

December 30, 2011



An Interview With:

COACH BLUDER

COACH BLUDER: We've been waiting a while for this, and it really feels good. This feels kind of like the right game where we played a complete game.

I thought there were a lot of great individual performances tonight but I love that we had 24 assists. I thought our defense was much better tonight. We obviously shot the ball well.

But just again, offensively, we passed the ball extremely well. We pushed. We looked very unselfish out there. This was a really good way for us to start the Big Ten Conference.

Q. It was 15-15, maybe like eight minutes in, and then a 40-11 run, over whatever span of time it was; what happened?

COACH BLUDER: We started pushing the ball well and hitting some threes out of transition, which really gets us fired up when we do that.

I thought our defense held for a number of possessions. We went to a zone. That was pretty effective against them. And we boxed out well the first half. We took care of the ball. We only had four turnovers the first half.

Q. Seemed like they were relaxed, you saw a lot of smiles out there tonight; did that come first, or did the good play come first, or just feed off each other?

COACH BLUDER: I think actually the smiles came first, and then when things start going well, it's easier to smile. It's easier to have fun when things are going well out there and things were going well for us tonight.

Q. Looking ahead to Ohio State now, what makes a team like that so challenging?

COACH BLUDER: I haven't looked at a whole lot of film on them, yet. But I know this they are scoring a lot of points, 80 point a game, and two of their players, Samantha Prahalis and Tayler Hill, are averaging half of the team points.

So they look like they are very guard oriented and they look like they are taking a lot of pride in their defense and scoring points off their defense. They are winning games by 30 points a game. We only get one shot at them and it's on their home floor. So obviously it's an important game for both teams when you only get one shot at them.

I think this momentum created tonight will help us going into that game.

Q. What makes Prahalis so good, and who will you have guarding her?

COACH BLUDER: I haven't thought that far ahead yet, but Prahalis is just -- she's got the swag, she really does. She knows that she's good and she brings it out on the floor. She plays with a little bit of a chip on her shoulder, and she knows she's good and she's going to rub it in your face. She enjoys playing that way.

Q. Can you talk about the progression with the underclassmen?

COACH BLUDER: Let's see, there's so many of them; who do I start with.

Sam I think is starting to feel more and more comfortable. She had three offensive boards tonight. I know she didn't score a lot of points tonight, but three offensive boards is nice. I think she's just starting to feel more and more comfortable in that starting role and being on the floor with her teammates and reading what her teammates are doing.

I thought Bethany Doolittle had a really nice game tonight. She took the ball to the hole

strong against people that were taller than her. That's nice to see. She didn't back away from them, so that was very good to see.

Melissa Dixon had double figures tonight. The kid is a shooter; you know she's going to come in and put up shots. She's got one of those short memories. She doesn't remember how many she missed. She's going to keep shooting them. And she's a weapon offensively. But the kid plays defense, too. Sometimes you think, oh, they are just a shooter and they don't play any defense.

I like the way Melissa plays defense. And she had the challenge of playing their best player, Morgan Jones, and I thought she did a really nice job of on her, even though she was under-sized.

Kathryn got some minutes tonight, continuing to progress, but you know, she's playing a position where we've got a little bit more depth. And Virg, she was on the bench tonight. That was the first time she's been on the bench for over a week, so that was nice to see.

Q. You touched on it already, 24 assists, is that what you want to -- to have success in the Big Ten, you are going to eight to ten girls going to the basket.

COACH BLUDER: I love the 24 assists. I just think that shows that we are passing the ball for high-percentage shots, looking for our teammates, we are drawing the defense really well. So that's a really good statistic to see.

Q. Judging by the score at the half, Wisconsin is down one at the half -- might not be a bad thing, think you have their attention a little bit?

COACH BLUDER: I think that our box score tonight will really get their attention.

Ohio State, you know, it's amazing the rivalry between Iowa and Ohio State. And it goes back to Vivian and it goes back to 22,000 at Carver-Hawkeye Arena. But there is definitely a rivalry between the two schools.

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