

Big 12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Saturday, March 4, 2017

Candi Whitaker Recee' Caldwell Arella Guirantes Texas Tech

Baylor - 95

Texas Tech - 63

THE MODERATOR: Okay, we're now joined by the Texas Tech Lady Raiders, Coach Candi Whitaker and her two student-athletes, Recee Caldwell and Arella Guirantes. Coach?

CANDI WHITAKER: Obviously, Baylor is very deep, very tough, very talented team. But I'm proud of our kids that they battled, had a great second quarter, tried to keep us alive. We knew we had to make a lot of threes and I thought we had a lot of players play fearless the at times trying to put it all out there and win the game. Battled for a while and Baylor does what Baylor does. Did I say that right? Anyway, they're good.

Q. Y'all were able to cut it down 6, 7 points there, after the 3-point shooting. What was going right for y'all to open y'all up to get y'all that momentum going?

RECEE CALDWELL: Coach Whitaker and Larryn did a great job calling our horn stuff and I think it makes for good spacing and Larryn got me involved in the game and we started doing some drives and kicks and the floor just really opened up.

Q. Coach, you've seen the last three Baylor teams. They've all fallen short of the Final Four when everyone thought they were really, really good. Is there anything about this team that makes you think they have Final Four potential? Anything different from the three years past?

CANDI WHITAKER: I think that this Baylor team is as talented as anyone in the country. They have more depth in the post than anyone in the country. I thought they were equally good last year. Maybe they have more depth this year in the post. In the tournament it's



about doing what you do best, and showing up every day. I think if they do that, they have as good of a chance as anyone.

Q. After that barrage and Baylor started to pull away what did they change to pull away from y'all and take moment back?

ARELLA GUIRANTES: I think they just got more aggressive and stuck to what they know. They try to get in the post, Nina Davis kept answering back and they just stayed aggressive and didn't fall to our runs.

Q. Coach, yesterday you said you had to have a hot shooting night to beat Baylor. Seemed like you got there, but seemed like other aspects they were able to take control of the game. What were the key aspects in how they were able to beat you today?

CANDI WHITAKER: Well, I think you look at the percentages, right, 45% in the first quarter, 52, then we dropped to 35 and 26, so one is that we stopped scoring with them to remain in the game. You look at their rebounds they just -- they're really big. We're boxing and it doesn't matter. Then I think you throw in Alexis Prince and Wallace making shots and there's no weaknesses in their game. You look at their lineup how do you combat it? You must shoot the ball extremely well to beat Baylor unless you have the size inside to battle with them. You're going to have to shoot it from the arc and make 15-plus threes to stay in the game. It's just what it is when you play Baylor.

Q. Coach, regardless of the scoreboard, what was the effort that you saw today compared to last week? How much more of an effort do you think the girls played with today?

CANDI WHITAKER: I thought they played with a lot more effort, at times, defensively. I thought we played for fearless, more courage to step up and take shots. The shots that Recee took in the second quarter I think took a lot of courage. She didn't have much space or time but she knew for us to stay in the game she knew she had to make big plays. Arella, they were giving her the three and that's not part of her game, but it took courage for her in the third quarter to step up and hit those three 3s. So definitely proud of how our kids fought and I think they have learned a lot this year being on the road. You have to show up and you have to play with a great deal of energy regardless if you're home or away and toward the end of the season I

thought you started to see that.

Q. You mentioned it, Coach, but what kind of improvements did you see from the beginning of conference play until now?

CANDI WHITAKER: You know, our season was a little bit of a roller coaster as far as up and down. We were pretty good at home and we struggled on the road. I've said this a lot, we had six new players that had never been through this league so there were a lot of question marks going into the season. We knew we were much more talented and we had more size but what that equates to in the Big 12 you don't know until you're in the Big 12. I think our players learned a lot. They're talented young women. They all have things to work on and they all have great things they bring to our program.

This season was really a matter of just a learning process more than anything, but I think you saw that through the season, kind of fall down, get back up, learn, play well, know what that feels like, you know, and just kind of finding our way through the Big 12 season.

THE MODERATOR: Okay, we're going to let you guys go. Thank you very much. Have a safe trip home.