

March 11, 2008



An interview with:

**COACH McCONNELL-MILLER
BIANCA SMITH
JACKIE McFARLAND**

THE MODERATOR: We'll let coach Kathy McConnell-Miller make an opening statement and then take questions.

COACH McCONNELL-MILLER: This was a tough day for -- that's the way my day has been like! First and foremost, I've got to credit Iowa State for coming out with energy, passion, and the desire to keep playing. I did not feel like our team came into this game without that same desire. I felt like we came in extremely prepared, poised from a chemistry standpoint and leadership standpoint and from an X's and O's standpoint.

They are an extremely bright team in that when there are mismatches, they've got the ability to exploit it. They set great screens, they've got the ability in a 30-second span to break your team down, and they broke us down possession after possession. We tried to make adjustments with switches, and they were strong enough and smart enough to end up with our big on their guards, and we couldn't stop 'em.

Tried to zone 'em up when they did that and they found the open shooters. They were hot! They were hot from the perimeter, and they were feeling it. You could see their chemistry as a team continue to grow as the game went on, and it was evident that we were struggling as the game went on. They progressively got better and we progressively pulled apart. Individually, of course, Jackie McFarland was solid, as usual, and continues to lead this team. I'm forever proud of her commitment to this team and her passion for playing for 40 minutes.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student athletes.

Q. It seemed like you were getting beat up today. Were you surprised at how physical this game was?

JACKIE McFARLAND: Not really surprised. That's been the entire season is throw two down there in the lane, and especially with Iowa State when they don't have the post, where that's usually when I do get single coverage is if the other team has a strong, bigger post than me.

So I expected to see a lot of double team to stop our inside game, and toward the end it was a free-for-all in the middle. It felt like everywhere I turned I couldn't take a step without getting hammered, boxed out or anything.

Q. Jackie, they threw up some desperation shots and one banked in, I think another one swished. Did it feel like one of those games like you can't --

JACKIE McFARLAND: I think that shot going into their halftime, I think that gave them all the confidence in the world. I hit that ball out of her hands and she grabbed it in midair and threw it in there. So I didn't think there was any way that was going in.

When it did, it's one of those things you have to take a step back and -- there are lucky plays like that, but they worked hard, and we came back in the second half I think kind of second-guessing ourselves, and they came out stronger than they did in the first.

Q. Are you expecting to keep playing? Do you think -- are you expecting to be in the WNIT?

JACKIE McFARLAND: I would hope so. An invitation to that tournament is something this league is so strong in, and when you look at the things we have done this season, I think it would be an honor. I think we're looking forward to a chance to continue on and play, get looks against people outside of this conference and see what we can do there.

Q. For either of you, you guys had 21

turnovers, they had 5. Is that something they were doing defensively or did you guys just not take care of the ball today?

JACKIE McFARLAND: I think -- I mean, defensively we were hooked up, they had us scouted as far as who were drivers, who were shooters, and I think we had a lot of mental errors. We were aggressive, which is our main point, and we were to be aggressive on offense and take it to 'em, but once we started our drive we would get to the line and a lot of times didn't finish the shot, lost the ball, lost the handle, finishing is a key for us.

Q. Jackie, were you aware you were 1 point shy of Tara?

JACKIE McFARLAND: No, I had no idea.

Q. Bianca, how hard will it be to replace Jackie next year?

BIANCA SMITH: Jackie is a great leader on and off the court, a great person. It will be tough to find somebody like her next season to fill those shoes. They're huge shoes to fill. I'm going to miss her a lot.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Coach Kathy McConnell-Miller? Any questions?

Q. Kathy, what were you trying to emphasize defensively coming in?

COACH McCONNELL-MILLER: Initially we had put Spears on Nisleit, who was their 4, and Jackie on Bolte. They're both small forwards, neither one post up at all, so Jackie was either on the one that had two inches on her -- but they're both 3-point shooters, but Nisleit typically sets the screens to get Ezell or Lacey open, which would end up with Spears on the ball quite a bit.

