tonight. In every huddle I thought they were really in tune with each other. They were really listening well. And so I thought that they were very, very focused for the entire 40 minutes tonight.

Q. Coach, it seemed like for a while there the teams were kind of trading baskets and for a stretch there in the middle defensively it looked like you guys kind of stepped up. Could you talk about the defense. It was an offense game then for a while there you got some stops?

COACH BLUDER: It was a pretty offensive game with us scoring 79 points, 44 in the first half. When we began the second half we were trading baskets back and forth. We talked about it in our timeouts. It's not good enough to trade baskets. The only way we're going to stop that is by with our defensive stops and getting the rebounds. And I thought Ashley Ellis-Milan did a really good job getting inside, getting some paint points, high percentage points.

She forced us into the zone and then our zone was effective after that. So it was also taking some time off the shot clock, which was nice.

Q. Can you talk about the first game with Ohio State, the only regular season game with Ohio State, and what you think of Ohio State, the team you'll face tomorrow night?

COACH BLUDER: I know we're facing a great team. Jantel Lavender, Player of the Year, they have the Defensive Player of the Year, the Freshman of the Year, the Coach of the Year. It's obviously a very good basketball team. We played a very good game when we beat them at our place. I thought we -- it was a game that we shot the ball well. We boarded well. We took care of the ball.

And so I'm sure Ohio State's remembering that and would like to have a little -- avenge that, but they're a great basketball team. But everybody you play this time of year is usually a very good basketball team. So we'll be looking forward to it.

Q. Can you talk about your streak, how you've performed, especially coming into the

Big Ten tournament and how you think you played today based off that?

COACH BLUDER: I thought we played well today. Again, I thought we shot well. I loved the balance we had. Seven games in a row was nice. But we want to make it eight.

Q. Coach, this is the first time I've had a chance to see Kachine Alexander play. I've rarely seen somebody with that height get those kind of rebounds. Can you talk about what she does on the board and what she gives to your team?

COACH BLUDER: She's fun to watch. She's a special player because she has that second effort. You think the ball is going out of bounds or that Minnesota had the ball and all of a sudden she comes up with it. And to me that's just heart. She just doesn't give up pursuing the basketball on a rebound. And I love that about Kachine because she gives us so many more possessions just because of her outright hustle and heart to go get the basketball.

Q. Can you talk about Wendy Ausdemore's game, shot well, had seven rebounds?

COACH BLUDER: She had a great game. When she gets confidence stroking the 3 it's so much fun to see her. And now she's at the power forward position, and sometimes we can create mismatches with her, or sometimes power forwards forget about her and forget what a 3-point threat that she really is.

But she leaves our university as one of the best 3-point shooters of all time. And she's had a remarkable career and obviously she's a great person as well.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.

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