

Atlantic Coast Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Friday, March 6, 2026

Duluth, Georgia, USA

Gas South Arena

Notre Dame Fighting Irish Niele Ivey

Hannah Hidalgo

Iyana Moore

Postgame Press Conference

Notre Dame - 81, NC State - 63

NIELE IVEY: Just so grateful and blessed to be in this position with this group. I keep talking about how we're peaking at the right time. This group is believing in everything that we're doing, and it's so phenomenal as a coach to see us playing the way we're playing together.

Just great basketball. We're getting better and growing day by day. I'm just blessed and grateful to be able to coach this group. This is a really tough conference. We just played NC State. They're a really great team. For us to come out here on a back-to-back and have this performance for 40 minutes is just amazing.

I'm so proud and excited to move on and play tomorrow.

Q. You mentioned yesterday about KK being back and being a glue player for you guys. Who else has stood out to you in this kind of push that you guys have made as of late?

NIELE IVEY: Honestly, every single player on our team. I will say Gisela is giving us great minutes off the bench and been a spark, but also KK and just this whole group. Every game, it's someone else stepping up and doing something fantastic for us. We rely on each and every person.

I would say that Gisela is another person that's given us a great spark. The three she made yesterday was big in the fourth quarter. Everyone stepping up in moments, timely moments that we need.

Q. Iyana, you were very, very comfortable out there



shooting your threes. Is something different? Is it the tournament? What's going on with you?

IYANA MOORE: I feel like I've been comfortable all season. I expect myself to make it. In games I don't make it, I'm like, dang, why didn't I make it? I've been comfortable all season, and my teammates, they really just believe in me to go out there and do that. When I have people around me who believe in me, it makes me more comfortable.

Q. Coach, normally you're one of the top four seeds so you get the double bye, but this year you had to play on the second day. How have you prepared your team to play multiple games back to back earlier than you normally have?

NIELE IVEY: This is our situation. It doesn't matter when we play, we want to play. We're excited. We have a great performance team. We did a great job this week of preparing them for back-to-back loads. There's a ton of recovery. The team knows what we need to do. No matter when we play, we're locked in and excited to play.

Q. Hannah, you are one of the smallest players on the court, but you dominate. In terms of next game, next level, how do you plan on moving forward, like next level?

HANNAH HIDALGO: Do you mean to like pros? Oh, okay, next level of the game.

Honestly, it's really just taking it day by day. I try and come out and play every game like it's my last game, and I think it makes it a lot easier on my teammates when I'm able to get up and pressure and get stops and also get rebounds.

I also want to point out that Iyana had nine rebounds. Kudos to that. That's crazy.

It's really just a mindset. I'm a competitor. I want to win, and I'm going to do whatever it takes for my teammates in order to get to that next step.



Q. You all lost to Duke already obviously this season. You have them tomorrow. You had this one circled, but you already beat NC State. Anything you're looking forward to tomorrow? Duke in the first game had all five players score in double figures.

NIELE IVEY: It's a great matchup. We're excited for the challenge. We have KK. We didn't have her the first time around. We're looking forward to this battle.

Q. Coach, how have you seen Hannah's leadership improve over her years here at Notre Dame?

NIELE IVEY: She's improved every year with every aspect of her game. I think the biggest improvement is her leadership. She's more vocal this year. She's taken that role on. She holds herself accountable. She holds her team accountable. She's an extension of me on the court, and I'm really proud of that because she carries a lot of weight. She has a lot that's on her every day. She has that pressure, and she comes in to work every day with the same mindset, the same approach.

And our team feeds off her energy. So I'm just really impressed and proud of the way she has led us as our leader. I think that's the biggest part of her maturity.

Q. You guys have been on a great run six and seven straight games. What do you attest the momentum switch, any adjustments that you made?

NIELE IVEY: This group is, again, the sense of urgency, we talked about that. I feel like in the month of February, we ratcheted up a whole other level with our sense of urgency, the way that we approached practice, games. They were always focused and ready, but it seemed like February is when it really clicked for us.

I'm not sure any one thing that they've done because this group comes back -- they come to work every day, but I think outside of that, the belief, the trust, and the chemistry has just really grown. It's just the way that they approach and the way that they've worked.

And KK's a big piece of that, I'm sorry. I said that yesterday. Adding KK to our -- back being healthy is a big part of that.

Q. Iyana, I was actually there the day you guys lost to Georgia Tech at the top of the year. That seems like so long ago. You've had such a big evolution since then. I wanted to ask you how has Coach Ivey poured into you since that moment and into that stretch now?

IYANA MOORE: I really think there's no one like Coach

Ivey. Coming here it's really about the people that make the program and being here, it's just so welcoming. The people here just make you laugh.

Coach Ivey cares about you more than just a person. Whenever she's yelling at you and everything like that, you know it comes from a good place.

I think it's just the family environment. You just want to run through a brick wall for Coach Ivey. I think she makes this program ten times better.

Q. Hannah, it feels like you're playing the best basketball of the season now. How do you bring that out in your teammates? Because it feels like they're also doing that.

HANNAH HIDALGO: Honestly it's a matter of trust. I trust my teammates. I trust when one of them misses a wide open layup on the right-hand side, I give it back to them, and they're going to make the next layup. When I pour that into them, I know they really feed off of that and do all of that. If they make a mistake, just encouraging them to get it back, and they bring so much more.

I think it's just a matter of continuing to talk to them and feeding them the ball when they're open, regardless of their mistakes.

Q. This is also for Hannah. How have you guys tried to balance between that sense of urgency that Niele has talked about, while also it seems like you guys are having the most fun you've had all season? That all comes with winning, I'm sure, but how do you balance the two between motivation and trying to maybe be a little relaxed?

IYANA MOORE: Honestly, we're present where our feet are, honestly we are excited to take the next step, especially in the ACC when it's anybody's tournament and anyone can win. It's really enjoying the moments we have right now with each other and enjoying the win and focus on the next game. We're watching the scout and watching Duke. So we're just really being intentional with that.

Q. Wes Moore said something at halftime to the sideline reporter, something to the effect of, if you've got tips for how to stop Hannah, please let me know. I don't want to ask for the state secrets on that. There probably aren't any anyway, but if you were having to game plan against her, what do you think those 24, 48 hours would be like, sitting there watching the film like, oh, my gosh, what are we going to do?

NIELE IVEY: I wouldn't be sleeping. No, I can't give away



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secrets.

I mean, she's phenomenal. I get why he feels that way, and everybody in the country should just -- she's just a fierce competitor, the best two-way player in our game. If I had to scout against her, I wouldn't sleep. She's just phenomenal. That's all I can say. Just love that she's with us.

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