

2023 NCAA Women's Lacrosse Championship

Monday, May 22, 2023

Cary, North Carolina, USA

WakeMed Soccer Park

Boston College Eagles Acacia Walker-Weinstein

Media Conference



THE MODERATOR: Once again, welcome to the 2023 NCAA Division I Women's Lacrosse Pre-Championship press conference. Next we will hear from Boston College head coach Acacia Walker-Weinstein.

Any thoughts on the season thus far what it took to get here, and expectations for Cary?

ACACIA WALKER-WEINSTEIN: We had a great season. It was very challenging in many ways, in such a great way. We played so many teams that helped prepare us. Really proud of the entire coaching staff and all the BC girls and our BC family for helping us get this far.

We are really excited to have an opportunity to compete in another Final Four against an amazing Syracuse team.

Q. It was just a little over a month ago now that you guys beat Syracuse in the regular season finale. I'm just curious, four weeks removed from that game, how you see this matchup going differently or maybe the same as that one.

ACACIA WALKER-WEINSTEIN: You know, that was such a great game, and you know, but I do think it was kind of what it was. It was the end of the regular season, which is like a million years ago, and I think both teams are very different in some really exciting ways, and new challenging ways for us for sure.

But I just think it's a totally different ballgame being in the Final Four knowing how incredibly talented these Syracuse players are, and knowing how hard everyone has worked. The stakes are super high, and I think it will be a very exciting game.

Q. We talked after that Penn game. You guys had a week off before that game and it wasn't your best outing. Are you changing anything up this time around with another big chunk of time off?

ACACIA WALKER-WEINSTEIN: You know, we are always trying to change. Like if we stay the same, then teams can track us, and if we stay the same, to me, we are not working hard. We are going to squeeze every last bit of intensity out of every single person on the team, including the coaching staff, for another six days to be very different.

In terms of tactical changes, yes, we are changing a lot. Personnel, not changing a whole lot. Just asking everyone to try to be a little bit better individually so that they can bring some really healthy change to their units.

Q. Syracuse is coming off two impressive wins in this tournament, their most points all season. You talked a lot about how you don't want to change too much, but you have to change a little bit. How are you guys going to maintain that production that you guys were able to in the final quarter of that regular season game and kind of predate Syracuse's adjustments?

ACACIA WALKER-WEINSTEIN: Like I said, we are just looking to get better individually. Our players are expected to work the hardest they have ever worked. We are not taking our foot off the gas, and in terms of preparation, our team knows that we've got to be ready for a very, what should I say, very deep, very skilled, very well-coached, very talented, very hungry Syracuse team.

But I know my girls and I know they are working hard. I know they want this, and I trust their work ethic. I trust their humble attitude, and I trust their intensity. I mean, they have shown nothing but laser focus in every practice, which is all I can ask for. And we'll continue to do that tonight when we train.

Q. Talk to us a little bit about the role Shea Dolce has been playing for you in goal as a freshman. You would think she's a senior with a very talented defense in front of her but really is showing tremendous maturity going into the Final Four.

ACACIA WALKER-WEINSTEIN: You know, she is. That's exactly what she is. She's very mature. She's very calm. She's very confident in herself because of her preparation



and her level of preparation. I mean, the kid works harder than anybody else on the team.

I think probably she and Cassidy Weeks and Jenn Medjid probably lead the way. But she also has an incredibly experienced and talented defensive unit in front of her, too, and I think they all are really gelling well and coming together during this really important stage of the season.

But Shea is a natural leader. We have always known that about her. I think she is probably working harder than she's of worked in her life, and that's going to set her up for Friday.

Q. When people go back and tell the story of national title teams, it always feels like there's 20 or 30 people who have a moment where they put their mark on it. Is there a moment where you point to Kayla's impact on that national title?

ACACIA WALKER-WEINSTEIN: Is there a moment from...

Q. Is there like an anecdote or anything that Kayla from your national title season, where Kayla was very impactful on your team?

ACACIA WALKER-WEINSTEIN: Oh, my gosh, one particular moment, no. I'd say she and I had many moments together. I would say her impact, you know, was -- it's hard to put into words. I mean, I loved my time with Kayla. She was so impactful on all of the girls, their confidence. The coaches, I think we all think very differently, and I think that was something that I valued so much about Kayla is she brought such brilliant insight.

