

Penn State Women's Basketball
Head Coach Carolyn Kieger Postgame Press Conference
vs. Maryland - January 30, 2022

Opening Statement: First of all, I thought tonight was a much better effort from our team. And I thought at the halfway mark of conference [play], gives us something to build upon. We outplayed them in that second half, we outscored them in the second half and really, I thought [we] paid attention to the details and had some toughness battles that we won there. Absolutely something to build upon. Can't give up 21 offensive rebounds and turn the ball over 24 times though. We shot 60% for the game, but it was those turnovers that killed us. When we got looks, they were falling. We got to obviously make sure we secure and value the basketball a little bit more. On the flip side, we got to be tough and can't give them second chance points because I think they shot 25 more shots than us. And a lot of it had to do with those second-chance points and those offensive rebounds that really torched us down the stretch, but proud of the team for their effort and coming back and we said we're going to keep it simple and focus on toughness and we absolutely got better in that department tonight.

Q: How do you feel your defense performed today in comparison to the Michigan State game?

A: I thought we were more locked into the scout[ing report]. I thought our communication was better. We obviously only had six steals, which we need to get in passing lanes and distract vision a little better than we did tonight. But I thought their communication in the second half was the best it's been in a while, and they were trying to fix mistakes on the fly and help each other out, which is a positive sign for us moving forward as we're halfway through, so [it's] better, obviously. I think those 21 offensive rebounds were killers for us and we have to fix that, even if we eliminate 10 of them it's a one point game first or second chance points.

Q: Makenna Marisa got honored before the game for getting 1000 Career points. How big was that moment for you?

A: Yea, I think it's a testament to her hard work and what she wants to do here at Penn State. But I'll tell you what, she is not satisfied. We'll celebrate it and it's just the first of many milestones for her here at Penn State and no doubt in my mind, we'll probably get 2000 at some point here. So, she's going to keep grinding, she's going to keep working and you know, it's one day at a time, it's one play at a time and honestly, I told you guys this two nights ago: the only thing Makenna cares about is the "W."

Q: You've mentioned before how Shay is your defensive Captain, she always brings the energy on defense. As we're hitting that midseason mark, how do you feel she's improved since the start of the season?

A: You know, I think for us, we're trying to improve in that area for everyone. It's not just for one player to improve in that category. It's got to be by committee. And that's an area that when we hit these next 10 games, it's got to improve. We have to have a mentality as a team of stop, score, and just continue to do that for 40 minutes and really buy into each possession. So, I'm not going to put that on one player. First it starts with me and then it's all five people on the floor at one given time.

Q: How tough was it playing your third game in just the past six days? Do you think that that has a lot of big effects on today's outcome?

A: I don't. We never make excuses. And we never will, but get to play the game we love, and we got to do a lot so it's a good thing to be able to play the game that you love in front of your fans, so we'll never complain about that.

Q: Coach, how big of an impact did the 24 turnovers have on today's game?

A: Yeah, huge. It was the number one thing, I think. 23 points off the turnovers and 20 Points off second chance points. So that's 43 points right there. So obviously, huge factors in the game.

Q: Kelly Jekot had a great run on offense today. How good does it feel to have her back playing like that?

A: Great. You know Kelly, Makenna, and I have spent a lot of time in the film room trying to take the ball out of Makenna's hands and Kelly had five assists tonight, taking the points away from Makenna at times, which I really think helped us and get the team set, being that commander and the director on the floor as our vet. We know she can do it and she's just continued to get more confident as the season went on and she went four for eight from three. Her facilitating from the point guard I think is a key and something we need to really continue to get better at and continue to get the ball out of Makenna's hands and I think our offense will flourish more and more if we you know, keep having our general here directing these young ones.