

**January 5, 2014**



An Interview With:

## **COACH BLUDER**

COACH BLUDER: We got beat by a very good team today. I want to congratulate Penn State. I thought they played very well. They are big, they are strong, they are fast, and probably better than us in all those areas.

When you're going against a team like that, you've really got to stick to fundamentals and you have got to shoot the ball really well, and we did not do those things. They out-shot us from every area today, including the free throw line. They out-rebounded us by a wide margin.

When you're that big and strong, it's hard to box them out. It's hard to keep them off the glass. In the first half we got some over the back calls because we had good position and we kind of got away from that.

I want to thank the Hawks fans for coming out. We had great fan support today and appreciate that so much. Wednesday, we are going to need them back, because we have no rest for the weary, so to speak, with two days to get ready for Minnesota where they are sitting at home today resting. So that's not a good way that the schedule has played out for us but we've got to be ready for them on Wednesday.

**Q. How much of a mismatch was it inside, especially when Doolittle got into foul trouble?**

COACH BLUDER: I think you could see; it was a tough mismatch situation. We tried to deny and provide some back side help, but they are very big, they are very strong and they are hard to get around. They did a nice job with the hook shot, too, which when you're 6-4 and can make a hook shot like that, it's hard to defend that.

**Q. You've had a lot of runs, and it seemed like every time you've been able to make a run, they were able to counter-punch.**

COACH BLUDER: We got within three with nine minutes to go in this game, and they took it at us after that. You're right, we got close, and then boom, they would have this little run and we'd try to close it in. The last few minutes, I think we just didn't have a whole lot left in us.

**Q. Maggie Lucas got off to 11 -- and she didn't score in the half. What did you do to contain her, and what changed?**

COACH BLUDER: She played great defense. She got two quick threes against us in the zone, kind of got her on fire a little bit, but I thought Sam was outstanding getting around screens. She used her feet really well. She actually went 20 minutes without scoring, from the ten-minute mark to the ten-minute mark, she did not score, if I remember right.

Again, I think that she did a great job defensively.

**Q. What does that say about, Sam played all 40 minutes, asking her to lead your team on offense?**

COACH BLUDER: A lot, isn't it, and she comes up with a double-double. Yeah, we are asking a lot of Sam. But you know something, Sam wouldn't want it any other way. She's a competitor. She wants to have the best player -- she wants to guard the best player. She wants to be leading this team. So I thought Sam, you know, really gave a lot out there today.

**Q. What do you have to do to shore things up between now and Wednesday?**

COACH BLUDER: Well, just box-outs alone. We gave up 16 offensive second-chance points, 16-1. We got beat by 16, and the margin of offense of second-chance points is 15. So if we can just clear one thing, in my opinion, it would be the box-outs.

Again, we're not going to be able to change a whole lot in two days. Minnesota is a team that runs tons of plays and it's going to need a lot of focus, a lot of focus to be able to defend

their plays.

In my opinion, I think our help side is very average right now. I think we have to get better help side positions so that people can't get to the rim as easily against us, as well. But we are not going to get bigger; we are not going to get faster; we are not going to get stronger in two days. So we've got to -- it's really, to me, it's fundamentals. And communication is another thing, and talking, talking all the time, using communication skills.

**Q. Seems like one of the trends in your losses is to get behind early and then the whole game you're battling back. Is there anything that you can do?**

COACH BLUDER: Yeah, our last four or five games, we've had really slow starts. And so we talked about it as a team, how we can change it, and we tried even changing our warm-up today, our pregame routine, did some things like that. But didn't really help a whole lot.

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