

# NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - Hawai'i vs LSU

Friday, March 17, 2023

Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA

Pete Maravich Assembly Center

**Hawai'i Rainbow Wahine**

**Laura Beeman**

**Kallin Spiller**

**Lily Wahinekapu**

Media Conference

LSU 73, Hawai'i 50

LAURA BEEMAN: Yeah, first off I want to thank LSU and the NCAA for hosting an he amazing event. The hospitality has been incredible. I also want to share that Coach Mulkey was unbelievably complimentary towards these kids, our program. I wish them well in the tournament. She had some really great things to say. She was a class act and I appreciate her because that doesn't always happen. So thank you, Coach.

As far as our team, you know, I thought we did a pretty good job on the boards. Turnovers got us and the amount of points they were able to score off our turnovers. What it came down to is when big shots had to be made and we missed shots when we had wide open looks. To beat a team the quality of LSU, you just have to hit open shots, and we just didn't do that.

Incredibly proud of these girls. Tough environment to come play in, in front of 10,000 people, but it was fun. This team has not quit all year long. They have fought adversity they had on all year and our tournament was a reflection of that. I thought they played outstanding. We are going to continue to advance and tournaments like this, situations like this are going to help us get there.

Yeah, just incredibly proud of this group.

**Q. Coming into the game, you want to play Hawai'i basketball, held them to 48 through three quarters right there with the rebounds. Is this the type of performance you wanted to have on the night?**



LILY WAHINEKAPU: Yes and no. Like Coach B said, we could have hit shots when we were open and minimize the turnovers. I think that really got to us. But yeah, we can definitely do better than what we did today but I'm still proud of my girls.

KALLIN SPILLER: Echoing Lily, it was exciting to see those moments where we stuck together as a team and continued to fight through the adversity that we have all season. I personally feel like my teammates and I really left it all on the court. Yes, there were a couple shots that we wish would have fallen or some defensive stops we wish we could have gotten.

But hats off to LSU, it's a great program that's going to make a deep run in this tournament and I'm really proud of what our team was able to show today.

**Q. 10-4 down the stretch; what are you most proud of?**

LILY WAHINEKAPU: The heart that we have; that never giving up; that we're playing the whole 40 minute, the entire game, giving all we have.

KALLIN SPILLER: When something new happened to us, when we thought we had gotten past the next -- something else, something else popped up. Seeing that heart and seeing that we were able to stick together and still have fun and really pull together a string of wins that I think no one expected us for to get after everything was really exciting.

But it was the fun along the way, too. I loved going out and playing with my teammates every single day, and I'm going to miss that.

**Q. The last two seasons here in UH, two times in March Madness, for you, retrospectively looking back, what are you personally most proud of when you can look back at your time at Hawai'i and what you have been able to do?**

KALLIN SPILLER: Firstly I feel honored that had Coach B gave me a chance to come and be a leader in her program. Hawai'i has been a strong program; they always been on my radar even before I came here. But to say that



we were able to finish the job for the first time since 2016; get two back-to-back tournament championships, I'm personally really proud to say that I felt like I gave my heart and soul to this program; and to see it's better than where it was when I started, and I'm proud of that fight and being part of this run.

**Q. Coming into the program this season and talking about the run you went on down the stretch and how you started the year, for you, what does this game and this experience do for you and the rest of the girls coming back? Knowing now it's the off-season and building up towards next year, what does that do for y'all?**

LILY WAHINEKAPU: This was a really cool experience playing against some of the top girls in the nation. I feel like this game, I learned a lot from this game on what I need to work on and my weaknesses, and just being in this environment with like 10,000 plus people is something new, so yeah.

**Q. Did y'all have a particular strategy for dealing with Alexis Morris on the perimeter? She seemed to not have the type of game she usually does.**

LILY WAHINEKAPU: We know she's a 3-level scorer and hit some tough shots and some pull-ups. She went on that run in the fourth quarter, I think, and it got to us a little bit.

**Q. You mentioned LSU making a deep run in the tournament. Can you go into a little detail as to why you think that?**

KALLIN SPILLER: Today I think it's really clear they have great guards and great posts and they are really a full team that's able to do everything. Personally guarding Angel Reece was difficult. Guarding LaDazhia was difficult and they are at the top of this game for a reason.

As a post focused on rebounding, I know how hard it is to collect those double doubles at the level she does. Coach Mulkey has done a great job with this program. Being against them, it's clear they are going to make a run, and playing for them, I'm rooting for them. For the ones that knocked us out, I'm hoping they go far.

**Q. Alexis, did y'all have a specific game plan for her? And second part, the way Caitlin conducted herself, any chance she might be a coach one day?**

LAURA BEEMAN: I hope I'm retired if she becomes a coach and I don't have to coach against her. No, I think she's going to do something different in her life but whatever direction that young lady goes, she will be very,

very successful. She's a top-notch kid, as impressive in the classroom as she is today here on the court, I can promise you that.