And the first three or four possessions it worked well, and then Brittany picked up two and became extremely tentative, and their focus became whoever she was coming off of, they began to post Spears up, and I think it took Brittany out of the flow on the defensive end.

I thought she was tentative and she wasn't even aggressive going to get rebounds, which is typically what she does. As far as that's concerned, we had to change our game plan, put Jackie on the 4, and that's what they exploited the bigs on their guards and tried to break us down and -- whether they pulled up for a 3 or took it to score.

Q. Did that affect Brittany on the offensive end, because she never looked like she got back on track.

COACH McCONNELL-MILLER: You know, I don't know where her mind-set was. This was not a typical game for Brittany Spears. She is typically a lot more aggressive on the offensive end. I thought they did a nice job when she was in there; they stayed hooked up, came off the point guard, whether it was Susie or Whitney, they planted one in the paint, denied Bianca and Spears any good looks. They did not help off of them.

When they pulled Spears out, they went to a diamond and one on Bianca and asked the other players to step up to the block, and they doubled up on Jackie. She just didn't get into the flow with the changing of the defenses.

Q. Kathy, how important is it for you to get into the WNIT?

COACH McCONNELL-MILLER: I think it's extremely important. There is no doubt that every coach and player's dream is to get to the NCAA tournament, and that's what you would like to do. Again, the conference is extremely strong, but I think it is very important for this team to continue to play and progress as a group. Obviously Jackie has been the heart and soul of this team. We need other players to develop and mature, and I think more games will help that.

To be able to take the step in the direction of playing in the postseason -- Jackie McFarland is going to be one of the few players in Colorado history to not make it to the NCAA tournament, and that's unfortunate for her, but she wants to continue to play, the team wants to continue to play, and I keep looking at Kansas State and Wyoming ending up in the finals last year and Kansas State winning our league and Wyoming being in the Top 25 and knowing how important more games and getting to a postseason is, particularly a very young team.

Q. Can you talk about Jackie's career and what she has meant to you your first three years?

COACH McCONNELL-MILLER: You asked the question about -- she'll get Tara's record, she'll get it. I feel good about our opportunities. But as far as Jackie is concerned, whoa, people just don't see her every day. It's the

most amazing thing. From the time she wakes up to the time she goes to bed she's got a schedule, and whatever she does, whether it's stay home and be a mom, whether it's playing in the WNBA, tax accountant, whatever she decides to do, she'll be the best at it, because she is the most organized, most efficient, most passionate individual you will ever, ever be around.

The impact that I think she has made on this program and the players, you can't see it. And right now she feels so bad about today, and she feels so bad about not getting to the tournament, and it's just indicative of her passion and her love for the University of Colorado, her love for the game of basketball and never wanting it to end.

I've never once had an issue with her in any regard other than she needed more rest. The biggest problem we had is when she was sitting on the bench with two fouls and she wanted to keep playing. She kept standing up, "I'm ready, I'm ready, I'm ready" that's probably the only conflict Jackie and I have ever had. She is awesome, I love her like a daughter and will forever.

Q. Coach, can you talk about the younger players learning from Bianca and Whitney and others?

COACH McCONNELL-MILLER: I think maturity tonight -- I really, really hope we move beyond this game, and we'll watch film, break it down, talk about things and hopefully grow as a team, but when you make mistakes and things happen in your life you've got to mature.

We need to mature as a group and individually, when we're challenged on the floor, when things aren't going well, to come together and fight through. And the teams in this league are the ones that are strong with the best senior leadership and have guards that can make plays.

We've got to get a team that has all of those things. We've got to mature as a team, and I'm excited -- today is not the day that or the platform you wanted to see Brittany Spears have the worst game of her freshman career, but hopefully she'll learn a great deal from it.

I want to see our younger players evolve and see if we can play games and give them an opportunity to compete out of the Big 12 and see how much they have grown from the nonconference. They're young. I realize Jackie is a senior and a great leader, but she is leading some young players that don't have a lot of experience, and she has had her challenges. And

Jackie doesn't think she has done a great job leading this team, but she has, and she's basing that on wins and losses, and I'm basing it on how we've grown as a group.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.

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