

2018 NCAA VOLLEYBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS
LEXINGTON SUB-REGIONAL – LEXINGTON, KY.
POST-MATCH QUOTES
FIRST ROUND
PURDUE 3, EAST TENNESSEE STATE 0

Purdue Head Coach, Dave Shondell

Opening Statement...

“Thank you very much for being here. Really good match for our squad tonight. We were really concerned about East Tennessee State University. They’ve had a fantastic season. They’ve got a couple of players from our neighborhood that we are very familiar with—a setter that I recruited at Purdue. So, it was a match that we spent a lot of time preparing for and I think it was one of those matches for us where we did a lot of good things. We kept the pressure on them and it helped us persevere. We’re just happy to be advancing and we know there will be another really good team to play tomorrow but it was a good performance for us and I told our players in the locker room I thought our ball control players made the difference tonight. Their presence on the floor was significant—from the serving to the passing to the defense to just the way they looked on the floor—I thought was a real difference tonight.”

On Leah Clayton of East Tennessee State ...

“Big-time athlete. I thought both their left-side hitters were very dynamic, very competitive, could do a lot of damage in the right situation. I think she’s got a little more experience, it appears to me, in tough situations. She was somebody that we knew we had to put a lot of emphasis on, and I look at the stat sheets and we feel very good about how we handled their outside hitters. But Sherridan (Atkinson) is 6 foot—she’s really about 6’6” and a half, but she’s told us we can’t list her higher than 6’5”. But she’s a presence that can get into somebody’s head especially when she starts actually blocking balls. I thought she did a good job. Our middles were releasing some to go out there and help, but she’s a great player. It was a tough night, I think, for her tonight, but I watched about seventeen matches of hers coming in, and she was really good in all of them.”

On Hayley Bush ...

“My observation was that the outside hitter that was getting blocked there was just making some bad decisions. Quite frankly, she was matched up on their setter who’s about 5’6” and a half and that’s a war we should win. But she was just hitting the ball. I think part of what the girls said earlier, you know, nerves, they weren’t relaxed and she was just pounding the ball low to the net thinking she was going to be able to score and I don’t think she’d warmed up to the point she needed to be because, really, after her first four swings, Caitlyn (Newton) was really good the rest of the match. But I think the plan was to try to stay away from some of the things that teams know we’re going to do a lot. Because we have, especially with Jael Johnson coming so far in the last three weeks, we’ve got five hitters who can score points. But we’ve got to spread out the wealth and our middles right now—that’s the thing [Hayley] Bush does extremely well. She runs the middle really well. She’s got a knack for getting the ball to our middles and knowing where they are and then with Sherridan (Atkinson) coming out of the back row or the front row, that can spread out your offense pretty well.”

Purdue Student-Athletes

#16 Sherridan Atkinson, OH, RS-Sr.

On the difference in the first set and the last two ...

"I would say we have freshman that have never been in the NCAA Tournament, and it can kind of be a little bit intimidating. It's nerve-racking even as a fifth-year senior because you don't know how it's going to go and everyone is all hyped up and you've been working all week on it. So, I think we got rid of those jitters and towards the end of first set and into the second set we were able to find a really comfortable rhythm."

On what this tournament means to her ...

"I think for me, this tournament means putting this program back on the map. Everyone knows that we are a talented team and we can compete with anyone, but it means something to get past the second round. We've been stuck there for a couple years. This win – especially winning in three (sets) – means a lot and taking that into tomorrow night is really important. I think we have what it takes 100 percent and I think that we are all willing and ready to give everything that we have. For our seniors, it was really encouraging to see the performance we had tonight and I hope we can carry it over."

On what the routine is the rest of the night ...

"Everyone that has family will say hello for a little bit, we will get our meal, some ice and then we are going to go outside and scout for the first two sets. We have scouting sheets, we will take notes and make sure we are conversing with each other, head back to the hotel, shower off and then we will have a meeting and then just make sure we have everything ironed out and detailed just to make sure that we're all cerebral and we know what to expect. We have to make sure that we're communicating within the team. Our coaches give us a lot of information but it's often times up to us to communicate back and forth with each other to make sure we have all of the important things we have in our brains."

On the cultural differences in the west coast and the midwest ...

"Huge culture shock for me. Everyone back home likes to think they're pretty cool, pretty laid back, people don't really cheer, there's not a lot of passion. In the Big Ten, everyone is fired up. Everyone wants every ball. You see people knee-sliding, chest-bumping, just everybody really fired up to play. That was something that I love doing now, but back then, I kind of wasn't at first. They fight a lot harder here for every ball, people are flying into bleachers, people, grandma's, anything. Back home it's kind of 'Oh, well, if the ball is over there, we will get the next ball.' It's not as gritty and as tough. The style of play is a lot harder. You have the most talented women in the country literally on this side (of the country). Not to disrespect the teams back home, but it's definitely a war every night, and that's something that I hadn't seen before I came out here."

#10 Marissa Hornung, DS, Fr.

On the difference in the first set and the last two ...

"I think we had to get the jitters out and we were playing a really emotional team. They had a really emotional first set. We let them think they could play with us for a little bit and then we shut them out. That was the difference in sets two and three."

On what this tournament means to her ...

