

# 2023 NCAA Women's Lacrosse Championship

Sunday, May 28, 2023

Cary, North Carolina, USA

WakeMed Soccer Park

## Northwestern Wildcats

## Kelly Amonte Hiller

## Izzy Scane

## Madison Taylor

### Media Conference



**KELLY AMONTE HILLER:** Honestly, the years, the years after that run of championships, it was pretty challenging. I was pretty hard on myself, taking a lot of ownership.

You know, I was putting too much expectations on myself and on the team. I think that, you know, I got to the point where you know, at one point, we just -- I just said, "I'm hitting the reset button." Completely resetting this program. You know, going back to how I started it in 2005, that crew.

It's not only been an awesome process. There's so many alums that contributed to this championship today that are not on this team. It's been a process each year of getting people to believe more and more and more, and it was -- honestly, there's nothing more fun than when you get a big group of people to believe in the same thing.

It was such a fun journey. I savored every single moment of it. I had absolutely so much fun.

**Q. Over the course of your postseason run, you held teams to single-digit goals. What were some of the things you did to keep these high-powered offenses not being as efficient as they were the rest of the season?**

**KELLY AMONTE HILLER:** I think our defense has been building. It's kind of funny because the last time we played Boston College in February, Sammi White (ph) was still a midfielder and Kendall Halpern was coming off an injury and played limited minutes in that game.

I think the second half of that game was kind of the spark that started this defensive run. We really came back. We held them to key possessions. The offense went and did their thing. It's just been really cool to see them building their confidence, building, building.

I think they have a lot of pride in what they are doing. They put a lot of work into it off the field, studying, and just making sure they are completely dialed and communicating together. I said to them at halftime, I could hear them communicating interest the sideline, and you couldn't hear anything.

Northwestern 18, Boston College 6

**THE MODERATOR:** We are joined by Northwestern, first title since 2012.

**KELLY AMONTE HILLER:** Oh, my gosh, what a group. What a group of families. What support we had today from, you know, fans and alumni and I mean, you could just feel it right from the beginning of the game.

We said at the beginning of the fall that the most important thing is going to be believing, no matter what we do, we've got to believe. And I think it showed out there today, even when things didn't go exactly the way we wanted them to go; everybody had each other's back, and this group has done that and built that all season long.

Oh, my gosh, I'm just absolutely so proud of them. Honestly, regardless of the score today, win or lose, I would have been so proud of this group. I have so much heart for them and what great leadership with Izzy and Erin, and newcomers like Hailey and Madi on the attack end.

It was just a great effort. I'm so proud of my D. They were spectacular this weekend.

**Q. You talked on Friday a little bit about the expectations that you build over the course of leading this program, especially talking about making it to the title game so many years in a row. For you, personally, was 11 years between championships, was it difficult? I know it sounds like a silly question, but how did you balance the mental of getting through that?**

So I just think that speaks to the power, and today, we didn't just have the D -- and Friday, too. It was like everyone is bouncing off of each other. Everyone is bouncing off of each other. We had it at the Loyola game, as well, and that's really fun when you have everyone backing each other up.

**Q. When you first wanted to come to Northwestern and made that initial string of titles, did you believe you would be sitting here today?**

IZZY SCANE: No. The simple answer, no. I mean, I hoped, and I came to Northwestern with the goal in mind of winning a National Championship, and that's why I picked this place.

But to be a part of a group that was as phenomenal as our team was this year, just I can't say enough amazing things about every single person on the team and the coaching staff and everyone involved with our program.

It's been the most fun year of my life, and I wouldn't change it for anything. I'm very, very thankful that I chose Northwestern to be the place where I stride to strive towards that. It's really given me a sense of home and community.

I've just had an amazing time over the last five years, and I'm very glad I could come back this year. The injury sucked, but having an extra year and being with the best people in the world has been phenomenal.

And now to be up in the conversations of teams that won National Championships under Kelly, it's just an honored. It's surreal, currently. It hasn't really set in yet. But it's exciting.

**Q. You had talked Friday about how when you were growing up, you had watch these Northwestern teams win titles. How does it feel to be in the same conversations as some of those teams?**

IZZY SCANE: It's insane. And we had alum in the stands that were at those games that won National Championships. People I watched growing up and trying to emulate their playing style and trying to be like them. It was like those kid dreams you didn't really expect to come true but you set your goals high and hope that you come somewhere close to them.

For this to be happening is just one of the most insane experiences of my life. I can't be more grateful for the people who have got me here. I have an amazing support system, and I always have for my family and through the

players on this team, the coaching staff.

