



Postgame Quotes
No. 4 Cincinnati vs. No. 1 UCONN
Game 10 – Semifinals, March 5, 2018
Mohegan Sun Arena – Uncasville, Conn.

Geno Auriemma

On the short bench.

"The players are aware from our practices and how we play that if they have to play a lot of minutes they don't mind, they actually probably prefer it. I don't think anyone wants to play 40 minutes, but I don't think the actual time on the floor is that big an issue as much of an issue as the emotional effort you have to put into each game, which will get you more fatigued than the actual time you are spending playing. Today we were hoping to get a lot of people involved and I thought Megan (Walker) came in and gave us good minutes. Fourth quarter was close, one of our goals this season is to win the fourth quarter. We are close, we only lost that one 10-9, so we are making progress."

On Gabby Williams' status.

"Yes, she could have played tonight."

On staying sharp as a team in blow outs.

"That is part of playing here at Connecticut, you don't necessarily base how you are going to play on what the score is or who the opponent is on the court. I try not to put the players with the bad habits on the court for long minutes so that is why we look so good a lot of times. Obviously we want to win, but we want to improve and get better so if you are on the court doing dumb stuff and not improving you will not see a lot of minutes. The players are smart, they understand what is going on."

On the big runs this season, and the differences from the past few season.

"I don't know that there is anything different. We might be getting a few more blocked shots with Z (Azura Stevens) on the court. I think we are a little quicker than we were last season because they are older. Crystal (Dangerfield) playing more minutes adds to that because the ball gets up the floor quicker. I don't know how to explain the runs, and you could say it is the other teams we are playing but we have had some big runs against good teams. I think our defense has been solid all year long, so maybe since we have been playing good defense every night is allowing us to get in transition. That is the only way I can explain it."

On being 100-0 in AAC play.

"I have run out of ways to describe this stuff. Today in the locker room I asked Kia (Nurse) and Gabby (Williams) how many games they have lost in college and they told me two and then I asked Katie Lou (Samuelson) how many games she had lost in college and she told me one. I told them most teams in America lose that many in a week. It must not be easy to do since we are the only team doing it. There must be something that we are doing that is allowing us to put ourselves in that position to be successful. The

reason I said it our team is that there are things you have to do to play for our team, and because we make you do those things we are in the position to be successful.”

Preparing for the NCAA Tournament.

“There is so much time between tomorrow and when the next tournament begins, I think that if the NCAA Tournament started Thursday or Friday we would be geared up, but we have 10 or 11 days to prepare for the next game. Tomorrow we are playing USF for the third time, it is not going to be like any of the other times, the second time was not like the first time. Tomorrow, the number one thing is winning the championship game, plain and simple. We have won conference championship games and lost in the NCAA Tournament and we have lost conference championship games and won the NCAA Tournament so the best thing that is going to come out of tomorrow is that Gabby (Williams) and everyone else will have time to get healthy. That is the number one thing, and believe me I want to win championships as long as we are keeping score, but probably more important is that we have 10 or 11 days to get caught up.”

Napheesa Collier

On the team’s defensive effort.

“I think everyone gave a really good effort tonight. We knew our scouting report and we knew what we wanted to take away from them and I thought we had a lot of energy. We came out and we did what we wanted to do”

On the scoreless second quarter

“Our goal is to always to shut a team down but it rarely happens. We try to bring a lot of energy and we got a lot of steal and deflections from Z (Azura Stevens). We noticed it at halftime but during the game you are locked in on defense and doing what you need to do score.”

Azura Stevens

On the team’s defensive effort.

“Everyone who came in to the game contributed. We did a good with tips, deflections and harassing them on the defensive end.”

On the start in place of Gabby Williams

“I did not feel any extra pressure. I try to approach every game the same and do everything I can to help the team. My role changed a little bit tonight, but I was expected to do what I do every night. I think as a team we did a good job putting a good effort together and getting the win for Gabby.”

On the team’s pride in their defense.

“We are trying to focus more on just being two-sided players and some of us are gifted offensively, but it means a lot more if you can defend someone to. I think we have done a good job of keying into that.”

On her improved defense.

“I did not foul anybody so that was a positive from this game. It is a work in progress that I am focusing on every game so it feels good to have games like this where I don’t foul very much and make fewer mistakes on the defensive end.”