



2019 NCAA VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT – MADISON REGIONAL Press Conference Transcripts - Dec. 14, 2019

NEBRASKA CORNHUSKERS

Opening Statement

Head coach John Cook: “I thought it was a really good match. Our team did a great job of defending Wisconsin. We were much improved in that area. They had the home crowd. They made some big plays when they needed to, and they played great.”

“They have proven to us that they are the best team in the Big Ten this year, and so we wish them the best in the final four, and again, I asked my team to come in here and compete and play with courage, and I couldn't be more proud of the effort they gave tonight.”

Q. Defensively, was this the type of match you wanted to play against Wisconsin?

Cook: “We prepared really well. We figured out some things the first two times we played them because we weren't very good against them, and our players did an A-plus job of following the game plan and staying with it.”

“We had plenty of opportunities to convert points. They did an awesome job with following the game plan. (Assistant coach) Jaylen (Reyes) came up with a great game plan, so I'm sure some other teams are going to study that.”

Q. Lexi, what did Wisconsin do that caused you the most stress tonight?

Lexi Sun: “I think they just have a lot of attackers and they are a great team. I'm trying to stay focused on our side of the net and what we can do better next year, but obviously they are a great team and have a lot going for them. I'm excited to see how far they get for the Big Ten.”

Q. Seemed like the first two and a half sets, there were a lot of attacking errors, maybe more than you guys usually commit. Was that part of the -- not part of the game plan, but maybe a symptom of the game plan, that you were taking chances and big swings against this team?

Cook: “Yeah, that was a little bit of it. But you've got to give Wisconsin credit. They made some great digs, and when teams are digging you and pressuring you, you try a little bit harder.”

“Again, if you look at our team as a group, we're getting better in these matches and growing from it, but this whole group returns. So I told them, I put a football field up on the whiteboard and said, okay, now we're at the 50-yard line. We've got another year. Goal is to get to Omaha.”

“I just think we'll learn from this, and sometimes you try too hard. But again, Wisconsin deserves a lot of credit where they had their block, and they are very good at digging and transitioning. It just makes you try harder to kill the ball when you're not killing it.”

“We had some great swings tonight. We decided we were going to be aggressive and attack, and so some of that is you're going to make -- you might make some more errors.”

Q. Jazz, early in the match when you were able to tool the block, what are you feeling and what are you thinking when you're having that success early in the match?

Jazz Sweet: “Definitely just trusting my training. We train every day and that was definitely part of our game plan going in playing Wisconsin. It’s a big block, so you have to go in high, so I was just trusting the plan that coach set up for us.”

Q. The jersey, No. 7 en --

Sweet: “Yeah, I forgot my long sleeve, so yeah.”

Q. Can you talk about what in the offense was causing problems for you guys that led to some of the issues you were Haying out there?

Hames: “I just thought they really set up their block and (defense) really well when they scouted us and they knew what we were going to do. In those long rallies, they were better in transition than we were and took better swings than we did in those situations, and I’ve got to do a better job putting my hitters in better positions to take those swings.”

Q. When you look at the whole season, how successful was this year for the team?

Hames: “Really successful -- sorry. I just think about everything that this team went through this year, and just how strong we became and the adversity that we went through. I’m just so proud that I get to play next to them every day and just to see how we bonded and how we grew together, it was really special. It’s come to an end and it’s sad, but it’s been amazing to play on this team.”

Q. When Lexi puts that 50-yard line up on that whiteboard, what does it mean to you as a junior on this team?

Sweet: “Next year is going to be the last year for a lot of us. I think it just gives us a different mindset and motivates us to go into next year and just understand that we have last year all behind us, or this past season, to use for our advantage for sure. Like you said, we don’t have anyone leaving this year.”

Q. For any of the players, the adversity and losing (Manager) Dane (Leclair), how proud are you to be able to play for his memory?

Hames: “Dane was always so fun-loving and he just brought so much to this team. Before we went into every match, we talked about how we wanted to go out there and play with the joy that Dane had, and I think we did a great job of doing that. It was always an inspiration for us, every time we went out there, and you know, he was just such a big part of this, and I think we honored him in the way we played and the way we acted with each other. If he was here, he would be very proud of us.”

Q. Was it your serving or passing that held you back the most in this match?

Cook: “Tonight? Neither. If you look at our stats, with we out-serve and passed Wisconsin tonight. Now, they had more aces than we did, but our numbers were better. If you told me we were going to out-serve and pass them and they were going to hit below 200, I would have liked our chances.

“Again, they are a great team, but we brought it serving tonight and we had them under a lot of stress. I thought our passing was really solid tonight, with the exception of the first run there in the first game where Megan got worked a little bit.”

Q. Speak to the impact of your Hawaiian assistant coach and what he brings to the program.

Cook: “Which Hawaiian bro you talking about?”

Q. You've got a couple I guess.

Sweet: “Jaylen loves his job. I’ve never seen somebody just so dedicated, just have so much passion for the game, and it rubs off on everyone around him. You can tell how much he wants everyone around him to be better and to just love the game as much as he does.

“He just brings this energy that we need sometimes, and he's been such a great asset to this team.”