In all my years in lacrosse, I've had great experiences and I'm very, very grateful for every single person that's touched me and allowed me to get to this place, and to be in Northwestern's records now is an honor and very, very exciting.

**Q. What were your expectations to yourself coming into this year?**

MADISON TAYLOR: When I came here, when I committed, all I thought about was like, how we are going to win a National Championship. That's really all I ever wanted, and to dream of it as a kid and now being here is, like, so surreal. I can't believe this is real right now. That's all I wanted. My dreams came true (laughter).

**Q. After multiple semifinals and the ACL injury, how did you keep the faith these past few years?**

IZZY SCANE: Yeah, as much as an ACL injury sucks, it really lets you reset and it lets you kind of get a new appreciation for what you have.

Missing last year obviously was really, really hard. But to be a part of the team as someone on the sideline was amazing. I think I grew a lot as a person and as a player.

And being able to come back, not all girls are lucky as me to get a year back and play again and enjoy the game again.

So I'm very glad it happened the way it did and it happened when it did. I was able to come back and have another year -- I mean, two years, actually. It's awesome. It's just given me a new appreciation for everything. It's awesome. I think this whole year we have just focused on enjoying ourselves.

I remember last night, I was sitting in bed and was like, we could lose this game by 20 and it could not take anything from this season. This team has been phenomenal. The people on this team are phenomenal. Every single person has grown as a player and as a person. It's just been the most amazing experience.

So I think when you have that as like to fall back on, there's no fear going into games. There's no pressure. There's nothing -- you're just happy here and it's been awesome.

**Q. What was the atmosphere in that first goal?**

MADISON TAYLOR: Yeah, basically, just they kind of like weren't really sliding off me. And like Erin came up to me

and she's like, "You've got, like this they are not sliding to you. Like if they want a freshman to just score, like, let them, because you can do it."

Once she said that to me, kind of just made me just keep going in. Just surreal. Great start to the game.

**Q. Early on the ball was kind of all over the place. How did you guys keep capitalizing off BC's long passes and stuff like that?**

IZZY SCANE: Yeah, it's definitely something I noticed. Like, early in the game my hands were slipping and my feet were slipping, and I think all we had to do was remember everyone is playing in the same conditions and no one is at an advantage or disadvantage.

I think making sure that we were just sticking to what we were doing and hoping eventually we would be able to keep our footing and our sticks in our hands. Obviously that started happening and that was awesome. But.

Basically focusing on knowing everyone is in the same weather right now, and we just have to play through it. Just another barrier that we'll be able to talk about ten years from now when we talk about winning a National Championship.

**Q. The other day, Izzy mentioned that Erin is probably the smartest player she played with. There were, cherry picking, at least two times today, she draws a double and seamlessly finds someone cutting. Can you kind of go a little deeper into what makes her such a smart player and how she impacts everything going around her?**

KELLY AMONTE HILLER: Well, I think first, she has an incredible love for this game. She studies this game. She watches every, every game that's on TV, every game and just she's a very intelligent girl, as well.

And the last thing is she's very calm. She's a very calm person. So it's easy for they are to see things on the field because she's calm, she's smart and she's studied. She checks all the boxes. She's a really funny girl, too, which makes it even that much more special.

**Q. What does it mean to you being a freshman, coming into this loaded offense, from day one -- you had five goals today, but what does it mean, all of these talented players trusted you with the offense?**

MADISON TAYLOR: It means so much to me, like Kelly was talking about, the faith we have in each other is just surreal, and I couldn't do it without them. They make it so

much easier for me to play on offense with them, and I just love every second of it and I love every one of them.

**Q. You're from Michigan, an area where the game is still developing. What does it mean to you to be from there and lead your team to this championship?**

IZZY SCANE: It's awesome. Part of my decision to go to Northwestern was staying in the Midwest. Growing up in Michigan and playing with all the kids that I grew up playing and the coaches that poured into me when I was younger and knew I would do big things and had that belief in my youth and all the way through my high school and middle school the class group, I kind of did that for them.

I hear from girls back in Michigan, like all the time and just how I've inspired them to think that they can do big things like that, and there's obviously a lot of girls now coming out of machine doing amazing things.

It's really, really fun to see the game grow and we've seen over the years it's just skyrocketing. It's such a fun, amazing sport. To me someone coming out of an area like that to draw attention kids coming out of there for know they can do anything kids coming out of the East Coast or anywhere. We have West Coast kids, too, doing the same thing for our team.

It's been awesome. An honor to even be in the position to kind of inspire kids to do that. So it's been great, yeah.

