

2008 NCAA® DIVISION I WOMEN'S BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

Greensboro Coliseum • Greensboro, NC

Tuesday, April 1, 2008

GREENSBORO REGIONAL FINAL
#1 CONNECTICUT vs. #2 RUTGERS

HEAD COACH C. VIVIAN STRINGER

Opening Statement

"I am extremely proud of our players. They played extremely hard. We did all we could. They (Connecticut) had a great game plan and went to work on the boards. At the end of the day, we had lots of turnovers. It's all the little things.



They (Matee Ajavon and Essence Carson) mean so much to our program. They are perfect examples of what student athletes should be. It's not about a show. It's about working hard to get it done. To have two in the same year that meant so much. They had impact on our nation and certainly our program. To see them go, it's tough. If we are fortunate enough in the years to come to have players that embody all of the things they do, I will consider myself blessed. It's unfortunate, I'm sorry for them and for our team to not be able to do what we felt strongly we could do."

On Coach Auriemma's decision to play Brittany Hunter on Essence Carson...

"The fact that they put Brittany Hunter on Essence meant that they were troubled. There was no way Brittany Hunter was going to stay with Essence. The reason we went with three guards was to force that match up. What we did was play three small guards knowing that they had no choice but to play Swanier, Montgomery and Moore on those three small guards. That meant that with those big players, they had to play Charles on Kia (and Hunter on Carson). We were inviting that matchup."

On using the difference in size in a new press...

"I knew that we were giving up size but I thought that we would be much more efficient by playing Brittany Ray and Heather Zurich in that one spot so we could apply a press that we've never used – a 2-1-2 press – to slow (UConn) down and make them think. That's why Maya didn't get looks – (we were) controlling and containing."

On the difference made by free throws...

"We can't win a game when we go to the free throw line five times and the opponent goes to the free throw line 21 times. But we seem to do that in championship times. That's the one thing I'll have to learn – how not to foul. Those have been the stats for the last five or six years. That's something I need to learn to do better."

On UConn's strong second half...

"We were tired. (In the first half), we were step-for-step with them, we knew where everybody was. What we knew is that everybody had to be in sight so by the time they (reached) half court or the 10-second line, so we could pick them up. But we were recovering too low or too slow. I asked if they were tired – they said they weren't. But you can't tell me that they weren't. (UConn's improvement) in the transition and in rebounding was key. We were step-for-step with that before. We were in great shape. I think our team followed the script, but started making tired mistakes and didn't go strong to the ball."

