

WOMEN'S GAME 8
March 7, 2018



WESTERN MICHIGAN – 65
BALL STATE - 54

KEN MATHER: We want to welcome our Ball State Cardinals, and we'll let Head Coach Brady Sallee open with an opening comment and then we'll take questions.

COACH SALLEE: Yeah, just really disappointed with that one. We laid a clunker on the worst possible day you could do it. Give Western credit for the things that they did. But, you know, we uncharacteristically shot 36 percent and only had eight assists, and that's just not who we've been. And you throw in 9 for 22 from the free throw line, it's a reason to be going home early. Tough to have the year that we had and come play the way we did, but it happens and it happened tonight. I think we're all disappointed with our effort.

Q. Carmen, you guys started a comeback there late in the game, I think four minutes left, it was an 8-point game. What was your mentality down the stretch in those moments?

CARMEN GRANDE: We go play by play, get good stops and drive on good offense and score the ball if we could, but basically you've got to get the stop, get the rebound and then go attack.

Q. Des, what was the feeling just from the get-go in just trying to get the wheels spun out of the mud and kind of get a flow? Was it hard to establish a rhythm, and did you feel it was hard to establish a rhythm early?

DESTINY WASHINGTON: Not necessarily. We've been in this position before so we know we have to go to the boards, we have to drive it to the basket. It just came down to want to.

Q. Fourth quarter, you cut the lead down, it was under 10. Just talk about the pressure in the fourth quarter and kind of chipping away, chipping away at the deficit through the game.

CARMEN GRANDE: Well, like I said before, we were just thinking play by play and we couldn't get past that, I don't know what you said, 8-point mark or whatever it was. But yeah, we were just trying play by play, stop by stop, and it took it as far as it took us. But we dug ourselves a hole too deep, if that makes sense.

DESTINY WASHINGTON: We didn't come out too strong and that's what kind of got us in the beginning. We just got to learn from our mistakes and get ready for what's next and learn and do better.

Q. Carmen, you guys had an uncharacteristic amount of turnovers out there. What were they doing defensively that might have made you a little bit uncomfortable or was it something you hadn't really seen a whole lot of throughout the year, can you kind of speak on that a little bit?

CARMEN GRANDE: I honestly think that we were just -- we just didn't handle pressure, which we get pressure in every game. Like yeah, credit to them, but we need to be able to play through that and I think we just did not very smart plays and that's what took us to like we put ourself in positions that made us turn it over because we don't really turn it over because we don't put ourselves there.

KEN MATHER: We'll continue with coach here for a few more questions.

Q. Brady, what is it about the quarterfinal round just in general? Teams coming off byes sometimes, I don't know if it's better sometimes to have to play on Monday and get some momentum going. We saw Central as the 1 seed lose last year in this round. Is there something about it, is this the toughest us round to play in or no?

COACH SALLEE: I don't think what you watched had anything to do with the quarterfinal round. I think we stunk. Just disappointed with how we handled the adversity of what happened and it just got snowballing on us. They were banking in 3s and kids were hitting their first 3 of the year and it rattled us. And you give them credit for making those shots, I guess, but you can't get rattled in those situations, you've got to keep playing.

You know, what it did was I think it led to us taking some shots out of our offensive that just weren't any good and then that just buries you even more. You play like that in quarterfinals, first round, first game of the year, NCAA Championship, guess what, you're going to get beat, and we have nobody to blame but ourselves.

Q. Coach, a bit of an uncharacteristic first half for you guys, a lot of low scoring there. I notice you were the last one off the court. What was going through your head and what did you guys talk about at halftime?

COACH SALLEE: I was looking for another locker room to go to, but they would only let me go to mine.

No, in all seriousness, honestly, I was watching my players' reaction going off the floor because we just -- boy, we got caught up in some stuff that you shouldn't get caught up in, whether it's calls for plays or we were just worried about the wrong things. That had my concern because you're not going to dig out of a hole like we were in if you're a splintered group. You've got to be cohesive in that moment and come together. I think at times we did, clearly we made a little bit of a run there and we showed a little bit of toughness, but we just couldn't quite get over the hump. But that was really what I was watching was kind of our body language to see how then to address my team at halftime and whether I need to go light them up or whether I need to keep it calm or anywhere in between.

Q. I don't know if there is an answer to this question or if there's an answer now, but kind of why to all of that? Like what about today got them frustrated, what about today maybe took them out of their element, why didn't they respond like they have in the past against adversity?

COACH SALLEE: I'll tell you, that's a million-dollar question. You know, I'm disappointed for our group because they wanted to be here, they were excited about the next three or four days, and they felt like they were a team that can make some noise in this thing. So I'm really disappointed for them because honestly, we've had some groups that have come up here and I'm not real sure they wanted to be here, but this wasn't one of them. So to then come out and play the way we did, you know, I hurt for them. But as to why it all happens and all that, I mean, I've got an economics degree, not a psychology degree, and I'm not real sure with the psychology degree I could get that one figured out.

It's just this time of year, it's the stage, and some teams step up and some teams play out of their minds and some teams bank 3s in and some teams miss layups. Unfortunately, we were the one that was on the wrong end of that one today.

KEN MATHER: Thank you, Brady.

COACH SALLEE: Thank you.