

University of Iowa Basketball Media Conference

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Lisa Bluder Women's Basketball

COACH BLUDER: First of all, I want to congratulate Ball State. I thought they played terrific, especially the first half. I thought they did a great job. They shot the ball well in the first half. They took control of this game early and then kept it. Just I wish them well down the line, because I think they did a great job.

I also want to thank our fans that came out today. I know it's an extra ticket and everything and for them to come out and support us in the NIT, we're really appreciative of the support they gave us. Unfortunately, the second quarter just got away from us, and that's really the story here. We had too many turnovers. We had more turnovers than they did. They shot more free throws. They outrebounded us. I mean, they really took it at us in almost every facet of the game.

Nathalie is just an unbelievable player and she didn't want her senior year to come to a close. That's what great seniors do. They put their team on their back and they carry the team. She definitely wanted the ball in her hands, obviously, taking 24 shots.

The future looks bright for our program. Megan had her ninth double-double of the year. Her third straight game scoring over 20 points. Did a great job for us. Eight offensive rebounds, just did a really, really good job for us. We had four people in double figures, so some good things to look for there. But it's hard to see this season come to an end. It's been a tough year. It's been a frustrating year.

Q. What do you want them to learn from this season when they look back on it going into the off-season?

COACH BLUDER: Yeah, hopefully we've learned a lesson that every possession counts, but I'm not sure because second quarter didn't look like that for us. I think we have to get recommitted to what made us great to begin with, and really dig deep and find that emotion, that passion for the game that we can put in the extra to be great again.

Q. Is it tough to stop a player come like Fontaine coming in and averaging 27 points? But what was



the game plan for her coming into the game?

COACH BLUDER: We were trying to keep the ball out of her hands and we didn't do a very good job of that when you shoot the ball 24 times. We wanted to try to keep it when we were supposed to be face guarding her when she was around 17 feet from the basket and not let her touch the basketball. We just didn't have the athleticism to be able to do that. And then help off of certain kids whenever she got the ball because we knew she wasn't going to give it up. We knew she was going to go to score every time she touched the ball, and just didn't really have good help side position a lot of times.

Q. Coach, you said the other day in the press conference that if the team wasn't ready it would be a short life. What did the team play like today?

COACH BLUDER: I thought we were ready. I thought we were a little more loose than usual to begin the game, and I thought maybe that could be a good thing. I don't think we respected Ball State enough. Maybe they didn't watch enough film to know that this was a good basketball team, a very good basketball team that was fundamentally sound, good inside player, great power forward, savvy point guard.

I'm not sure that mentally they really knew how good Ball State was, and we were worried about this game as coaches. We thought this was going to be a real challenge tonight. We thought our second round game was going to be easier than our first round game, quite honestly.

Q. What is this team capable of next year?

COACH BLUDER: That's a hard question to ask right now. I think we do have to change some things. We have obviously eight freshmen, sophomores on our team, we have to figure out where our leadership's going to come from next year. But I told you the other day I still thought we could make the NCAA Tournament. I really believe that. I really believed it, and I believe it can happen again next year. We obviously have to change a few things in order to do it, and I don't know what those are right now.