

# Women's Basketball Invitation Tournament: Columbia vs Wisconsin

Monday, March 30, 2026

Wichita, Kansas, USA

Charles Koch Arena

## Columbia Lions

## Coach Megan Griffith

## Mia Broom

## Riley Weiss

## Susie Rafiu

### Semifinal Postgame Press Conference

Columbia 67, Wisconsin 50

MEGAN GRIFFITH: I thought Wisconsin obviously is a very tough team. I think everybody playing in this tournament is a great team, very well-coached, and I'd just say I was really proud of our team for executing our defensive scout pretty well.

I think we made some mistakes, but the rhythm of the game, I do think we dominated for the most part.

I said we need to get used to these new WBIT balls, make some more free throws, right? But we're happy to move on to the next round and we're ready for Kansas or BYU.

**Q. For any of the players, it seemed like you guys really pulled away there in the second quarter. What was going right for you guys at that point in the game?**

RILEY WEISS: Yeah, we started getting stops at that point and we know that defense fuels our offense, so we need stops in order to get the ball in the other end and then execute our offense.

I think it started from getting stops and getting loose balls. That was a big thing for us, too. We were missing a bunch of those, so just grabbing on to those, being first to the ball, and getting the ball with two hands.

**Q. You guys were mentioning the defense, but to hold them to I think 50 points on 69 possessions, what was especially going right for you guys on that end?**



SUSIE RAFIU: A lot, such as building tackies, which is three stops in a row. It's just constantly communicating with each other on the defensive. Like talking early is a big point of emphasis for us, and then once we take a shot we want, wrapping up the rebounds so we can go and execute on the other end like Riley said.

MIA BROOM: I would say we also prepare very well for games. Our coaching staff makes sure we know the other team inside out, so coming into the game we're pretty confident knowing what they want to do and who they want to look for.

**Q. How do you feel like the dynamics of the game changed when they lost Kyrah Daniels there?**

SUSIE RAFIU: Yeah, she's a big piece. We prepped for her a lot so we know how good she is. They had to rely on other people and I think that did work for them at times, but definitely she's probably a huge missing piece for them.

We didn't let it affect us, kept going. We know personnel for whoever stepped up next, so we were ready to go.

MIA BROOM: Yeah, I agree with Susie. That's a good point.

RILEY WEISS: Yeah, like she said, obviously No. 20 is a really good player, but we're focused on ourselves. What happened in the game happens. Can't control that. Just remaining focusing on ourselves and not really paying attention to that, but yes, No. 20 is a key player for them.

**Q. Riley, on the offensive end you guys hit a couple threes early but also got 32 points on lay-ups. Just curious what you thought worked well in terms of being able to establish you guys' offense everywhere on the court.**

RILEY WEISS: Yeah, I would say that we are a pretty dynamic team, so leaning into that, not just settling for threes, has been a big emphasis for us, getting the ball inside, and yeah, just diversifying that shot chart.

Because the threes aren't always going to fall, and we just need a combination of that inside presence as well as the outside, and then when the threes are falling, it's really great.

**Q. Mia, really important play with about six plus minutes to go. They've got the game down to eight points and they've got the ball. Can you walk us through that possession where you ended up stripping the ball and getting it over to Susie?**

MIA BROOM: Yes, I think I remember what play you're talking about. Just grabbing the ball with two hands. I heard someone from our bench yelling, two hands, because I was trying to dribble it out.

Then I got the ball to Susie, my girl, and that allowed us to get the and-1 -- was that the possession?

**Q. Susie, when I was watching the Harvard-Wisconsin game, I kind of thought it was like, wow, I've seen this game before three times over between you and Harvard where it's more of a rock fight. How important was it for you to not get in that kind of a game today and dictate the tempo?**

SUSIE RAFIU: Yeah, coming into today's game and just this tournament in general dominance is a big thing for us, so like setting the tone like that and not letting it get to a third and fourth quarter like we usually get with Harvard where it's back and forth.

