

ACC Women's Basketball Championship
Greensboro, NC
#1 Duke, #6 NC State

March 7, 2010

#6 NC STATE

Steve Phillips: We are joined by NC Head Coach Kellie Harper and student athletes Nikitta Gartrell and Bonae Holston. Coach, if we can open with a statement from you, and we'll open the floor to questions.

Kellie Harper: First of all I want to congratulate Duke. Obviously they are a very talented basketball team and I want to wish them success moving forward. You know, I'm extremely proud of our team for so many reasons. For improving, for believing, for working hard in practice, for playing together. But in that locker room a few minutes ago I was proud of them for wanting more. They are hurt. That they didn't win this game. And I am so proud of that.

Steve Phillips: Thank you. Now we'll open the floor to questions.

Q Obviously you came out with a lot of energy and had the lead. Did you kind of tell that that had to happen and you had to play close to a perfect basketball game to win?

Kellie Harper: We talked about having to play with a lot of energy and I thought early on we did start that way. We had few good looks at some 3's and I thought if we knocked those down early Duke may have tightened up a little bit. Those are shots that we typically make to be quite on honest with you. And I think we front rimmed three in a row. I will be honest the kids had as much energy I had hoped for in this situation.

Q Coach, 15 minutes left in the first half, you are up 9-2, and Amber picks up her second foul. How critical was that to your game plan in terms of especially your press break?

Kellie Harper: Well, you know, I thought that her second foul obviously came very, very quickly in the game. It changed our rotations our executions, one less option for press breaker. Also, I was expecting Amber to do a great job defensively for us tonight, and not having her in there, you know, at that time, it took a little out of us.

Q The start of the second half, when you didn't score two points. Was that something that Duke was doing or was that something you guys weren't doing?

Kellie Harper: We were having a problem with Duke's length. They are so big and long and they covered up a lot of the passing lanes, and our guard, in particular, had a hard time finding an open person. And too many turnovers during that stretch. And, again, we weren't quite moving the way we needed to during that stretch to put ourselves in position to find open people. I think a little bit of both. I thought Duke's defense again when they started to extend their pressure laterally, that affected us.

Q This question is for Nikitta. Aside from today's loss what does this whole tournament run do for this team heading into the next part of the post season?
Nikitta Gartrell: Well, we can't hang our heads, we lost. We wanted to win, but, I mean, we have a whole another season ahead of us which is NCAA, which we came into the season trying to get back to previous seasons. Right now we have to get refocused and hopefully it will turn out great.

Q Was there kind of a new sense of confidence from the whole team? Is there something you can tell by your teammates the way you guys are interacting?
Nikitta Gartrell: I have to say winning is a big part of how we been acting lately. Our confidence and everything has been sky high. So we right now we can't drop our heads and let our confidence go away because, like I say, we have NCAA to work on now.

Q What has been the big thing that has made this team successful over the last few weeks? You keep talking about the NCAA Tournament and you probably weren't in it February 1st. If you are now what is the difference?
Bonae Holston: I think the way we come and play and fight every night has been a difference. We come to fight to win. To turn out is very good.

Q Coach, the NCAA speech here. Duke is the only team that is in 100% in. Tell everybody why you should be in.
Kellie Harper: I think our kids have proved over the last few weeks that we are an NCAA Tournament team. Right now I don't think I have to make an argument for these girls. I think they made it for me.
Steve Phillips: Thank you so much. The best in the coming weeks