

Atlantic Coast Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Thursday March 5, 2020

Kenny Brooks Elizabeth Kitley Dara Mabrey Virginia Tech

Wake Forest - 58, Virginia Tech -55

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Virginia Tech. We have Kenny Brooks, Elizabeth Kitley and Dara Mabrey. Coach?

KENNY BROOKS: Obviously we're disappointed. We felt like we had a really good situation with our team, and we were going to go out and compete for an ACC Championship. But what you have to understand is this time of the year you gotta perform, you have to execute. Games are going to be a little bit different. They're going to be more grinded out. I thought we didn't play well today at all. We never really got in sync. Foul trouble early in the first half kind of limited us to try to get into a flow, and so we had to continue playing that way. I give credit to Wake Forest. I thought they did a good job of taking us out of things that we wanted to run, the way we wanted to run 'em. We didn't come out and play as well as we felt like we could have or need to do play.

Q. Players, your best ACC record ever, how stunning or aggravating is it to come here and have to go home after one game?

DARA MABREY: I would say it's pretty aggravating, but at the end of the day we can't take anything away that this group has done this year with our record and everything that we accomplished.

ELIZABETH KITLEY: I mean, it's frustrating because we know how good we are when we play well together but that's something we struggled with all year. We don't all play well together at the same time and that's what you need in March and we didn't do that today.

Q. Some of the things you talked to the team about after this one, Coach, takeaways?

KENNY BROOKS: Obviously there is a lot of emotion going on right now but I did tell them to reflect back on the year and don't allow one performance to dictate



how you feel about your year. It was a really good year. We had a lot of fun, we did a lot of wonderful things together.

This group, this team has laid down a foundation for years to come, in my opinion, as far as where we want to be and how we want to be recognized.

So it was really good. It was really good. I'm very excited for the future of this program, and I think this particular group has laid down that foundation.

Q. For either of you, what did Wake Forest do defensively that made it such a difficult day shooting and handling the ball?

DARA MABREY: I wouldn't say necessarily like, yeah, give credit to Wake Forest, they played a really good game. But I think we're such a strong offensive team if anyone went wrong it was probably us. We needed to adjust and I would say we needed to not find a rhythm and we never really did.

Q. When you beat 'em at their place last month you scored 73 points and shot better than 50% from the field. What were you doing bettered last time than today?

KENNY BROOKS: I thought we had a better rhythm. We got taken out of the rhythm early, Liz got her second foul with 7 minutes to go in the half, we had to take her out for the remainder of the half and we just never -- Aisha Sheppard got a second foul in the second quarter as well so we finished that quarter, we were trying to have makeshift line-ups, line-ups we've never practiced before. Dara had to play extensive minutes, probably took a toll on her a little bit. We just never got into rhythm.

We're a team that needs to play with balance and we went 4 for 15 from the three and all four threes came from Dara. We needed more production from other areas in order for us to be a good team. As Liz mentioned, we're a really good team and we're really, really good when we have everyone stepping up and producing at the same time because then it's hard to focus on one area. Liz was dealing with double teams a lot today and they probably felt a little more comfortable in doing so because we didn't have our outside shot flowing.

Q. You guys had 16 turnovers, did you feel like they were under characteristic turnovers or turnovers that Wake Forest gave you because of defensive?

ELIZABETH KITLEY: Personally I had five so that was not handling the double teams well enough. You can give credit to their defensive but I didn't handle that how I should have. We know how to do that, but we didn't -- or I didn't execute that at all.

Q. Dara, obviously you're making the threes in the first quarter there, what were they doing differently defensively the rest of the game because obviously we're they were trying to stop you from that point?

DARA MABREY: I think I got open ones but didn't knock 'em down. Just have to adjust. That's pretty much it.

Q. Did you find them defensively doing anything better first half compared to second half?

KENNY BROOKS: Again, the game was stagnant for us. As I was looking at my play sheet, it's kind of -- I just felt like I didn't have all my options and we were trying to force feed it inside. They did a good job of doubling on Liz, we did a poor job of capitalizing on it and flashing to high post so we could relieve their pressure. We were doing it as an after-thought and I thought we took some bad angles trying to throw the ball inside which takes us back to we were turning the ball over. We don't make those mistakes against ourselves, Wake Forest did a good job of -- and they're long. That's one of the things that provided problems for us all night long is they're so long that they send Sharp in to rebound on the backside when we try to go zone and she is really a post player and getting offensive rebounds. They said they only had 15 but it felt like 35. They came up with key plays throughout the game. Banks came in and I don't know she played -- I think she played a little bit yesterday, but she made big shots. Conti hit a couple of runners that we had people hanging all over and they kept us at bay down the stretch. We just never could really recover. We didn't feel like ourselves especially that second quarter when we lost Liz and she went out and we weren't able to capitalize on anything.

Q. Kenny, Aisha went 1-9, was it a product of not feeling herself? What was your message to her about getting her confidence back up?

KENNY BROOKS: You know, I wish I knew. I don't know. The game happened so fast, you encourage and we needed her. We needed her. My postgame message wasn't anything to her. It was directed totally to the team.

We win as a team. We lose as a team. Everyone has to step up and produce. It was mainly toward them and really, you know, talking about what we've

accomplished so far.

Q. Obviously you guys have another tournament yet to come. I'm not sure how this might affect seeding, but you've lost 3 of your last 4, what about the mindset to get you back to playing the way you want to going into the next?

KENNY BROOKS: Honestly we need a break. These kids are, obviously they're student-athletes first, and I think Liz had two or three tests on Tuesday right before we left and everybody is kind of fried a bit. They have one more day of class tomorrow and they'll get back and then they have a couple days off.

I think we're an NCAA team, but I think the part that excites me the most is that it's going to be fresh, because we're going to play against people we haven't seen for the last two and a half months.

I love the ACC, but I'm sick and tired of it right now, because it's a good league and every night it presents a challenge. You look at Wake Forest, they're long, they have tremendous players in Raca. Their kids are good. For me, and I think I can probably speak for them, it's going to be refreshing to see people we haven't seen before and to be able to go out after a break and recharge our batteries a little bit. It's a long grind. It's a long season.

I was talking to, I can't remember which coach it was, we had a head coaches meeting and I was talking to the baseball coach and the soccer coach and they said your season is so long and I said amen, we've been going since July. I think this break is going to be really good for them.

The three out of the four that we lost, they were good teams who had good performances. UVA had a good performance against us, the two kids played ought out of their minds. This was a good performance by Wake Forest, take nothing away from them, they're good teams. We're looking forward to recharging and seeing some new people.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thank you.