

Penn State Women's Basketball
Carolyn Kieger Postgame Press Conference
vs. Youngstown State – December 12, 2021

Opening Statement

I just want to thank everyone for coming out today. It wasn't our best start, but I'm extremely proud of our team for showing toughness and resilience, pushing back and weathering the storm at the beginning of that game. That's a credit to what we've been working on mentally and emotionally. I give a lot of credit to our captains and our upperclassmen for keeping us in that game and keeping us mentally composed. Obviously, it was a huge day for and Anna Camden with a double-double. She had a big performance on the glass, and she was three for four from three-point line. There was a career high from Leilani Kapinus tonight with 20 points and seven rebounds. And Ali Brigham had eight and eight in about 10 minutes. We just talked about this in the locker room that with Makenna Marisa and Ali Brigham being in foul trouble in the first half, a lot of people stepped up tonight, which was huge and important for our team to see. While Shay Hagan's had six steals, she went on her a little stretch by herself. That really got us that spark and just ignited our defense which was which was great. So, it was a huge team win. Youngstown State is a great team, they have you know five kids at any given point that can go off for double figures, they shoot lights out. They were 8-0, so that's a great program win for us.

Q: The majority of your points came from assists. How much do you think having a good bond between players is important during games?

A: It is everything. We have been talking over the last six games about how our assist numbers have gone down. I think that has been a key contribution to our struggles on the offensive end the last couple games, but to see us get back in that positive assist to turnover ratio was huge for us. Obviously with Makenna Marisa not having as large of a scoring night as she usually does, it was great for others to step up and for her to get other people involved. We talk about our assist to turnover ratio on a daily basis and it's great for us to get that back in that positive column.

Q: Coach, Youngstown State came out firing on all cylinders, but you guys rebounded rather quickly following the media timeout. What did you say to the team and what was the conversation like in the huddle to kind of get them back on track?

A: Yeah, just challenge them. You know, I thought we call it our juice. I thought we were flat and I didn't think we were playing with a lot of emotion. It was just kind of flat in the gym in general. So we just really wanted them to pick it up and make sure that we're doing the little things and focus on the fundamentals, focus on running hard, focus on talking, all the stuff you can control. Usually when that happens, you focus on the controllables, good things turn around and that's what happened.

Q: You guys outshot Youngstown State tonight 49 percent to 28 percent, and you were talking about the team and the team's overall shooting performance. What do you credit this performance to overall?

A: Yeah, I didn't see that coming for us to be able to hold them to 28 percent from the field. Usually, like I said, they've been shooting lights out. So huge credit to our defensive gameplan and for our players to have their hands up and be in their face. I thought they did a great job talking through screens, we hit a couple and navigated a few really well but we ended up with 10 blocks which is a lot for obviously any team, but I thought our players were really locked into having a hand in their face and in their shooting pockets.

Q: Coach, looking at the communication so far to start the season how would you judge it just between the players?

A: [It's] getting there. It is never where you want it to be right when we talk about really loud and continuous communication and battlefield communication all the time. That's something we stressed all summer long and something that has definitely gotten better from last year to this year but obviously as a coach you are never satisfied, and I think the players know that is an area of growth we need to keep pursuing every day.

Q: You mentioned it before about the Anna Camden double-double but what did you see from her today?

A: Yeah, confidence. She shot that one three with someone in her face and didn't even hesitate. That was one of my favorite plays of the game. But we've really been challenging Anna to rebound for us and be that defensive presence for us and she's been locked into that last game. She had ten rebounds today. She's really buying into that role and that's huge for our team. You know, she's our captain, she's our vocal leader, and to have her come back and back that up with a double-double is huge for her confidence and for the rest of the team as well.