

Women's National Invitation Tournament

Saturday, March 18, 2017
Iowa City, Iowa



Lisa Bluder
Hannah Stewart
Megan Gustafson
Kathleen Doyle
Ally Disterhoft
WNIT - Iowa

Iowa - 78, South Dakota - 73

Q. Megan, you seem to get beat up about every game. Are you getting used to that? You're stronger this year and you seem to really finish well. Is that just part of playing center for Iowa and in the Big Ten and all that?

MEGAN GUSTAFSON: Yeah, I'm pretty used to it by now. I know in practice our post players are always going against each other and doing a really good job of making each other better all the time, every day, and so I think that really translates into games for sure.

Q. You've had games where you're clicking offensively this year, but it seemed like today was a different level?

MEGAN GUSTAFSON: I guess so. I know my teammates did a really good job of setting me up. If they were collapsing I was able to hit them, and so I think it just really worked well tonight.

Q. Hannah, 5 for 6, you had 10 last game. You just really seem comfortable down low right now with the ball?

HANNAH STEWART: Yeah, I've told a lot of people this, but when you get to go up against Megan Gustafson every day in practice, you're pretty prepared for the posts that you go up against.

Q. For either Megan or Hannah, the two of you and Chase and Hailey knew something before the game, you guys kind of huddled up, the posts. What is said during that and what is --

MEGAN GUSTAFSON: Yeah, every game we kind of get in the huddle. We're kind of pretty much just pumping each other up, trying to -- you know, we want these four right here for our big post girls, and we can

go against anyone, so just kind of getting each other ready for the game.

Q. Megan, kind of a weird question, but do you recall the shot you missed about three minutes into the game, a little too hard off the glass? Do you remember it?

MEGAN GUSTAFSON: No, honestly, I don't remember it.

Q. Ally, you lead in rebounds, you led in assists, points in the paint, double figures. That's pretty much Iowa basketball, isn't it?

ALLY DISTERHOFT: Yeah, I think that that's what we always pride ourselves in. Obviously the game plan, at least in the second half, was to get paint points, to get paint touches. We felt like we had a huge mismatch there, so I think that we did a really good job of sticking to that game plan, getting the ball inside when we could, and then just -- they went on a run in that second quarter, we came in at halftime, really tried to shore up the defensive end a little bit. Obviously they went on a few more runs, but that's basketball for you, but all in all, really glad that we responded the way that we did.

Q. Kathleen, you set a school record for freshmen for assists. How many of those would have gone to Megan or Hannah --

KATHLEEN DOYLE: Well, they're very good at finishing, though. It makes my job really easy.

Q. I didn't actually look at how many the number was, but did you feel like you had an abnormal number of blocks today? Are we going to have to change Iowa City to Block City?

ALLY DISTERHOFT: Block City, Jock City, I don't know. No, I think we just did a good job of getting out on shooters, rotating pretty well, especially when we were in those scramble situations. So a few of those are kind of lucky, we just jumped at the right time, especially on some of those three-point shots, but that's always fun. I know Chase got a really big one in the first half, and it's just always fun to get pumped up with your teammates about those things.

Q. Hannah, how would you say you've changed or improved as a player since last year and maybe even since earlier this year?

HANNAH STEWART: I think confidence is a big thing. You know, with experience and with being on the court and just learning more of the 5 at Iowa and going up against some Big Ten posts with time has really just built my confidence up.

Q. Megan, you guys were protecting a two-point lead late. Do you remember the offensive rebound you got? Do you remember anything about that play?

MEGAN GUSTAFSON: Oh, yes, I remember that one, and no, I was just there at the right time, and so that was kind of a little bit of luck there, but I knew that I had to get it, and I was kind of in the mode of I needed to get every single rebound to get it to my teammates if I couldn't put it up myself.

Q. Ally, you were so emotional that last game. I don't know if a letdown would be the right word, but tough to reach that exact plateau because you were sky high for that, obviously you got the record and stuff, but you seemed pretty decent today.

