



Postgame Quotes
No. 3 USF 63, No. 2 Temple 58
Game 9 – Semifinals, Sunday, March 5, 2017
Mohegan Sun Arena – Uncasville, Conn.

USF Head Coach Jose Fernandez

Opening Statement

"Well you know, I couldn't be prouder of this group. We played five kids in that first half, the entire time and you know in that third quarter we were up seven with the ball and we went on a drought there. In that fourth quarter we made big shots and got the stops that we needed to.

It was an important game for both teams for NCAA seeding. Us winning up there, them winning at our place. We wanted this game. This is the third year in a row we are playing on Monday night. That is one thing, when you play in this tournament you want to play for a championship and you want to have that opportunity. For us to be here and to play on Monday night again, with everything that this team has gone through, four new starters, I couldn't be prouder of them."

On surviving the drought in the third quarter

"I think we wanted to get some switches on their bigs guarding our perimeter kids and I thought Tamara [Henshaw] had a great first half. She was assertive. We got her the ball in the right places and she finished. Again Kit[ija Laksa] hitting that runner and that big three and knocking down her free-throws to close the game were huge."

On what USF did differently than the last time it faced Temple

"Well, in Tampa that was a tough loss for us because we were up three with a minute-45 to go and we didn't rebound and they hit two threes to win the game. Where today, we knew [Feyonda] Fitzgerald, she is a tough player to guard because she can create off the dribble and she shoots it but for us we needed to rebound and I think the glass was huge. Second chance points for us and defensive glass and I think that was the difference."

On his team's improvement as the year went on

"[UConn] lost three draft choices. Where they are at right now and where we're at because we lost a lot. They have a different type of kid than we get. Last Monday night we did play a lot better than we did up [in Storrs]. That first game up there was atrocious. But I think our team has learned from that. Shoot in the second game at our place we score 70 points and shoot 47 percent from the field and you only have 12 turnovers you get beat by 26, whatever it was. We have to do a much better job defensively and we have to hold them to one shot and you got to score because they're so good offensively. You got to score and we have to answer. That will be the plan. But our kids are excited, we are the only team in the country to face them three times.

USF Sophomore Guard/Forward Kitija Laksa

On confidence from the last time USF played UConn

"It's Connecticut. You can prepare but they always will surprise. I think that every chance we have playing them we can do it, we can make it a tough battle. It is the third game of the year playing them. It's the third time, the third lucky one or how's the saying. Third time's the charm, exactly, that one, thank you."

On if there was sense of urgency having to take the shots down the stretch.

"Honestly, no. Because my teammates made the shots. They made the plays. I screened Tamara's man so many times I got two players. She was open. She made her plays and honestly there is no frustration if your teammates step up."

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