"To me, it just means that we get to play close to home with my teammates and everything. We were on the bus ride, we got to bond through it and just stepping on the floor and knowing what it's like to not play at home and not play in a gym where it's someone's home court. That's what makes this different and I also think that just for our team to be able to participate and be a representative of the Big Ten is a big deal. Just to put our conference on the map, that is really big to us."

On if dancing is part of Sherridan Atkinson's game ...

"Yes that is Sherridan. That is Sherridan's personality. But, it's what keeps her loose and relaxed. We're just having fun out there and that's what volleyball is kind of all about. We just kind of let her do her own thing."

ETST Head Coach, Lindsey Devine

Opening statement ...

"We had a fantastic season and one game does not define all the hard work that this group has put in. These seniors, they have to be proud of all the things that they have accomplished over the four years. So I'm sitting beside two amazing seniors and we were pretty much a senior squad this year and they did everything that I asked of them all year, so as their coach I'm super proud."

On the teams effort this season...

"Nothing can be taken away from this program because when they walk into Brooks Gym, our home court, they will be able to look up in the rafters the accomplishments of their four years, we will be able to hang two more banners which is remarkable, we summed it up before we arrived here in Lexington all the things that this group has done. There were so many firsts, maybe not the first that you see, the at-large (bid to the NCAA Tournament), yes. But there are many other firsts in our program that we are really, really proud of. This is a unique group this is my family, I love them, all and were good."

On their performance in the second set ...

"I think (Alyssa) Kvarta summed it up. (We were) a little timid, we just sat back on our heels and expected a Big Ten team to take it easy on us and that's never going to happen, especially what they do day in and day out, so that was one factor. The other factor was that we wanted to put the ball on such a small part of the court versus just being aggressive, remembering what got us to this point. I think our serve reception was fantastic, we were in system and we recognized that if we were able to terminate fast then we were in that game. However, again, when you allow a team to stay around like a Purdue, then they are going to get you because of their athleticism, so well coached, probably a little more disciplined than we were tonight so I just think those factors put together and that's why set two got away from us."

On possibly creating parody in the sport ...

"I hope so, I mean anything can happen and you invest in your players, you invest in those relationships, you get the support of a great athletic department and it is possible to do whatever you put your mind to and if you lay that out, young women today, if you are very clear in what you are saying to them, what your goals are, the vision you have for them. They are going to respond and give you all that they can because of this honest relationship you share with them early on and I think that if you keep that mindset, I think our sport will continue to grow and are not going to be the only team that sees their name up in the selection show next year. I hope we motivate people"

East Tennessee State Student-Athletes

#12 Alyssa Kvarta, S, Sr.

On what her time at ETSU has meant ...

"When I came in, I was super, super nervous and didn't know what to expect. I had a lot of great leaders on the team that showed me what love and passion is all about in the game. As I continued to grow up

with those people, I've learned for myself how to grow and how to show others coming in how much it means to us about this program and how hard Coach Devine has worked. The group of girls that I've been paired with the last four years have been my absolute family. I couldn't thank this program any more for pairing me up with those girls because I couldn't do life without them. I lean on them, and they lean on me throughout the game and I couldn't be more grateful to be paired with these girls."

On what the season has meant to the team ...

"I think it shows, this year, that our grit was 100 times more than last year. We had a great team last year, but this year just felt like something completely different. Everyone was all in. Everyone wanted to get extra reps and come in early. We never had a day off and sometimes it's hard not having a day off, but we're really grateful for it because we wouldn't have been in this position if we had a day off. Being pushed to that higher standard has pushed us to this level. I know a lot of us are grateful to be back in this position because that was our ultimate goal last year, was to come back to the NCAA."

On making history with an at-large bid ...

"It's an unbelievable feeling and I hope we motivate the ones coming in that they can make more history. They can make more history. Anyone that comes in can make more history if they put their heart and desire into it. We really wanted to leave our footprint on this program and we have. I know tonight wasn't how we wanted it, but we all played hard. We're just hoping that next year, they go further."

On Friday's match ...

"It says about, don't be timid, go all out for the ball. I'm willing to go all the way across the gym to barrel through chairs to get a ball because I want to win. I think we were just being more timid. They have spectacular players, but I think we just laid off a little bit when we should have pushed."

#7 Mariah McPartland, MB, Sr.

On what her time at ETSU has meant ...

"East Tennessee State has been the world to me. It's changed me, who I am. I came in as a girl and I'm leaving as a woman. Lindsey Devine and the whole coaching staff, the whole East Tennessee athletics program take academics so seriously and they instill that in us, in our every day lives. They hold us to a higher standard than I think a lot of players and people experience in their college career, so I'm forever grateful for them."

On what the season has meant to the team ...

"Our mantra is 'why not'. When we went into those preseason tournaments, we went all out, we played 'why not'. We tried to follow the game plan that the coaches gave to us. We worked all out, all the time. Practices, we never had a day off, we're always in the weight room, every morning. Every afternoon, we're giving our all in the gym. I think that really showed throughout the season and our record. None of our wins were luck, but it was hard work."

On Friday's match ...

"I think we personally talked about, after the first set we played, we focused on our side of the court and I think that's why we were so successful. I think in the second and third set, we were worried about their side. We were worried about what kinds of swings were coming at us instead of just reading the set. Instead, we were thinking 'oh no, she's their good swinger, we're got to get a touch' and then we were scrambling. After the first set, we should have just taken a step back and just said, alright, let's do what we just did."