



2014 NCAA DIVISION I WOMEN'S BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

Regional Semifinal · Notre Dame vs. Oklahoma State
Purcell Pavilion at the Joyce Center · Notre Dame, Ind.
Saturday, March 29

REGIONAL SEMIFINAL GAME 2 QUOTES – Notre Dame

Muffet McGraw – Head Coach

Opening Statement...

"I thought the crowd set the tone today. There was no question when we came out to see the sea of green—to hear the excitement, to feel the electricity—that was a phenomenal atmosphere for a game. I thought the roof might come off the crowd was so loud at times. They really got us off to a great start. Thanks to the crowd for getting the game going."

On Odyssey Sims...

"She is a tough matchup no matter where she is on the floor. I think their team has gotten a lot better throughout the year. At the beginning of the year, I think their team was all Odyssey. They were waiting for the freshmen to come along and they have come along. She has really done a great job leading them and getting them to improve throughout the year. So, this is a much different team from the beginning of the year, and I think you have to credit Odyssey's leadership for that."

On Achonwa's start...

"She was running the floor, scoring in transition, we were finding her inside off the pick and roll; just a fabulous game. She got us out to a great start. She got a lot of offensive rebounds early. She looked so determined. She was demanding the ball, and we were willing to give it to her. Part of the game plan was to get the ball inside, and I was happy we were able to do that."

On Jewell Loyd's rebounding...

"Right from the get-go, she was really looking to get on the boards and start the break to get us going in transition. She is such a good rebounder; we are never surprised when she gets a double-double. We think she is capable of that every day."

On not being able to extend the lead...

"We knew they were going to score. We knew we weren't going to shut them out. They have a really good player in Tiffany Bias. She is really hard to guard and she is so fast. I think early on the crowd got to them a little bit because they missed some easy shots they normally would make. So, I think once

Tiffany got out and hit a couple shots that really relaxed their team and they were able to get into their sets better. So, I think getting out to that big lead was really key for us.”

On resting Achonwa...

“I really wanted to take her out, but I didn’t want to. I wanted to rest her a little bit, but once she was on the bench for those short minutes, I couldn’t wait to get her back in. When they went inside against her in the second half, I think they may have been trying to get her in foul trouble to get her out of the game. Jones played really well. They were able to score inside on us pretty easily but I think Natalie was the best player on floor, certainly in the first half.”

On Jim Littell’s comments claiming this year’s team is better than last year’s...

“We have been a really good team so far. We do have a lot of scoring threats and a lot of versatility. We have a lot of people who can come in and have a big night. When you have three players you count on every night, one of them is going to have a big night. I think that takes the pressure off of the other two. I think the fact that they enjoy playing together so much and their unselfishness has been a trademark for us the last few years. I think we knew when we lost Skylar [Diggins] every one was going to have to step up and do a little bit more. She is still sort of here in spirit. I think she has left a legacy of that intensity and competitiveness. I think you see that in Jewell, Ace [Natalie Achonwa], and Kayla [McBride] and all of the people that played with her. I think we’re a good team, but it remains to be seen if we are better than last year.”

Jewell Loyd – Sophomore – Guard

On the keys to Notre Dame’s 14-0 start...

“Transition. Being able to rebound and push. We did that very well.”

On challenges of and preparation for guarding Baylor guard Odyssey Sims Monday night...

“Just making sure I protect the ball. I probably will practice with my position coach later, making sure I know what her tendencies are. I’m hoping that our team defense will be with me on Monday night.”

Natalie Achonwa – Senior – Forward

On challenge of maintaining focus after starting the game on a 14-0 run...

“Every team’s going to fight back no matter who you’re playing. They did a great job of that today. I think it was just a matter of focusing on getting our defensive stops. We run a drill in practice that’s just four stops and that’s what we focus on. Just the next two minutes and how we’re going to get stops and how we’re going to continue that momentum.”

On keeping up with Notre Dame’s fast pace of play as a forward...

“You have guards like Jewell Loyd, Kayla McBride and Lindsay Allen, people that can get up the floor. As a post, if you don’t keep up, you’re going to get left behind. I think it’s just focusing on how to play in the gaps and how to get up the court. Half the time I was open just because they were so focused on Kayla dribbling up the court and Jewell coming for the alley-oop on the other side, that I just slipped through the middle.”

On her behind the back pass to Madison Cable in transition...

“After the defense adjusted and focused on me running down the floor, Madison Cable [did a great job] on just continuing to cut. It was easy to find her when everyone’s staring and packing [the paint] against you. She made a great cut and was open in the paint and did a great job at finishing.”

On scoring 15 points in the first half and controlling the paint...

“When you have great players and scorers like Jewell Loyd and Kayla McBride, you have some of the best players in the country on your team, the defense focuses on them a little more. The ability that they have to pass and share the ball is why we’re so successful. I just happened to be open in the middle a couple of times and they did a great job of finding me. I was just trying to give the team energy and contribute in any way I can. When they’re focusing on the other players, it’s easier for me to get a bucket down the middle.”