**Q. First I want to ask about the last goal Izzy scored, a steal, heavy contact, a dive or a sprawl, whatever it was, and you know, you're parallel to the ground and just fight the ball past the goalie. Is it possible you saved your best goal for last? Be interested to hear what Kelly thought of it, too.**

IZZY SCANE: I think all that is it just -- I mean, I've said it a hundred times but I just love the group around me so much, and I'm willing to do whatever it takes for them, and the whole team is. You see that people sacrifice a lot to put us in positions to be successful; and throwing themselves on the ground, they get hit, they get bodied, anything. If I can do the same and lay myself on the line for the girls to the left and right of me, like I am going to do it 20 times over.

The last goal is definitely a fun one. I had no idea the ball went into the cage. Just tossed it and hoped it stayed within the realm of our offensive players. It was just fun. People just surrounded me and they gave me hugs. It was awesome. Definitely a fun one to end on.

**Q. I had the vantage point of watching on TV back in**



**Chicago. Everybody surely took note of your utter inability to stop crying after the game. Can you describe what was coming out of you?**

IZZY SCANE: Called me out there. (Laughter).

No, it's been a long, amazing process getting here, and I think -- I mean, I'm 22 years old. I've been at Northwestern for the last five years, and I've loved every moment of it.

And I've seen the ups and downs of this program, and of the team, and every team I've been on has been a different group of girls, a different environment, and it's been amazing every single year. That's why I wanted to come back.

And especially with being out last year, and this year, just having so much respect for every single person on the team, being able to finally come out with that -- it's crazy, because it seems so far away because it seems like such a big, crazy dream.

But this year, we really focused, jut like, it's just a game, every single game is just a game. For it to finally click and happen, I can't really explain the emotion behind it; and having all of our favorite people and loved ones in the stands rooting for us and being there, it's just amazing.

I think if you're ever lucky enough to experience something like that, you've done a great job. So it's been -- it was awesome.

**Q. Kelly, what can you say about the impact Sammie White had on this game defensively and maybe intangible things we may not know or see?**

KELLY AMONTE HILLER: Sam and Sammie are best of friends and they both had incredible impact on this game today. Sammie White, draw controls, on ground balls, on defense. She is just a phenomenal -- she scored a goal, forgot about that one.

She's just a phenomenal kid, phenomenal player. You know, when you have your best friend beside you on that draw control, they were -- they were just -- they were doing it, and it was really, really cool to see them.

I knew right before -- right before the game that Sam was going to do so well on draws today and just be able to manipulate and put it where she wanted to, and it was a great day for those two, two sophomores, just doing their thing.

**Q. And Kelly, you mentioned the first Boston College game. That was when you switched Sammie to**

**defense; correct?**

KELLY AMONTE HILLER: Second half, yeah. Switched her to D. Kendall went down on D for the second half, and we really kind of saw some of the confidence that we could have with that group down there. Kylee Mahoney and Allie Berkery rounded out the four defenders, and honestly the job that Hannah Gillespie and Jane Hansen; Jane Hansen was phenomenal today. Those guys have really done an amazing job this year, and it's been so fun to work with them. They have been so coachable.

**Q. So that fourth goal we talked about a little bit earlier, that was extra special because it was 99 on the year, a record, and also the career Northwestern record for goals. How does it feel to be in that position up with some of the greatest names to ever play lacrosse?**

IZZY SCANE: Yeah, I mean it's crazy. It's not something I've paid much, or if any, attention to. I think the focus was win a National Championship.

And that is an amazing honor to have kind of on the back burner. But the girls on our offense and defensively, they got us the ball a lot; the draw team got us the ball a lot and they created so many opportunities for me. You have to have a good understanding of the game to really get a grasp of the amount of work that people put in on the offensive end to give me the looks that I have, and I cannot take away from that.

Because, yeah, I might be the one finishing the goals, finishing the shots but they are absolutely phenomenal players and they really work very, very hard for me to be in the position that I'm in; and same thing with the scout girls that we see at practice every day. We play against the best defenders every day at practice, and then we get to games, and it's just fun.

Yeah, I can't thank them enough for allowing me to be in the position to kind of get up in the ranks with these players that I used to watch when I was younger and looked up to. It's definitely a cool addition to winning today, I would say.

**Q. How does it feel to tie Cindy for the most championship titles?**

KELLY AMONTE HILLER: Honestly, Cindy is my idol. I pretty much owe everything to her along with my parents and my family, and she just taught me so much. I still lean on her as a mentor, and you know, to even be in the same conversations as Cindy Timchal, it's quite an honor.

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