

Big 12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Monday, March 6, 2017

Kim Mulkey
Alexis Prince
Kristy Wallace
Baylor

West Virginia - 77

Baylor - 66

THE MODERATOR: We are now joined by the Baylor Lady Bears, Coach Kim Mulkey and her two student-athletes from Baylor University, Kristy Wallace and Alexis Prince. Coach, did you want to make an opening statement? She declines opening statement. We will go straight to questions.

Q. Kim, you were giving up 55 points a game and they had 65 at the end of the third quarter. Could you ever have imagined that?

KIM MULKEY: Very few times in 31 years of coaching, something like that, I can ever think of one player took her team on her shoulders and won three games and Tynice Martin did that. She did it in every game here. She just elevate over people and make shots and kudos to that team because she really did. I've seen it one other time where one player just took her team to a championship.

I think back, I'm not a zone coach, but I may have waited a little too late to go to a zone. I thought the zone disrupted their rhythm and her rhythm and just look at the stat sheet, guys. We had four people in double figures, but then after that nobody scores for you. So some people need to do some soul searching on our bench when they go in a game. Is the moment too big for you, or can you put on your big girl panties and play in a game like this?

Let me quickly tell you, this is but three games and if I can be as happy being an opponent as I can for a guy and a school and a team it would be Mike Carey. He is a hard-nosed, man-to-man coach. I love how he coaches, and I'm happy for him. As disappointed as I am that we didn't win another tournament championship, I'm just happy for Mike and his team.



Q. Kim, only 15 turnovers, but it seemed like they came at crucial times and then maybe just also the inability to get the rebound when you needed it. Did you feel like those things were big?

KIM MULKEY: Bryce, this game honestly was probably lost in the first five minutes. Part of our scouting report when you played these guys -- because they're on a roll right now and they're playing really well and they're scoring the ball. You can only give them one opportunity to miss. We didn't get rebounds.

If you look at the last quarter and a half for us, guys, we cut the game to 6 points being down -- what were we? 20-something? Why didn't we play with that sense of urgency when the game started? If you play with that sense of urgency when the game started and you get every loose ball and you're productive the first five minutes of the game, you might not have lost.

Q. Kristy, how frustrating was that getting down 21 against a team that you had beat twice during the regular season?

KRISTY WALLACE: We shot ourselves in the foot tonight, and as Coach said it was lost in the first five minutes.

Q. Coach, you talked about having a lot of admiration for Mike Carey. He's been at it a long time. I think he came in 2001 at West Virginia about a little after you did at Baylor. Can you talk about why you admire his coaching style and what do you think this means to him, his first conference title?

KIM MULKEY: Mike and I just talk the same language. He's not petty. He just wants to coach. He's not into who his best friends are. He just wants to go out and coach hard-nosed basketball, and I just enjoy visiting with him. I think he teaches man-to-man defense as good as anybody that I've ever coached against and I just love that. I just love how he challenges his girls, and he coaches 'em just like he coached guys.

You know, he's out there to help 'em win. He doesn't mind getting on 'em. He doesn't mind challenging them, and they consequently play good for him.

Q. Alexis, you were on Tynice from the start. How difficult of a match-up is that particularly when a player is on a roll like that? What was the scouting

report as far as trying to defend her?

ALEXIS PRINCE: I mean when a player hot, ain't really much you can do.

Q. Coach, if you can, just talk about last four minutes when you all -- when the team made the run to cut it down to 6 and just couldn't find a way to get over the hump.

KIM MULKEY: Well, you're fatigued at that point. You're leaving it all -- listen, I am excited and I expected them to -- well, I better use a better word than "fight." I expected them to play hard. That's all we know.

They didn't just sit back and feel sorry for themselves. They tried to make it a ball game, but when you have to expend that much energy sometimes you just can't make that one more shot or that one more free throw. But, again, if you played that hard the first five minutes or even the first half you might not have had to use that much energy late.

Q. Coach, how important now is the next week and a half where you have some time off before you guys have to play in terms of getting healthy and getting over this and moving forward?

KIM MULKEY: There's four parts to a season. The regular season is the most important thing. That's 18 basketball games. We're the Big 12 Champs. We've been fortunate for I don't know how many years now to win the tournament on top of that. We didn't, though. That certainly doesn't outweigh what we did in the regular season, so that's the second part of your season.

The third part now will be the NCAA Tournament. Hopefully we'll get a good seed and host at Baylor and go to a good regional where our fans can see us play. You've gotta win four games now to get to the Final Four. The first part of your -- nonconference is the first part of the four segments of your season.

Q. Coach, how positive was it to make two stops and then score the last two buckets going into the halftime in the locker room?

KIM MULKEY: I thought it was big. You cut it to single digits, and I talked about that at halftime. That's a good thing. You cut it to single digits there, and we did some good things through the course of the game when we were in desperate mode to do some good things. But you should not always have to wait for that. We've been blessed. Three losses we've not been in that situation much. So hopefully when we get a few days off and come back and prepare, we can look at this as a learning experience and challenge some kids that just flat out didn't help us today.

Q. Kim, when you're a heavy favorite and they

come out launching threes and it wasn't just all the threes and they start making enough of them, did you feel like your team started to play uptight at all?

KIM MULKEY: No, I wouldn't use "uptight." Probably just like if you're out there, it's like, whew, when are they going to miss one? I think it's probably more that than uptight. We never think we're going to lose a game, no matter how far we're down.

But it can wear on you a little bit when you think, gosh, I guarded her pretty good and she elevated and made it in your takes and when you did get her to miss we give up an offensive rebound. Those kinds of things. Didn't happen for us today.

Q. Coach, it's been eight years since you entered the NCAA Tournament coming off a loss. How might that change your message and your motivating tactics?

KIM MULKEY: It won't. It won't at all.

Q. Kristy, you guys did play with very much intensity in the fourth quarter especially. What do you think it was that you guys didn't start off the game like that when you reflect on it. Coach said you weren't tight, but what do you think it was that you didn't have that intensity from the beginning?

KRISTY WALLACE: I know toward the end we didn't give up and I'm proud of our team for that definitely. Coming out, off with the bang they were ready, played good, strong defense; and, you know, they hit shots. Yeah, it's a credit to them. They played well.

Q. Kim, you played Natalie a lot of minutes and I guess that was maybe with the zone and the press, but she just like she has in some other games seemed like she was reluctant to pull the trigger.

KIM MULKEY: Natalie is a freshman and through the course of the year she has become more aggressive. She has looked to shoot it. Dekeiya played 15 minutes and just was turning down good shots. She would drive to the paint and normally she makes those shots. She was, I thought, passive, and I knew we were going to start pressing. And I just thought Natalie being fresh and we were going to drop back to the zone and Mike could play the top of the zone better than Dekeiya could because Natalie is a natural 2 player and Dekeiya is a 3.

Q. Coach, does it look like still with Alexis Jones it's still a day-by-day, week-by-week?

KIM MULKEY: She worked out today. She was on the floor with the ball and says her knee is feeling better. I'm hoping that we have done the right thing by her and let her rest until the most important part and that's the

NCAA Tournament. I hope she can, you know, give us some valuable time during the tournament.

THE MODERATOR: Okay, ladies. Thank you very much. Congratulations on a good season and good luck in the NCAA.