

March 5, 2015



Minnesota - 82
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An Interview With:

**PURDUE
COACH SHARON VERSYP
WHITNEY BAYS
LIZA CLEMONS**

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Coach Sharon Versyp and Whitney Bays and Liza Clemons. Coach, an opening statement.

COACH VERSYP: If we could play with this much heart through the season that would be great. But we also had pieces that didn't fall together the entire year. I'm just proud of these two seniors, how hard -- their heart and their fight got after it. And this is how we play Purdue basketball. We got back to what we needed to do with the defense, sharing the basketball, 24 assists on 25 makes.

What it came down to for us was they got a lot of offensive boards.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Whitney, what was the difference between these two games? Today you guys get down by 18 and fight back like that. Just what was it about this week that kept you guys at it?

WHITNEY BAYS: You know, we're a young team. And sometimes it takes tough losses to learn things. But just the heart. That's what it was. That was the difference. The skill set has been there, you know what I mean? All these things we're seeing. Everybody can shoot. It's been there all along, but just the heart and effort. That's all it was.

Q. Liza, your emotions right now?

LIZA CLEMONS: It does hurt to know that this is my last game to be with my teammates. I've said it: Basketball is all I've known for a long time. But I'm really proud of the way my team fought. We came in as underdogs, and like you said we're down 18, and to know that we fought hard to come back and we almost had the game, I'm really proud of my teammates for that.

Q. Whitney, what was the talk when you guys got down so big there in the first half. What were you guys talking about amongst each other?

WHITNEY BAYS: Just chip away at it, honestly. Get stops. We kept bringing back games that we had previously played in. We can do this. Just believing. Getting stops. And talking about who we need to stop and what's the opening on offense and things like that.

But basically just going back to what I said before, just getting everybody riled up and the heart and the effort.

Q. Whitney, eventually what will be your message to the players that are coming back?

WHITNEY BAYS: Just keep playing. Have fun and enjoy. We talked about it in the locker room. I told them to remember this feeling. It's not a good feeling. Nobody likes to feel it. But learn from it. It will make you play harder.

You have these tough losses, but it gives you the experience and you grow. And I think our team stepped up huge. Nobody thought that we were going to do what we did in the tournament.

And everybody stepped up. Everybody played hard. Just remember this feeling. Don't let it happen next year.

Q. Liza, you guys had to try and manage the fouls the best you could down the stretch. What was that like to have both you and Whitney in foul trouble and know you had

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to stay in the game but knowing you needed stops too?

LIZA CLEMONS: It was very difficult for the simple fact we knew we had to be physical but we couldn't be as physical because the way the game was called.

But we definitely just had to keep playing, no matter what, try and get the stop, do it straight up. Hopefully they miss. Either way, box out and keep going. We still had to play hard.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Questions for Coach.

Q. What has to change going into next year?

COACH VERSYP: You know, three things. We gotta be the best-conditioned team and because of a lot of different things we couldn't do that. We have to be a tougher team throughout the year. And third we have to play for each other every single second and every single moment.

Q. Is that latter point something that you guys found a little bit more this week that you didn't have as much over the last month and a half?

COACH VERSYP: I think it was always there. But when you have as many injuries as we had, we didn't know who we were going to have from game to game. It's difficult. You don't know what starting lineup you're going to have. You don't know if you're going to have six players or seven players.

And that doesn't make it an excuse, but we never could get in sync. So that was a good portion of it. And then when you lose as many close games as we do, you lose that confidence.

And we weren't able to overcome it on the floor a lot.

Q. What do you need out of the returning players in the offseason?

COACH VERSYP: Everything. They're going to be shooting obviously over 50,000 shots this summer. They have to work on their bodies, minds, emotion.

We just have to take it to obviously a continued other level, because we're a little bit behind because we've got such a young team. We've got four or five young ones coming in as well. So we've got to have great leadership.

I think you can always have good leadership, but you gotta have great leadership and that could be in any facet -- conditioning,

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academics, weight training. But we have to get stronger. We have to become more physical. We have to become tougher. We've got to want it.

Q. Do these two games sort of help with that message that you have to play more like this than that?

COACH VERSYP: Yeah, I thought -- you know, it came together a little too late, you know? But, yeah, it was enjoyable these last two games, really getting after it and executing on both ends of the floor.

So when you play like that, and that's what the seniors said: You need to carry it over into next year. You need to springboard it and remember this feeling because it hasn't been the season that any of us wanted.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.

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