

Big 12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Monday, March 6, 2017

Mike Carey
Lanay Montgomery
Teana Muldrow
Tynice Martin

West Virginia

West Virginia - 77

Baylor - 66

THE MODERATOR: We are now joined by the West Virginia Mountaineers, Coach Mike Carey, his student-athletes, Tynice Martin, Teana Muldrow and Lanay Montgomery. Coach, congratulations. Your thoughts?

MIKE CAREY: You know, first of all, Baylor is a great program. They do a great job. Won the leg again and everything, so it's an honor for us. If we're going to knock somebody off it was an honor for us to knock off Baylor because they're such a great program. Give all the credit to our players.

They knew coming down here that we had to win at least one, two games; and I told 'em after the second game, hell, we might as well win the third one since we're here. And they came out and played extremely hard and continued to play defense the whole time. I look here where Baylor only had nine offensive rebounds, which is pretty good for us, defensively keeping them off the boards.

We turned it over only 7 times, so I thought those were going to be the areas that we had to do really well in and we were able to do that.

Q. Coach, what clicked for you guys here in Oklahoma City?

MIKE CAREY: I tell you what, our players just -- we were having good practices before we came here. We really were. They were focused, and you could just see it in their body language that, you know -- I said in here after the Oklahoma game I had to shut down our shootaround because they were so focused and going so hard. We needed some energy for the game.



I knew we were focused, and, you know, I thought the last 5 minutes of this half we played not to lose instead of playing to win; but, you know, we were able to hold on and get the victory.

Q. Coach, last evening you mentioned about the pace of the game, it was -- especially against Texas it was quicker than you wanted it to be, but tonight for whatever reason that was the pace that you got and you stayed with it until you as you just mentioned until late in the game. Was it just a gut feeling or just what?

MIKE CAREY: I just felt, especially when they were going big on us, the opportunity we had on the fast breaks we wanted to pick that up when they went big on us. Then I just thought the last 5 minutes I could tell -- I took a couple of timeouts because I could tell we were about out of gas. Instead of attacking their press and attacking their zone we were just, you know, getting some bad shots and wasn't getting to the rim. But, you know, give our players all the credit. We don't play a lot of people and to play three games in three nights against the caliber of teams we played, they did just a fantastic job.

Q. Tynice, you had a huge tournament. Kim Mulkey said that you really willed your team to this championship through all three games. At one point you hit a three, stuck your tongue out, looked like you were having a lot of fun out there. What was it like for you and did you know going into this, did you feel like you were going to be on in this tournament?

TYNICE MARTIN: I mean, coming into the tournament, yeah, we had a lot of confidence. Like Coach said, we had great practices and we had good energy. It was just different from regular season. Everybody was just playing hard. I could tell from the Oklahoma game that we came here to win and I mean, we had to do it for Lanay. I wanted to send Lanay out with a championship, and that's what we did.

Q. You guys had to -- you know, losing Bria from last year you had to find your new identity maybe a little bit this year and you went through some tough times during Big 12 play with a couple of losing streaks. As recently as nine days ago you

lost at Oklahoma State. What was it that finally clicked you guys together? Can you put that into perspective?

LANAY MONTGOMERY: I think, like, coming into the tournament we didn't know if we would like the NCAA Tournament and our coach told us that, you know, girls, we have got to go down here and win at least two games to know for sure that we can get to the NCAA, and I think we came down here and had our mindset and the girls knew it was all or nothing. Our backs were against the wall and we had to give it our all. I think we came out and played strong, tough and physical for three games.

TEANA MULDROW: I just think that we wanted to defend. Playing basketball I learned that offense is great, but defense wins championships and we bought into defense and we knew it was going to be the key. Scoring is not the problem for us. It is just sticking with defense and having each other's backs. I think we did that well this tournament.

Q. Ladies, can you talk about fourth quarter. Baylor gets within 4, what was the key for y'all to be able to hold back that surge they had and extend the lead and go on to win?

TYNICE MARTIN: Defense. They hit some good shots, and we stopped playing defense for a while and we picked it back up and we had to hit free throws. They started fouling us at the end, and we had to focus and not let their press get into our heads and not turn the ball over.

Q. Coach, can you put into perspective a sophomore scoring 32 in a conference championship game?

TYNICE MARTIN: Of course. It feels amazing, but when you have the team --

MIKE CAREY: I think he asked me.

TYNICE MARTIN: Okay, go ahead. Sorry! (Laughter.)

MIKE CAREY: No, Tynice, you know, she has been a scorer the whole year. Well, for two years. She was a scorer last year for us and a scorer this year. Our biggest thing with Tynice during the year when she started scoring, people started overplaying here and playing box and ones and sending their zone out at her.

Once she learned how to start moving without the basketball and attacking the rim, good things happened for her. Our players, you got to give our players a lot of credit, because, man, they looked for her in this tournament. They really looked for her. When she broke open she had the ball and that's the key. People

got to free her up and make good passes to her, and we were able to do that.

TYNICE MARTIN: Like I said, it feels amazing, you know, to average what I averaged this tournament. But when you have good practices and when you have, you know, my teammates behind me saying nobody can guard you and my coach saying attack them, you have no choice but to do what they say and to believe in yourself. So I feel like that's why I play with the confidence I play with.

Q. Tynice, you got a little bit emotional talking about your family being able to be here and watch you play. What was it like to have them in the crowd and how often do they get to see you play?

TYNICE MARTIN: My dad, he gets to the big games. My mom, she has a heavy work schedule. But it was good seeing them in the stands, you know, witnessing this and us having this first Big 12 championship together. It meant everything, you know, looking in the stands and seeing them, you know, cheering and happy and them on TV. So it meant everything for them to be there.

Q. Mike, I know with all the conference changes and stuff over the last few years a lot of schools suddenly were playing teams way far way and you guys are way far way from this whole conference. Can you talk about what some of the difficulties of that have been to play a championship game so far away from your home fans, but also what it means to win your first one?

MIKE CAREY: You saw when we played Oklahoma here in Oklahoma it was like a home game for them, and then Texas, a lot of fans and Baylor today. We're so far from West Virginia, Morgantown. We don't get a lot of fans here, but you know what? The fans we did have here we really appreciate it and I can hear 'em, and when the game was over they were singing "Country Roads" and that's all that mattered, that we heard that song we end. And give Lanay Montgomery credit. She does so much for us on the defensive side and the offensive side, but she sacrifices a lot of games setting picks and helping the guards on defense; and, you know, we're really going to miss her as a senior.

Teana played half a game and almost had a double-double, so that tells you what she brings to the game. And Chania had 8 assists and only two turnovers. So it was a total team effort, and Tynice hit some great shots and some tough shots. Tynice takes shots you say, "no, no, no. Great shot!" She has that confidence, and we want her to have that confidence, you know, she has a green light. You got a shot, shoot it.

THE MODERATOR: Best of luck in the NAAs, guys.

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Kim Mulkey
Alexis Prince
Kristy Wallace
Baylor

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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 the 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.