ALLY DISTERHOFT: Yeah, I think it was just a different dynamic with this game. Obviously we have different game plans each game, and obviously individually the shots weren't falling this game, but we had advantages in a lot of other areas, which I think that's what we look to do is take advantage of that.

You know, we'll take that win any single day.

Q. Coach said you were going to embrace this tournament. Do you feel like you really have? It looks like you're having fun. I know it's not the NCAA, but you're the last team in Iowa standing now.

MEGAN GUSTAFSON: I love being in this tournament. We treat it as our own NCAA Tournament, so we're going to go and play our hardest, play together, and play as long as we can.

Q. Megan, did you think at some point, I haven't missed a shot in a while? Did you think of that at all?

MEGAN GUSTAFSON: Yeah, I mean, a little bit. My teammates have done such a good job of looking for it, tapping in, or if they're on the high side, getting it into me, and I know Kathleen had a couple amazing passes to me and she dished, so I have to credit my teammates for sure.

Q. Have you guys kind of stopped to think how special those numbers Kathleen is putting up, and she only took over the point guard spot three quarters of the way through the season? When Tania comes back next year, how will the flow of

the game be next year with all you guys on the floor?

KATHLEEN DOYLE: Yeah, I think we do a good job of finding each other and just not playing one-on-one basketball more, just looking for our teammates, and it's a lot more fun to play that way.

Q. Megan, would you say this is your best game you've ever had?

MEGAN GUSTAFSON: It's kind of hard to compare to high school just because that was a little bit different level of competition, but I mean, I was just there to win. That was kind of my only goal, and so, again, my teammates and my coaches, they knew, and I was able to get open, and if I wasn't open I was able to get to my teammates.

LISA BLUDER: First of all, I want to thank the crowd again for coming out to support us today. I thought they were loud. They were engaged. Obviously home court is really important during this tournament. It's the one national tournament you get to play on your home court, so you might as well take advantage of it and use it, and I think that we're doing a good job of using our fans, and I think our fans are just tremendous at supporting our basketball team. A big thank-you to them.

With our team, I don't know what to even say about Megan anymore. I mean, amazing. She just is an incredible -- I think you get a feel for her, she's an incredible human being, too. She's fun to be around. She's always positive. But the numbers that she put up today, a career high 33 points, 15 for 16, we teased her after the game, what's wrong with you missing that shot. But just an amazing number.

And then Kathleen, we really need to note that, that she took the freshman assist record away from Sam Logic. When you think of Sam Logic and who she was, a first-round WNBA pick, and she's taking that record away, that shows you what the potential is for Kathleen Doyle. Lex coming in, I'm really happy for her as a senior, converting those free throws at the end.

It was a really fun game to be a part of. Again, just really excited to keep playing again because this is a good South Dakota team. This is a team that won the whole tournament last year. They're well-coached. They're very balanced. That's what scared me going into this game is they're such a balanced basketball team.

Q. Start of the third quarter, the first 13 points were all by the post players. Megan got the first nine, then Hannah got a couple baskets. That was the strategy?

LISA BLUDER: Well, again, when you've got posts like that, why wouldn't you? I thought that South Dakota did a pretty good job of trying to take that away from us, sagging off of our perimeters, and you know, again, credit those guys. 23 assists, so we got them the ball, even though I thought South Dakota was really trying to pack it in on them.

Q. Would you say you're moving the ball as well as you have all year the last couple games or maybe just today?

LISA BLUDER: You know, I thought we started out the game doing a good job of that. The second quarter, I thought we got a little stagnant. I think that was part of our problem the second quarter. We had five field goals. We were doing a little bit too much one-on-one, where we're more of a pass-and-distribute team, and we want to be that type of team, and we got away from our identity a little bit in that second quarter, but I think we got it back as the game went on.

Q. Is that just Bre at the end, she's not to give up an easy basket?

LISA BLUDER: I mean, that's why she's in. We have a defensive team at the end, we have a free throw team at the end, and Bre is definitely on the defensive team. We've got to get her to quit fouling a little bit, but she's young and she's learning, and I'm glad she's a Hawkeye.

