



2009
Northeast Conference
Women's Basketball Championship

Presented by esurance

Quarterfinal & Semifinal Rounds

William H. Pitt Center

Fairfield, CT

March 7 & 8

#2 Central Conn. St. 62, #7 Fairleigh Dickinson 51

POST GAME QUOTES

March 7, 2009 / Quarterfinal Three

Fairleigh Dickinson Head Coach Peter Cinella

Opening statement...

They really battled, controlled the tempo and I really liked where we were at 37-37. I thought we were in good shape and 46-44. The tempo was what we were looking for and we knew we had to find a way to defend them. I didn't think we would be able to outscore them in a higher scoring game, they just beat us in that type of game, 71-69. We were looking for a game in the low 50s and we were right there and I'm not sure if it was seven minutes when we had a bad spell for about five minutes and it was probably the only time we didn't get good shots and we gave them a couple of easy looks. To their credit, they hit the big shots. Crockett hit a big three and Olgesby seems to hurt us in the three games we played this year. We tried to do whatever we could, we tried to contain her during the whole game, but not during that four minute span and that's when she got some good looks. I'm very proud of our seniors. Shenika Chang had the best game of her career by far. That's always how you want to end your career. She had a career high with 20 points and 12 rebounds and she also played good defense. We took care of the basketball. I think Central is the type of team that can get you out of stuff. Only 11 turnovers, so that was a positive sign. Central is a good team and they have a lot of weapons. We said some teams you put two or three people's names on the dry erase board – the blackboard players – but they have six and then if Harris comes in and hits two threes, they have seven. They have a lot of weapons and they have a lot of weapons on the boards, too. They're a good team.

On CCSU's Justina Udenze...

When she's not in the game they're not as big internally and you can get some low-post looks and Shenika made 10 field goals. A lot of those might have been when she (Udenze) was not in, I know some were on her, and also you can drive a little bit because she takes up a lot of space in there.

On lineup changes...

Well we did it four times, we got three stops defensively and we had one turnover on offense... I thought lets go with five subs at once to give everyone a breather right around the timeouts. We did it

three times in the first half and they got stops every time so I think they did a good job. The second half, we had a turnover, but they did their job.

On CCSU containing Mariyah Laury...

I think they just did a good job containing her. She didn't have any easy break outs. They put some solid defenders on her and pressured up on her and put good defenders between her and the basket. They got around the screens pretty well, we tried to set screens but this time of year you know when they're coming. They just did a good job on her and she didn't get those easy breakouts because we didn't have any steals and any rebounds and Mariyah probably scores about 25 percent of our baskets on fast breaks. When you only get two steals and we usually get nine or ten and she scores on those, and we didn't get rebounds either. We got out-rebounded by 14, so the lack of rebounds and the lack of steals cut out our breaks and that's probably 30 percent of our offense. A couple threes went in and out, too.

Fairleigh Dickinson's Shenika Chang

On CCSU's Justina Udenze...

She's a good rebounder so we knew when they shot, we had to especially look for her to box her out.

Central Connecticut State Head Coach Beryl Piper

Opening statement...

I thought it was a real hard-fought game. Both teams fought hard and battled and I'm just really really proud of our team and the composure they showed, especially of the fact of how young we are. Down the wire they really ran offense and made all the right decisions and did all the right things when we needed them to and that says a lot since we are so young. It says a lot about this team – balanced scoring all around and everybody doing their job when we need them to do their job. Jhanay Harris is our only senior, going 3-for-4 hitting three threes that were big threes and just doing a great job on defense. Her and Shontice Simmons both had to guard Laury and Laury has hurt us the last few times we played them and we held her to five points. Defensively we just did a great job. In the second half we limited Sykes getting to the free throw line. She was getting to the free throw line in the first half and we talked about that at half time and the kids did all the things we asked them to do when we asked them to do it tonight and we win the game. It's about an advance.

On Justina Udenze...

There were a couple things that happened. Obviously Justina is so important to us rebounding-wise. She's the biggest kid we have on our team and she can keep the ball alive and do a lot of things for us. In the first half when you look at where we were, we had so many kids with two fouls and we were able to go down at half time and still have the lead with the foul trouble we had in the first half. We were able to get through the second half without anybody fouling out of the game and that was big. It was hard for Justina because she was in there with two fouls and they knew it and they were going at her and she didn't want to pick up her third...all the kids made big plays. In the first half when we were in foul trouble, Christy Leverette when in and she only played four minutes in the game but the four minutes that she played were so important and she made a huge basket during that time. So it was a team effort and everybody rebounded the basketball. Rebounding is crucial, turnovers are

crucial and we were able to get through it tonight and we really did a great job on the boards, outrebounding them by 14 rebounds.

On establishing an identity for the type of game they play...

In all honesty, the game where we struggle and make bad decisions, we try to make the big play instead of making the smart play, that's why composure-wise everybody just settled in and made the right decisions at the right time. There were a couple times during the game when we started getting a little crazy and you could feel the stress, so we just got a timeout so everybody could settle down and be on the same page, and we got through it.

Central Connecticut State's Leanne Crockett

On the last stretch to pull away with the lead...

It definitely changed the momentum of the game. It was crunch time and we knew we had to build a lead and build it then. It was getting close and our offense was struggling and we needed a spark to get the lead back up and put the game away. We had good ball movement and we all picked it up on the offensive end in those few minutes to build the lead back up.

On the team's turnaround from last season...

It's awesome to be a part of something like this. Last year to only win four games and to come and now be in the semifinals of the NEC tournament is a big deal and is an awesome thing to be a part of, I couldn't ask for a better way for the season to go. I think we played great today. We came off a three-game losing streak coming into the tournament and that was nervous but tonight we proved that we still have what we showed this whole season and I think we can carry it over into the semifinals.

Central Connecticut State's Justina Udenze

On the team's turnaround from last season...

It feels amazing to come as far as we have. Hard work pays off and I'm looking forward to more in the future.

On the close game through the first half...

I felt like we knew how important this game was for us so it was important to keep our composure and not make mental mistakes and if we did to pick each other up. We're a team and if one person messes up, we all mess up so we wanted to build on being positive and trying to make smart decisions and make smart passes and know where to be on defense.