

Stars Head Coach Dan Hughes:

(On the game...)

“That was our best rebounding effort that I’ve seen. Hamby with 18 rebounds just kind of lead the way, and I thought that was pivotal, you know, in this game. The other thing was getting us a start. We just haven’t had a lot of starts. We got a start in that game and I think it was important.”

(On getting off to a good start...)

“Yeah, you could just feel it a little bit. We scored on the first possession. You know, it’s funny: We did a team-building thing with them yesterday. I’ve never done a lot of that in my career, but they’re unique. This group, you’re looking at our three leading scorers: a rookie, a second year and a third year player. They haven’t been in the league to win, so they’re going through how to work together to find success. But I thought we came out and did a good job of coming into the game with confidence offensively, and defensively executing our game plan and kind of sticking with it through the ups and downs of playing good teams. They’re really a talented team. I mean good golly: Stewart, and Jewell Loyd and Bird. They’re a handful. Clark is playing really well, I mean they’re offensively very, very challenging, so I was real pleased defensively that we could stay in plays to that level.”

(On if the team building activity in practice was planned...)

“No, it’s just a 61 year old guy that needed to do something different to get the point across. It’s not that they don’t want to give the effort, it’s that they haven’t done it together. You start winning some of these games, then you start to understand how effort is one thing, but a unified effort is all doing the same thing. We did some things where they had to kind of work together, figure out how they’re going to do it, accomplish it as a group, and it’s the first time I’ve done that. From a teaching standpoint, I wanted a different way to get a message to them, that you know what? We got to understand how to work with each other in crucial situations and hang with it at this point. Boy, Hamby just rebounded and she set a physical tone for us. Moriah Jefferson really got us out of the gate, and really I thought was strong and understanding where to get the ball, including herself. Kayla McBride, I mean that’s just a hell of a shot. She’s getting a lot of attention from teams, and I thought she did a good job of navigating today, but defensively, solid effort, offensively, much improved effort and they hung together, that’s the biggest thing. We want this group to understand that if we learn to work together, the rewards can be there for us. We’ve got to become a team in this season that learns how to win.”

(On maintaining a lead during the game...)

“We had timeouts. They’re a good group. If you watched them today, they were exceptionally good coming out of timeouts. One of the things that we did yesterday was listening, and I think they did a great job. We came out of timeouts and were able to find success, you know Moriah got down in the lane, went to the

line hit two. We came out of our out of bounds action and Kayla, we wanted the ball in her hands, we got it and she was able to knock a play down. It's just a young team learning how to be in those moments with each other and start to trust each other a little bit coming out of it, but defensively very solid the whole game, just very solid against a team that I think is extremely offensively talented, a very talented team. I was real pleased, but I thought our rebounding was the best I'd seen all year."

(On the key to winning...)

"Well, I think it was one of those games where you had to grind out to win. You had to find a way to get yourself to the line as Moriah Jefferson did, to get the ball in Kayla McBride's hand and convert a basket. Defensively, we were staying in it. They were guarding us well, we weren't scoring, and we were still defending. Boy, we have strived to get that. In some of the games we've lost, we've had a lot of close games, some of the games we lost we would not score and it would affect our defense. This one, it was a grind. They were having trouble scoring and we were having trouble scoring, and they did a good job coming out of the timeouts to give us separation to win."

Stars Forward Dearica Hamby:

(On the effect of the team building exercise in practice...)

"I think that helped. The last two practices have also been super competitive. Our last game, our shoot around was really competitive as well, so just that carrying over and us being physical."

(On how she was effective at rebounding...)

"It's kind of funny: Coach VJ and I before the game did some rebounding drills that we've never done before, but I think me being aggressive. The coaches have kind of been on me about doing my role better so that helped my rebounding."

Stars Guard Kayla McBride:

(On maintaining a lead into the 4th quarter...)

"It was new. I think we did a really good job all around, especially defensively. I think that was really important for us to come out. They made a run at the beginning of the 4th quarter, and we kind of stayed in it. We've been used to being down in the 4th quarter, so to have that lead was a little bit of a comfort. We handled it really well."

(On the pivotal three-pointer at the end of the game...)

"First of all, I saw Dearica get the offensive rebound, so I got extremely excited because she had been all over the place the whole night which was big for us, especially against Stewart who is so active. I didn't even see the shot clock, I actually pulled it out and I saw the shot clock and I was like I had to make a play. It was kind of like an outer body experience. You don't really think about what you're supposed to do, you just kind of do it, it's instinctual. I made a play and

thank fully the ball went it. It wasn't going in the rest of the game, but I'm just glad I could make a play for my teammates."

(On how she played through adversity...)

"That's been a process with me this whole year. I think I was frustrated a little bit when things weren't going my way, being a young player, just staying confident. I know I'm a shooter, I know I'm going to have a lot of attention on the offensive end, so just to continue to stay confident, continue to stay aggressive and just trust the process that it's going to come back around to me and today it did."

(On the impact of team building exercise in practice...)

"It definitely helps. We did some stuff yesterday, but I think this team is very close off the court actually. I think we have really good chemistry we're just young. We haven't played with each other that much, so to have that chemistry off the court, being so personal with each other and being able to communicate with each other, that's what's going to bring us success on the court. We know it's going to be a process, there are going to be some growing pains, but I think we're headed in the right direction."