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An interview with:

UConn

THE MODERATOR: Joining us from UConn is junior guard, Moriah Jefferson and senior forward Kaleena Mosqueda-Lewis. We will start with questions.

Q. (No microphone.)

MORIAH JEFFERSON: It was good. Got to play basketball so that's all that matters.

Q. Moriah, the first seven baskets you guys had were layups. Can you talk about how your mentality was in terms of getting inside early, were you doing what you were trying to do and getting off to an aggressive start?

MORIAH JEFFERSON: No, they were being really aggressive. So anytime somebody's playing on you that hard, you really just want try to drive and get by 'em. Either you get a lay-up or you have to make somebody help and dump it off to the post players, so really I was just trying to get to the basket.

Q. Kaleena, do you feel the team is building momentum, these two games have been UConn for the most part, is that something you sense?

KALEENA MOSQUEDA-LEWIS: It's definitely something we like to build on. Each game we try to make sure that we're doing things better and better, so whether it's defensively, offensively, finding a flow with each other, we definitely try to build on that, especially after these first two games, playing as a team and tomorrow we will hopefully play even better than that.

Q. Kaleena, can you just talk about your first half and the team's first half, 62

points in a half. Was that the best half you guys have played offensively this season? How did you come out for this game?

KALEENA MOSQUEDA-LEWIS: I think that's a question for Coach.

Q. Players first.

KALEENA MOSQUEDA-LEWIS: I don't know if that's the best half we have had but it was definitely an aggressive half -- one of the most aggressive halves we have had, attacking them offensively, defensively, making sure we're not backing down and making sure we were the ones being the aggressors. It's definitely something we made a point to do tonight.

Q. How tough is it to play three games if a row, three days?

MORIAH JEFFERSON: It's really tough, pressing and running all over the court. I think it's just a mental thing, you have to stay focused mentally and we have been going after things like that all season in practice, going hard in practice day-after-day, so I think that makes it easier when you are going into these games.

Q. Kaleena, 5 out of 7, 3-point shooting guard, almost video game numbers. Did you feel like you were just open or you had a good flow going?

KALEENA MOSQUEDA-LEWIS: My teammates were doing a good job. Like Moriah said, when the defense is playing you that hard and they're pressuring you, you want to make sure that you're attacking them, and the guards on our team did a great job of making sure they were making penetration and finding the open man. I think that's what it was and also our post players are doing a great job at carving out some space and when they were doubled they kicked it out.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, ladies. Questions for Coach?

Q. Geno, given how many three's that

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Kaleena has made in her time here, are you ever stunned at how wide open she is? I've been here both days and I was --

COACH AURIEMMA: I thought there was a couple times tonight where I was surprised she shot it and it was like there wasn't anybody there but I thought tonight there were a couple of contested shots.

You know, it's really hard to run plays for a great 3-point shooter. If you're not going to guard anybody, at least you're going to guard that guy.

So I like the fact that we get a lot of K's three's, where they come from some transition stuff, somewhere -- you know, our guards are pretty good at getting in the lane, and she's pretty good at not wasting a lot of time and just catching and shooting.

Seven 3-pointers is a lot in the game, take seven. That's probably a good number. I would be happy if it was ten if she played more minutes. Some guys in our league that have taken 500 shots. Love to see how many points some of my guys would score if they took 500 shots in the season up to now.

We try to be efficient, you know. Getting the 3-point shooter open is not easy, it's not easy so you got to get 'em when their defense isn't set.

Q. Yesterday you said you were kind of looking forward to the athleticism and speed of this team. You trounced them in the first half but did you see some of that? Was there that challenge for your team?

COACH AURIEMMA: Yeah, I think so. You know, when there is -- like our guys look like they play at a certain pace, and it works for us, you know, against every team we play. But when we play a team -- and it's happened this year a bunch of times, I think. We play a team that is athletic like this team and is physical like this team, because our guys kick it into another gear, it almost looks like they're not nearly as athletic as they looked last night against whoever they played last night. Or however athletic they will look tomorrow night if they played tomorrow night. But when they play us and we don't play at that pace that we played, let's say, maybe last night because now all of the sudden we know who we're playing and we play at a completely different pace, it makes them look less than what they are. That's why we do what we do. That's why we practice the way we practice, to take advantage of nights like tonight.

Q. Geno, I remember at the South Carolina game you talked about what it would take for them to become a national power and win championships, and I think you mentioned three things they need to do. Along those lines, you've run through the conference for two years, 20 points is the closest game you have had in two years. What's it going to take for that gap to close, what do schools need to do to make this a more competitive conference? Is it a time thing? Is there something schools can do to make this not a 40-point blowout?

COACH AURIEMMA: What's the difference whether it's a 40-point blow out or you win anyway? Is the ACC really competitive? Notre Dame has lost one game in two years. In our league if you take us out of the league, this league is pretty competitive, because at the end of the season, if you were third, and you lost, you went to, like, seventh. So USF and UConn, yeah, because of where we come from and because of what our backgrounds are and what we're used to dealing with, a little different than the rest of the teams in our league, somewhat, but the rest of the conference is very competitive among themselves. It's just that putting us in it changes everything. If we weren't in this league, everybody would say, wow, that's a pretty competitive conference. Every game is pretty competitive.

Putting us in there, it changes everything. I'm sure the ACC is a very competitive place to play until Notre Dame got there.

Q. Geno, what did you make of the three managers standing side-by-side? We saw you wave to them!

COACH AURIEMMA: Somebody mentioned it yesterday -- I hadn't seen it. Somebody mentioned it yesterday so today I wanted to look down there and see what all the commotion was about and I saw the three guys lined up there, just staring at us and I gotta say, I've never seen that before. I was like kind of like, what are you guys looking at? I couldn't figure out, was there something going on in that huddle that we weren't supposed to know? But I gotta tell you, I've been coaching 40 years and I've never seen that, ever.

Q. You waved at them. Did they wave back?

COACH AURIEMMA: I think their orders are like London Yards -- you know, the guys that are guarding the Queen, they're not allowed to smile, but one guy couldn't help himself, I made him turn and look away, he started laughing but he didn't want to get caught. He didn't want to get in big trouble.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Coach.

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