Q. Three-point defense, is it just a matter of South Dakota is just such a good three-point shooting team?

LISA BLUDER: They are a very good three-point team, and we actually said that was one of our top keys was three-point defense, and we obviously didn't do a very good job of that, especially against J.C. Bradley. She had four threes in the second quarter, so the second quarter, we weren't offensively doing as well as we were capable of. But also we gave up threes in that second quarter, and I thought that gave them a lot of momentum going into the locker room.

But I was pretty happy with the other three quarters.

Q. Would you agree that of the 13 rebounds Megan had, the last one was probably the most important because you were up two, missed a three, and you called a time-out right away, ran a play, and she saw the clock and she scored?

LISA BLUDER: Yeah, and I thought our team -- I thought they did a great job of focusing on timeouts and really executing. For example, on that one, we called a time-out, we were able to check what type of defense they were in, we were able to call a play, we were able to use the clock in that situation, so I thought that was really good. I thought our team did a good job

in those situations -- when they were trying to foul us, the free throw situations. So I was happy with the way we managed that at the end. I thought the team really focused and did a good job of that.

Q. How has Hannah evolved into a contributor for you?

LISA BLUDER: Yeah, you know, I think we were putting -- is it a round circle in a square peg? What's the one? What do you say? Or is it vice versa? I think we were trying to do that a little bit last year with her. We were trying to have her play more of a 4 position all summer long she worked on it, and you know, she just felt she was undersized to play the 5. She's not. She can play the 5, and I think this year she's just embraced it, understood that that's the best place for her on the floor, and she is such an important part of our offense and defense as a 5 on the floor. And I love to see her confidence growing. I absolutely love that.

You know, and I talked to her a couple weeks ago about this is a tough situation. You're playing behind one of the best posts really, I think, in the Midwest. You're playing behind her, so it does limit your minutes, but the minutes that you're in are so vitally important to us, and when you go in, we have a lot of confidence in her, and I just love it that she's playing that way.

Q. What's it like to watch her and Megan go at it in practice?

LISA BLUDER: You know, they battle. But you know who I feel sorry for is our gray squad, our practice guys. They really take a beating in there with those two.

Q. Is there a way to get them both on the floor do you think at the same time?

LISA BLUDER: You know, there is a way to get them on the floor. I don't know that it's the best for us. I mean, I don't know that we're best offensively with both of them on the floor. You know, I kind of go with Chase and Megan a little bit more or Chase and Hannah on the floor together. But when Megan is in there, I kind of really like to isolate her. But there's always possibilities of that.

Q. What do you think is going to happen next round? Do you think maybe South Dakota State -- if it's South Dakota State, do you think maybe they've earned a home game since they beat you during the regular season, or what do you think is going to happen?

LISA BLUDER: I don't think any of that matters. I think what matters is money and attendance, and unfortunately that's the way it is with the WNIT, and so we'll have to wait until after tomorrow's game to see our opponent and where the game will be.

If we had our druthers, we'd probably like to play on Thursday. I know our men are playing at home next week, so if we have the option to choose, that's what we would choose. But we have to wait and see what happens with that game tomorrow and then who they decide will be the host.

Q. Chase didn't score, but she had five rebounds, three assists and three blocked shots.

LISA BLUDER: Yeah. You know, and I had a hard time getting her in at the end because when they have five guards basically on the floor, it's hard to have two posts in there at the same time. And so it was hard for me to get Chase in toward that end in that fourth quarter, end of the third quarter, just because of matching up against them.

Q. Nine blocks and five steals, so active hands on defense I guess you could say, a handful led to transition buckets.

LISA BLUDER: I like the blocks. The blocks to me are kind of -- they're kind of powerful, right? They kind of make you stand up a little straighter. The crowd loves it, so those are fun. So it was really fun to see us get a couple of key blocks.