So just really establishing that from the beginning and then carrying it on throughout the game, if not amping it up even more is definitely key for us.

**Q. Mia, for you, just curious with Fliss and Maria out of the lineup and you and Riley handling the ball a lot together in that starting lineup, curious to hear your thoughts on the partnership and chemistry you have playing with Riley in that lineup in this tournament, not just today but throughout the WBIT.**

MIA BROOM: Yeah, Riley is so fun to play with. She kind of does everything for us offensively. She's our mind, so Coach puts a lot of pressure on her to be a point guard even though she's scoring all of our points as well. Just knowing that that's someone I can always go to when I'm trying to run the offense, I see that I almost had a triple-double today with these turnovers, so that's cool.

But yeah, Riley just got my back always, so even though I might be bringing the ball up a lot, I can always check in with her like what play are we running and stuff like that.

**Q. Mia and Susie, I know you guys have seen Riley hit a ton of tough shots, but when she nailed that one from the logo with the shot clock winding down, what was running through your head?**

MIA BROOM: I knew that was in.

SUSIE RAFIU: Yeah. I was waiting to sub in and I saw it go up and I was like, that's good, and think I literally jumped up as well on the side. But yeah, no, that's what Riley does, so no surprise there for us.

**Q. Coach, if you could talk a little bit about Hilke, obviously her game today and her development, but also how much of a help was she in the scout since she played with Robin for two years?**

MEGAN GRIFFITH: This is for the student-athletes still.

**Q. Oh.**

SUSIE RAFIU: First of all, on Hilke's growth and development, she's come strides since she joined us and we're so happy to have her as well. She made great plays today and just in this tournament in general so really happy for her to have stepped up and into a starting role too, so she's been amazing.

And in terms of the scout, obviously there's some things that carry over, but again, our coaches do a great job of preparing us. So them two working together, the rest of our staff, we felt more than confident and prepared to go today.

**Q. Same thing I asked them in terms of defense, to hold them to 50 points on 69 possessions, obviously they've gone up against other defensive teams that didn't have quite the low numbers. What was it you guys were able to do to keep them out of rhythm?**

MEGAN GRIFFITH: I think it starts with point of attack, and that's Mia and Perri, so many possessions for us press our half court defense. I just loved the way that they've been approaching the game and pressuring the ball.

I think all of the opponents, and this is a large credit to Mia, because Perri has obviously been in this role as season; Mia and even Nasi Simmons coming bench to enter the offense that like everything was just a little tougher for them. Forcing them off catch points; making them catch out of rhythm; also arriving on the catch. That's something that we really talk a lot about.

I just think we're following Perri's lead and Mia has been a huge assist just in terms of being inserted into the starting

lineup and doing what she does well. I would say that breeds a lot of confidence in everybody else around the ball that hey, okay, if I'm recovering I can get there in time or hey, let's change this out on the backside because I have time now.

I would just say we really bought into that team identity of, hey, we're going to pressure you and we're going to make everything difficult.

**Q. What were you seeing during that run that they had from them that maybe you didn't see earlier and how did you like how your players responded there?**

MEGAN GRIFFITH: Yeah, they have some great players that can make shots. I've seen No. 1 hit a ton of shots. I've seen obviously 2024, she got going a little bit earlier in the game. But No. 1 hit a couple shots, and I think for us, it was just, like, it brought them confidence and then for you it's like, that was a tough shot.

I do think we were running at the ball a little bit. Mia made some choice decisions I would say in transition but then recovered from them with Hilke, Susie, Riley, all these chase-down blocks.

So it was just nice to see us all have each other's backs in those moments, and I think that's what honestly got us over that hump. But that's a good team that's going to make shots. I think our response was good after they went on that little bit of a run, which I can't even remember what it was, if it was a six or eight-point run but it was just really good for us to respond.

That was the thing we talked a lot about, like can our responses be elite. The mistake happens, but can our responses be elite. I thought Mia, Hilke, Suse, Perri Riley did a great job of that.

