

March 23, 2014



NCAA 2014 BASKETBALL
CHAMPIONSHIP
DIVISION I WOMEN'S
FIRST/SECOND ROUNDS
UNIVERSITY OF IOWA, HOST

Iowa – 87
Marist – 65

An interview with:

**Coach Lisa Bluder
Bethany Doolittle
Samantha Logic
Theairra Taylor**

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Iowa. We'll take an opening comment from coach.

COACH BLUDER: Just a great feeling out on the floor tonight. I thought our players executed very well. I thought they relaxed and had fun out there. Enjoyed playing on their home court. Enjoyed executing. Shot the ball well.

It was one of those games I thought offensively we just had so many weapons, whether it was Bethany inside, Theairra has a career-high 3-pointers, Melissa gets going later in the game, Sam is one rebound short of a triple-double. In an NCAA game that doesn't happen very often.

A lot of really good things for our team out there tonight. And I thought the crowd was really great. I thought the crowd was loud. I think that was the most excited I heard a gym for a jump-ball victory in a long time, so it was fun.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Theairra, you started 0-5 from three, then hit 12 of your last 18. What changed for you guys?

THEAIRRA TAYLOR: Well, the coach just tells us to keep shooting. Beth was demanding so much attention, we were wide open. We don't want to drive in and getting charged with fouls. We let it go and kept building our confidence as we went on.

Q. The center was open for you tonight, wasn't it?

BETHANY DOOLITTLE: I think my teammates were doing well at finding me down low. Trying to get in the best position I was. They found me and I was able to put some shots down.

Q. One of your best games?

BETHANY DOOLITTLE: I'd say as a team it was one of the best games this season. Everyone did something to help us out.

I think that gives us a lot of confidence going into the next one.

Q. Theairra, can you tell me about the sense of urgency today knowing this might be it?

THEAIRRA TAYLOR: Yeah, I felt like there was a lot of anticipation building up to the game. But when we got on the floor, we wanted to compete, win, get to the Sweet 16. We want to cut down those nets.

That's my motivation. That's all of our motivation. We just went out and showed what we can do.

Q. Sam, you had two weeks off since you lost in the Big Ten championship. What was the mood of the team and how did that affect how you came out and played today?

SAMANTHA LOGIC: Well, I think any time you have two weeks off, you're antsy to get back on the floor. After a loss like that, we were pretty focused. Last two weeks we've been focusing on ourselves, especially the first week, week and a half. Then when you find out who you're playing, you focus on them.

We had great focus and energy I think for two weeks without having a game, which is kind of tough to sustain, but we were definitely ready for tonight.

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Q. Bethany, you opened both halves with a field goal. Was that kind of the game plan going in or just something that opened up?

BETHANY DOOLITTLE: Yeah, I think from the get-go we had a little bit of a height advantage down low. I think we were trying to take advantage of that a little bit. That definitely helped us out later on get the people on the perimeter open for their shots.

Q. Sam, what do you need to take from tonight and carry over into Tuesday's game?

SAMANTHA LOGIC: First off, we have to keep our defensive intensity like that. Louisville is a great team, one of the top teams in the country. Excited to have them on our home floor; great opportunity for us.

To get our offense going, to get our transition going, we have to play great defense, just really focus on that so we can get our offense going.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, ladies. We'll entertain questions for coach.

Q. Claire is getting some more minutes. Talk about her performance.

COACH BLUDER: I think Claire is playing the best basketball of her career right now. Claire has found a role as far as we need rebounds, go get the rebound. She had two beautiful offensive rebounds. One led to a Theairra three for us. She battles in there. She's physical and she doesn't care. She just battles in there.

She had a nice three. She got pretty excited when she got that three. I just feel like Claire has matured this year and is playing extremely well right now.

Q. One of the Marist players talked about how you guys were able to shut down their motion offense so they had to move to more sets. What were you able to do defensively that enabled that?

COACH BLUDER: Well, we probably didn't shut it down because they still scored quite a few points, 65 points.

But we had four days to get ready for their offense. It is an offensive juggernaut. It is so hard to get ready for because there are so many screens. I said this earlier. Marist is one of the best teams I've ever seen at being able to read screens and make you pay for what you're doing, whether

you're switching, they do a great job of reading it, whether you're chasing over top.

We worked very hard on that in the last four days and we spent a lot of time getting ready for those screens.

Q. Sam went down with like 10 minutes left and you huddled the team up on the court. What did you say to them?

COACH BLUDER: I really thought at that point we were going to be shooting free throws. I thought she took the elbow to the face, but they said it was incidental contact instead of a player bringing it up intentionally.

Melissa had been sitting on the bench, I was thinking about getting her ready to get in and shoot the free throws, remembering what defense we were in.

We also talked about, we've had a little break here, let's not let the momentum shift. Let's have fun but stay focused.

Q. You haven't been able to get over the hump and get to the Sweet 16 in recent years. Is that something you've talked about with the players?

COACH BLUDER: The players know it, definitely. It's something that we would love to accomplish. I mean, who wouldn't want to be in the Sweet 16? It's something we definitely would love to have the opportunity to do.

Q. Talk about the improvement in rebounding.

COACH BLUDER: We worked hard on it the last couple of weeks. I'm probably most happy with our offensive rebounding. We got over a third of the offensive rebounds. That's kind of the general norm. For us that's good, really good. Happy with the rebounding tonight.

I thought Marist didn't attack the boards that hard because they were trying to get back in transition so much. But we'll take it.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, coach.

COACH BLUDER: Thank you.

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