

2007 State Farm Missouri Valley Conference Women's Tournament
Semifinal Round: Drake 61, Evansville 58
Saturday, March 10, 2007
Knapp Center, Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa

Drake head coach Amy Stephens: "First, I would like to congratulate Evansville on a terrific season and an unbelievable basketball game. Part of me wishes I were in the stands watching the game. They are terrific team and we are fortunate to have an opportunity to play for a championship tomorrow.

"Two significant keys were our ability to rebound and defend – not only in this game but throughout the tournament. We had 15 offensive boards and obviously the critical ones came at the free throw line by Lauren (Dybing) and Tori (Runner). Those were absolutely huge. I thought that played a significant factor in the game.

"To finish the first half with three freshmen on the floor and to be tied at halftime...I was a pretty excited coach. Lindsey's back to back threes really shifted the momentum down the stretch.

"Instead of writing rebounding on the board. I just wrote contact rebounding. I just should have written that three months ago. Dybing has done a phenomenal job on the boards. Runner is playing her role. We have been pretty scrappy. It is effort. I wish I was telling them something inspirational but I'm not. It is just the character of the team.

"Our coaching staff couldn't be more proud of the team the way they have listened. There were days when we just had six kids at practice. But every kid has stepped up. This is an inspirational story and I'm glad we get to share with this with Drake and the Des Moines community. We are very excited about tomorrow

"We are encouraging our kids to get off their feet. We don't want them to over celebrate because we still have to play tomorrow. Our kids have capitalized on an opportunity. It is just a thrill to have our community watch us compete for the championship.

"We will continue to prepare. Our kids will be ready and play with a lot of heart and determination and come out swinging.

Junior guard Lindsay Whorton: "It is similar to story we have had through the tournament with other players stepping up and making big plays. During our run in the first half every player was involved. If all of our players step up that is what makes a difference. We made our run at the beginning of the game when every player scored. In the first half I didn't get a lot of shots (two) but other players stepped up and capitalized on open shots. I was the benefactor of what Lauren (Dybing) and Kelsey (Keizer) did in the first half.

"Our team is very confident in terms of what we are capable of. We know that to be successful we must defend, rebound and execute our offense. Everyone has elevated their level of play and coach says that is what good teams do during the postseason. The fact that we are doing this as a team is giving us a lot of confidence. I have been sleeping like a baby."

Sophomore forward Kelsey Keizer: "Rebounding has been a constant and that is very important. We are continuing to play good defense and that is what gets our offense going...it's easy to sleep when you're winning."

Sophomore forward Lauren Dybing: "Honestly, I came into tournament saying what can I do to help this team especially with Brandy (Dahir) out. Every single trial, illness has helped prepare us through this week. Coach has said throughout the season - through adversity comes triumph. We just wanted to play hard. We needed people to step up for our team to have success."

Evansville head coach Tricia Cullop: “ Drake came out on fire. The game was won and lost on the boards. I can’t give up Drake enough credit for their kids for crashing the boards hard. They also kept tipping the ball and wore us out..

“Give Drake a lot of credit for playing three games in three days. It shows a lot of desire. Yesterday we were fortunate to pull out a win, but today we came up a little short. This was a great environment for women’s basketball.

“We got some good looks in the first half and even had some point blank shots that we couldn’t knock done. We used a lot of energy getting back into game. Drake did a good job of being patient in getting good look. We would play well defensively with the shot clock down going down to three seconds but then we would foul...

“We certainly wanted to wear her (guard Lindsay Whorton) out. I think Monique’ Jones (Drake freshman guard) had a great game. At times, we didn’t give help defense that we needed to. Drake was relentless going to the boards.”

Rebekah Parker: “We are notorious for getting down and then deciding to play. It is unfortunate because if we started to play when the tip goes, we would be in a better position. When we were down by 14, we thought about bringing it together and working as a team to get stops. You have to credit Drake. They did a good a job.

Laura Gaybrick: “It was a battle back and forth. Had we not dug ourselves in a hole it might have been a different game. Playing Drake on their home court made it awful difficult.

“I consider tournament a whole new season. They are on a roll...they are on their home court and it definitely worked in their favor.”