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REGIONAL SEMIFINAL GAME 2 QUOTES – Oklahoma State

Jim Littell – Head Coach

Opening Statement...

"I'm very proud of our team. We've had a wonderful year. We finished 3rd in the BIG 12, which is arguably one of the best conferences in the country. Then we advanced in the NCAA tournament and went to Purdue and won on their home court, and then came in here and fought. I'm very proud of our group. Obviously Notre Dame is very deserving of their ranking. As I said earlier in the week, I think there are two teams who have separated themselves from the rest of the country and they are UConn and Notre Dame. They have every piece to the puzzle—they've got athletes, they've got shooters, they've got post players, they understand the game and they're very efficient about what they do. After probably the first five to seven minutes, I thought our kids played somewhat even with them, but sometimes you've just got to say someone's pretty darn good. And that team is really, really good and well coached. We got beat today by a better team, but that doesn't take away from the fact that I'm proud of my kids and the year that they've had. I want to look at the big picture and to win 25 in our league is an outstanding year."

On Tiffany Bias...

"This young lady has started every game for four years for us. She's been the face of our program. She's been a leader since the days she's stepped on this campus. She's taken our program to new levels from being a NIT team to the Sweet 16. It all falls on what this young lady has done and how she's lead over the years. I'm very proud of what's she's accomplished. There was no way she wasn't going to play in this game. She would have walked out there with a broken leg. I've never had a young lady in 37 years of coaching that gives more, expects more of herself and is a better teammate than this young lady."

On the game in general...

"I don't know if we were in a little bit of awe or not, but it did seem like we were a step behind in everything we did the first five or six minutes. We were sending two back in transition and they were just blowing by us. We haven't been on this stage, and sometimes you've got to live it and go through it to really understand what it is. Sometimes when you're a little tense and a little awestruck, it kind of

slows you down a little bit. I thought after the first six or seven minutes of the game, we played more like we are capable of playing. It was very difficult for us to guard them. They have so many pieces of the puzzle. Natalie [Achonwa] was very tough on the inside, [Jewell] Loyd is just a tremendous athlete and I don't know if there's many young ladies in country who can play the game better than Kayla McBride does. We got beat by a better team. We told our team afterwards, 'This is what we are striving to be, this is how we are trying to build our program.' Sometimes you've got to see what it's like. You've got to play the best to know what it takes, and we'll take this as a learning experience and hopefully our program will continue to grow by experiencing this situation."

Tiffany Bias – Senior – Guard

On Notre Dame jumping off to a good start...

"[Notre Dame] jumped off to a quick start and they had the momentum on their side. We weren't stopping ball and that transition really killed us. It's unfortunate that it was at the beginning of the game and it started like that. When you get down 11-0, it's hard to fight back, but they're a good team so we needed to come out better than that."

On Oklahoma State's success in the lane...

"When you see openings and gaps, you need to attack because when you attack, you can get your teammates open. They were really playing hard on the wings and they are a good defensive team, so when you see those openings and the gaps, then you need to take it."

On whether or not her ankle injury was a problem...

"It was one of those things that was all adrenaline. I wasn't too worried about it when I started playing and getting warmed up and getting loose. I didn't feel it at all during the game."

On comparing Notre Dame and Baylor...

"I think that it is going to be a good matchup. They both have good guards and good posts. It's going to be hard to guard Odyssey [Sims] off the dribble and staying out of foul trouble with her. For Notre Dame, they have good guards too who can rise up and shoot. It's going to be a dog fight between [Notre Dame and Baylor]."

On being determined to play in this game despite her ankle problems...

"Coach [Jim Littell] really helped me out these last couple of days to get me back to 100 percent and get me to where I can play and feel comfortable. I knew it could be one-and-done, especially when I didn't feel like I played my game the last couple of games, I wanted to come out and give it all for my team, that's all you can ask for. I was lucky that my shots were falling today. Coach [Jim Littell] always told me, 'Have no regrets.' This is what we worked for, playing teams like this, so we came out here and gave it all we could."

On her time at Oklahoma State...

"It was a rollercoaster. I wouldn't have wanted to go through everything that I went through and experience all this stuff without the people beside me. They were there on my hardest days and they were there on my happiest days. They were always by my side, no matter what. When you say the word family, that's what the Oklahoma State Cowgirls have."

Lashawn Jones – Junior – Center

On guarding Natalie Achonwa...

“She was going to the boards very hard. Her being so aggressive was something that made her very tough to contain.”

Comparing Notre Dame and Baylor...

“Notre Dame is more than Baylor. They both have good posts and good guards. I think it’s going to be a good matchup between them. I just think Notre Dame is a little more athletic than Baylor.”