We had to get in gaps. We knew that we had to get in gaps because of what Morris could do getting downhill, and you have to pick your poison with a team that is as talented as LSU. We knew we weren't going to stop Reece. We just had to try to do as give a job on her as we could on boards, make her touches outside the paint as much as possible and make her work a little bit. With Morris, we tried to get in gaps so she couldn't get downhill on us and put the ball in other people's hands and make them score.

**Q. Was your game plan pretty much -- did you do a lot of the things that you wanted to do? Looked like y'all were working the clock down trying to shorten the game and one of the defensive things you did against Morris, did a lot of those things work? Just their talent and depth got you?**

LAURA BEEMAN: Yeah, you know, I think that, again, Reece is going to get what she gets. She's going to go No. 1, No. 2 in the WNBA; we don't have a pro on our team right now.

So I think against Morris it was a little bit effective. Letting some of the other players shoot and having to make big shots was effective. It wasn't necessarily our game plan to run the clock down. It was what they did defensively that caused that at times.

We couldn't get downhill and drive and kick, and they closed so quickly that when we thought when they had shots, they were right there in our face and we tried to get them to drive and kick and get them in more rotation. It wasn't our game plan to run the clock down. It was our game plan to run down and get great shots. They make that very, very difficult.

When we took great shots and weren't able to turn the ball over and we were able to get back in transition, and when you can stop this team's transition and make them play in the halfcourt, you have a chance. I know they average 84 points a game, we held them below that average and I am pretty proud of my kids for that.

It was don't get killed on the boards. We had to put body on body on body on Reece and others and try to stop their transition as best we could by taking great shots and not turning the ball over.

**Q. What's your thought on how this run late this year might carry over to the off-season?**

LAURA BEEMAN: I don't know, it hasn't sunk in yet, and when it does, I'm probably going to cry for a while. This has been an emotional season: The injuries we had; losing games we weren't supposed to lose; going on a run and being down in the tournament and having to hit a big shot.

I think everyone needs to reflect a little bit. Everyone needs to be just really thankful for each other on our team and we do celebrate each other every single day I think that's important.

Once we all sit and talk we'll come up with a game plan of how to continue to build our skill. These women that we played against tonight are highly skilled. They are three-level scorers. They do things defensively and with speed that we don't have, and if we need to continue to advance in the tournament, we have to continue to grow our skill and our skillset.

So this is a little bit of a motivation for those that are returning. I definitely think that they will draw on this experience in that moment of, 'I don't want to get in the gym,' it's going to be, 'Wait, I need to get in the gym.' That's the type of team they are. But right now, I don't know if it's sunk in yet. This has been a crazy season.

**Q. Wanted to ask you about the fourth quarter. In the Conference Championship game, you guys mounted a comeback. What was the feeling on the team going into the fourth quarter today?**

LAURA BEEMAN: I told them the same thing. I said I'm really bad at math but I think we're about six or seven baskets down; we have been here before. And they laughed. I said, Guys, we've been here. Let's chip away, stop, score, stop. This is a great team but we have to get back to not turning the ball over, taking great shots. We have to get on the boards.

I said, right now, offensively we are not taking care of the ball, for a while and then we had some open shots. We just didn't hit them, and that's a little bit of the difference when you're playing against the top-calibre teams in the country, they hit big shots. We had wide open shots, and the kids just couldn't put it down.

Back to Brian's question, I know I have a lot of kids that are going to get on our gun this summer and take a lot of shots.

**Q. When you called the time-out, there was about three minutes left, what was your message at that point?**

LAURA BEEMAN: At that point it was pretty loud, obviously, in the stadium and the hand signals that we had were working pretty well. But we wanted to script three or four plays and, say, let's try these. We knew a couple we thought we could get good looks and we did. We didn't hit the shots. It was more last push, close this gap. Maybe we can't win this gap but we can bring it within 15 or 19, something like that, hopefully 15, and the shots just didn't fall.

Thank you.

**Q. The biggest crowd you played in front of this year was 3,600 at Oregon State, this was about three times that. It can be intimidating but uplifting, too. What did you think of the atmosphere?**

LAURA BEEMAN: It was amazing. I wish our kids could play in front of this every single night. It's special when you can play in front of a sold out crowd. I don't think it intimidated the kids. Even in the time-out, it was, wow, this many people are here; they are watching us, too, and we are playing good basketball.

It's a testament to the community here to get out and support these young women like this. It's phenomenal. But I think my kids loved it. I know I did. It was fantastic. Hopefully we can continue to grow our program in Hawai'i, and maybe one day get a sellout like this, would be fantastic.

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