But really, I think the most -- the thing that I cherish the most about our time can Kayla when she was with us there was a lot of trust between she and her players, between she and I, between she and the other coaches, and when you have a level of trust that genuine, I think it can be really powerful.

You know, the moments are -- there's a lot of moments. She helped me raise my little guy, and she was a part of every big moment.

But really, I would credit Kayla in saying that she is one of the most genuine human beings, and her trust and her love for our program and our philosophy is what really helped us that year.

Q. I know it puts you on the spot, and I'm going to try to word it a little differently. But do you have a favorite story, I guess, that in like five or ten years you're going to tell about her.

ACACIA WALKER-WEINSTEIN: About Kayla. Yeah, you may have to come back to me on that one. You know, I'll never forget when she and I hugged after the final whistle and we were both, you know, crying in each other's arms, and she and I had both wanted that our whole lives and never had it as a player. And you know, the common bond between the two of us; that it was our life goal, so to be able to tackle that together is definitely one of my favorite moments.

I would say that's one that will probably stick out forever.

Q. Sticking a bit on just having seen Syracuse under Kayla's tutelage, I know you asked you a couple weeks ago about blending team and how teams blend from each other. Are there things that you see out of Syracuse that are things that you would have taught as a head coach, and are there things that you pick up when you see Syracuse play, and you say, oh, that's a new wrinkle to something we might have done?

ACACIA WALKER-WEINSTEIN: Yeah, I think the common overlap is that they are very unselfish. There's a very unselfish style of play that I think both Kayla and I believe is ultimately the most powerful thing that you can have with your team.

Yeah, of course, there's a lot of deception behind their offense, a lot of deception behind our offense. I know they are always trying to be different and trying to be better but yeah, the philosophies overlap a lot.

But at the same time it's been two years since we've been together, and that's a lot of time to change. You know, Kayla has picked up her own steam and she has become such an incredible head coach that I think her team has morphed a little bit more into, you know, Kayla's team, and we are very different. Our teams are very different. But there is a lot of overlap. I think we are fast-paced, effective and smart.

Q. Wondering, it was eons ago, two months ago that you played University of Denver, but any thoughts on that match up and what D presents on the other side of the bracket and potentially if you would meet them on Sunday?

ACACIA WALKER-WEINSTEIN: Yeah, those guys are an awesome team. They are made up of really smart kids, and I think they are hungry to forge their own path into history. Clearly they have already done that.

But I think they are very smart. I think when we played them, we were not anywhere near our best. But I do not



think that's why we lost. I think we lost because they were significantly better than us that day.

So I have ultimate, very deep level of respect for Denver and their coaching staff, and I know they are going to be ready to fight Northwestern.

Q. And do you know Liza Kelly at all, just any thoughts on her?

ACACIA WALKER-WEINSTEIN: Yeah, I've known her for a long time. I don't know her very personally but I know she's a great coach and loves her girls, and it's fun to kind of watch how she's done things her own way. I think she's -- I'm not surprised she's here. I think she's very smart and I think she's very committed to her craft, and she's been doing this for a long time. But I have a lot of respect for her.

Q. Six consecutive semifinals is a pretty remarkable number, and there's been so many personnel changes, but the result is the same, being in the semifinals. What's the biggest thing that you credit that level of consistency to?

ACACIA WALKER-WEINSTEIN: I credit it to the type of players that come to play at Boston College. These girls, there's a very, you know, unique profile, I would say. These girls that come to play for Boston College, they want to within a National Championship. They are willing to sacrifice their personal agendas for the team.

And they fight really hard for the Boston College community. That's something I really underestimated before I became a head coach. I had no idea how tight the Boston College community is.

But I would say, I credit the girls and the type of people that are coming to play for this team, and they get on board with the high expectations that the coaches set, and you know, we said it a long time ago, that we were going to win a National Championship.

And then after 2020, that goal shifted and we want to win more. I just think these girls are very committed to being the very best that they can be in the classroom and on the field and for their families. I think that's what makes them special.

THE MODERATOR: All right, Coach, I know you're busy and you have practice to get to. Thank you for taking time out of your day to be here. Good luck, everyone, safely travels and we'll see you in Cary.

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