

February 13, 2014



An interview with:

COACH LISA BLUDER

COACH BLUDER: We're happy to get 20 wins. To get it this early in the year is a good thing for us; keeping it on a roll. But now we have to go on the road at Purdue, a team that's rested all week long while we've had two games.

But at this time of year, to be quite honest, kids would rather play. Players would rather play than practice. So, you know, I'm assuming they're going to be rusty and we're going to be ready to go in this game.

Tonight, we were one point away from having five players in double figures. I continue to love the balance of our team. Ally (Disterhoft) has a double-double. We got high-percentage shots in the second half. I thought it was our best rebounding performance of the year. I'm happy with the way we conducted ourselves in this game.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. (Question about winning 20 games as Iowa coach.)

COACH BLUDER: We want that consistency. We want to be that 20-win program every year. I think one year we ended up 19 a couple years back, so that was kind of disappointing.

We're trying our hardest to get to that 20-win plateau. I know it doesn't mean as much to the search committee as it used to, but it's definitely a positive mark.

Q. Coach, you mentioned the Purdue and Michigan games coming up. Two road games. Could go a long way in determining who gets in that top four seed.

COACH BLUDER: Yeah, that top four seed is so important because those four seeds get first-round byes in our Big Ten tournament.

You really have the advantage if you're in those top four seeds. We only have one meeting with Purdue this year. If it comes down to head-to-head, this one game is going to be very, very important.

We're going into their place. We have won four straight Big Ten road games. I feel like our team is playing well on the road. We won at their place last year. I know they're in the top 25, but I think we play best against those types of teams.

Q. Coach, your team came out in the second half with a 7-0 start. How big was that to push the lead?

COACH BLUDER: I thought it was great momentum. Just let us kind of be able to play without the stress of them being right there.

I thought it was a good momentum boost for us, kind of took a little bit out of their sails at the same time. I like the way we came out in the second half.

Q. Lisa, you kept encouraging Melissa because you know eventually it's going to pay dividends?

COACH BLUDER: I will always encourage Melissa. She's a great shooter. Sometimes they don't go in for you. We did stress we wanted the ball to come in, go back out. I think that's a little bit better shot for her to get her feet set. We were able to do that in the second half, be able to do that better.

We got higher-percentage shots. We got 36 paint points tonight, which was a lot against the zone. I thought we did a good job of trying to get the ball inside, better job in the second half especially.

Q. You had 19 assists on 24 buckets. How important was that?

COACH BLUDER: That is our style. That is our trademark. We are going to pass the ball for

better shots. We're going to give up shots to get better shots.

That's Iowa basketball. That's what we do.

Q. Coach, it was nice seeing Nicole (Smith) back on the floor. What's her status health-wise for the rest of the season?

COACH BLUDER: Right now it's really getting her momentum back, getting her chemistry with the team as far as her timing on plays, remembering all the plays. So really it's just getting a comfort level.

But her health is good. The knee is recuperated, she's ready to go. Got a rebound tonight, too.

Q. Were you at all surprised with the amount of success you had in the paint?

COACH BLUDER: I do think us having a good knowledge of the type of zone defense that they were playing helps because we know what to look for.

But at the same time we did a great job of getting the ball inside. When we got the ball inside, they were pretty wide-open shots. So that was nice.

It was nice to see Claire (Till) get in on that as well. Claire had to play significant minutes and that's actually good for the Purdue game, that we got to put Beth (Bethany Doolittle) on the bench and rest her for a while. It was nice to see Claire get involved. That's going to really do good things for her confidence.

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