

2023 NCAA Women's Lacrosse Championship

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WakeMed Soccer Park

Syracuse Orange

Kayla Treanor

Media Conference



and how you've seen them applied in the week since and how they will be applied entering this rematch.

KAYLA TREANOR: Yeah, that was a really unfortunate loss for us just because we had a lead, we had a pretty significant lead early, and we had it for about 59 minutes of the game, and the first time they led was under that last minute.

So the players were really bummed and frustrated after that game, and then you know, it just took us some time. We had to make some adjustments as coaches and do a couple different things that I think have really helped us in this NCAA Tournament.

But it certainly fuels the team. I think it gives them a level of respect for their opponent, knowing that it was such a great game last time.

I think the girls are excited to get a rematch against these guys, and just know that it's going to be a really great game.

Q. I know you've had a lot of players come back from season-ending injuries. Is there anything that struck you about the way Sierra Cockerille recovered from her injury and to become the major contributor for the team this year?

KAYLA TREANOR: Yeah, I think this is the best lacrosse she's ever played in her career. Something really unique about Sierra with her injury is just having coached a lot of players that have torn their ACL, she was just really unique in that she cried for about, you know, 30 seconds to a minute in that game, in our Northwestern game two years ago, and really ever since then, she's been on a mission to come back stronger and faster and a better teammate.

She never through the process has really felt bad for herself. She was super motivated. Was really optimistic about it and just had an amazing attitude, and I think that's being reflected in how well she's playing right now.

I've said this all season. I think she is one of the very best midfielders in the country, and I think she's just had an

THE MODERATOR: Welcome once again to the 2023 NCAA Division I Women's Lacrosse Pre-Championship press conference.

We are here with our fourth and final coach, Syracuse head coach Kayla Treanor. Thank you so much for joining us and taking time out of your day.

First we'll throw things to you, coach, reflections on the season thus far and what it took to get to this point and expectations for carry.

KAYLA TREANOR: Yeah, we're fired up. Really excited to be playing in a Final Four. The girls have worked so hard all year. This is the place where they have wanted to be all year, so it's just really exciting that it's finally here, and you know, that we're in it and we have a chance to compete for a championship.

Q. Having coached at BC, and knowing the sideline and knowing some of those players, does that give you an advantage that you wouldn't have over other teams? What about that experience are you going to be able to highlight as a coach for Syracuse?

KAYLA TREANOR: Yeah, I mean, being two years removed, they have really evolved and grown, and they are a unique team this year, unique from teams in the past.

But yeah, of course, obviously coaching there and knowing their players, just understanding that team a bit. But I know they have really changed a lot in just some of the things that they do. And they are good coaches. They are unpredictable. I think in general, we just have to be ready for a great game, great matchup, and yeah, we're excited about it.

Q. It was just over a month ago now that you guys lost to Boston College in the regular season finale. Curious what lessons the team took from that game

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amazing year this year, and I can't wait to watch her play in the Final Four and just watch her dominate.

But no, she's been an amazing teammate, amazing leader, and just really handled this injury so unique and just never feeling bad about herself and just all business and getting after it and just really being an amazing teammate.

Q. We just spoke with Acacia, and she talked about what a strong core you've had with your student athletes, and I hear that also from the athletes, and the level of trust that you share not only with the players but the other coaches. Maybe share with us in terms of what you think has been really key to you developing into such a great coach at such a young stage in your career?

KAYLA TREANOR: I don't know, I think I have so much to learn and so much to grow. Like you said, I am so young, but I've been very fortunate to have amazing mentors in my path and along my journey, first with Coach Gait being my college coach, and just always having him as a mentor in my life.

And then really going to BC was huge for me in terms of just growing and learning so much from them. Acacia and Jenn, they are just amazing coaches and are a huge part of my life.

I worked at Harvard, too, with Lisa Miller who also coached at Syracuse prior to Gary.

I've been really lucky. My dad is a college basketball coach and he's taught me a lot. Coaching has just been a big part of my life.

I don't know, I guess I still feel very much so in the pursuit of chasing being a great coach. I don't really feel like I've reached that yet but I have had amazing mentors and because of that, I've just been so lucky and just really blessed.

Q. You talked about mentors a little bit. Acacia mentioned, in similarities between the team, she mentioned "unselfishness" and "deception" as two qualities that both teams share. Where do you think you learned the importance of those two things over the course of your career?

KAYLA TREANOR: I would say the deception piece, Gary. He's so unique and his mind thinks so differently. A lot of that I learned as a player and as a coach from him.

And then the unselfishness, I think Acacia did a really good job teaching that to her teams and her players.

I think that for our team in particular, they are a really talented group of players but that really enjoy being around each other, and you know, just want to win.

So I think it's just a lot of credit to the players for buying into that, for behaving like that on and off the field and just being an amazing group.

Q. So each time Syracuse has been to championship weekend, they have been eliminated by one of three teams, Boston College, Northwestern and Maryland. Two of those teams are in this tournament. What's your mindset going into that, and how do you think Syracuse can kind of up-end history of getting over that mountaintop finally?

KAYLA TREANOR: Yeah, well, I didn't know that. But I just think for this year in particular, the Final Four, and for our team, I just think there is not a lot of doubt. I think that our team knows that this is a Final Four that's wide open and that -- I know obviously they haven't played Denver or seen Denver.

But BC we played and we led for 59 minutes of the game. A couple things change and the outcome might be different, so they know that they can beat them.

And Northwestern, same thing, we're the one team that's been able to beat them this year.

I just feel like there's a lot of confidence knowing that they are going to be amazing games but it's really anyone's to take. I think for this group, you know, it's all about just being motivated to go take it.

Q. You guys also had a tough out in the ACC Championship, so it was kind of a difficult two weeks for you guys. How, if at all, important was that extra week for resetting for the NCAA Tournament, and what did you guys really work on and talk about during that time that helped you pivot?

KAYLA TREANOR: Yeah, I just think we're such a different team right now compared to where we were in the ACC tournament. You know, it's a really long year and we played some amazing teams. We ended the regular season and had to bounce back quickly and go to an ACC tournament and travel. We certainly didn't play, you know, the way we talk about it is, Syracuse lacrosse.

When we came back it was the first time since our preseason where they had that significant amount of time to talk about us and the way that we want to play and who we are going to be. We did that leading into the season

and haven't had that opportunity since.

So we had like a week and a half to really work on ourselves and we redefined the way that we want to play and what we are going to be about and how we are going to play in this NCAA Tournament, and I think that was really beneficial for us.

We also made a couple adjustments that I think have really helped in terms of personnel on the field. But really it was just a time for us to refocus and get our motivation back and just regroup in terms of who we are and how we want to play.

You know, we set out to play a certain way and we've done that so far, and you know, hopefully we have two games left. Just focus on weekend and finishing it and playing the way we want to play.

Q. What was the critical personnel adjustment or strategy adjustment that you guys made, if you can share?

KAYLA TREANOR: Well, probably the biggest one is just moving Tessa Queri to defense. She's been outstanding for us, and just made a big adjustment for us in our zone and how we want to play it.

You know, I give a lot of credit to the coaching staff, Caitlin and Kenzie for coming up with that idea, and it's really, really helped us I think.

I'm just excited for her because she's a player that we were talking about that we can't have off the field, and being a midfielder, they do sub. So just having her on the field for the whole game makes such a difference.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you very much for taking time out of your day to be here. Appreciate it. Good luck in practice, safe travels and we will see you in Cary.

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