**Q. With the 16 lay-ups you guys had, was there something in particular you could exploit with Wisconsin's defense?**

MEGAN GRIFFITH: Well, I mean, I think some of them, too, were like run-outs. We had some transition possessions we were able to get out in front of the pack. Changing from offense to defense, defense to offense, we talk about can we be great in transition moments, whatever that is. The rebound to the outlet, the outlet to the run, to the hit ahead.

I think our team has done a great job at prioritizing that, and then also I thought Susie was enormous in the third quarter. I think she went on her own little 6-0 run. And that's the beauty of this team, is Perri wasn't necessarily

feeling 100 percent today, so we were able to go to Susie because of the way they were guarding her as well.

It's like, all right, if they're going to drop, we got to go to U. Let's screen her. Let's get this player off you a little bit and then just go to work.

So incredible. Credit to our team for delivering the right pass, as well. But I thought we had them in scramble mode quite a lot today.

**Q. You guys have beat some power conference schools. What do you think it says about the strength of you guys and the strength of the Ivy to have reached this point?**

MEGAN GRIFFITH: Yeah, there's no secret when I got hired with our athletic director who's here hired me 10 years ago I told him I wanted to have a top-25 program and I wanted to be one of the best teams in the country, and I think we're there.

I think we've gotten there over the last five years. I think we still have some work to do. Obviously all of the teams here want to be playing in the NCAA Tournament, but, hey, we reset and we're in a new season, and we want to go win this thing on Wednesday.

But I just think we've got some great coaches in our league, we've got some great players. That's the beauty of recruiting to a school like Columbia University in the best city in the world. We have so much to elite coaching staff retain here, and I've never had a player transfer to another Division I school in 10 years.

I would just say I think we're doing something right here, but I wouldn't be able to do that without the support of our administration. I would just say thank you to Peter, obviously, but we have a lot of work to do to be that top-25 program and consistently show up in the tournament.

**Q. Just to start with Riley, curious how you kind of think about her evolution from a player who at the beginning of the year you were trying to get her to diversify her game and now she's kind of the point guard for you in a lot of ways right now. Just her growth to be able to be someone that you can call on in that moment.**

MEGAN GRIFFITH: Mm-hmm. I mean, I like to say to our players, all of them, I think Perri is a perfect example of this, as well, is just if you decide not to put limitations on yourself and you make that choice, which it's a choice, I do believe that. We all are blessed with certain different qualities and tools naturally.

But I said to Riley, if you want to be the best, you can be the best, it's just a matter of the choices that you decide to make in taking care of yourself, getting yourself as physically, mentally, emotionally ready, but then also just trusting the system and trusting me, I think that's a big part of it, is when you want the people that dominate the ball to be able to make the most decisions that are in line with your game plan.

So I would just say a huge credit to Riley for trusting me in her growth process. And since year one to now she's just a completely different human that plays with so much toughness, so much passion and love for this team.

The best of her is yet to come. I can say that very confidently.

**Q. I know you'll say job is not done here, but to think back to the semifinals of Ivy Madness and how you felt like the team was maybe not responding to the pressure in the way you wanted, and to see them grow into this version where they're advancing to the championship game and playing the freer version of themselves, how rewarding is that for you as a coach just to see that process over the past however many weeks that's been?**

MEGAN GRIFFITH: Yeah, I mean, I'll celebrate that on Wednesday, but right now, for me it's just a matter of keeping this team locked in on the same vision, in the same boat, rowing in the same direction. That's something that you do lose sight of from time to time.

I would just say the thing I'm the most proud of is how they've leaned into trusting each other. It's one thing to trust me, which I do think this team does, but to trust each other to make decisions and to trust Mia who has played a large scoring role for us but not as a primary ball handler; to trust Hilke to be back into the lineup.

Like talk about a player-led program. That is the thing that's changed since the Ivy League tournament, is they're deciding that this is their team, this is their mission, it's not just the mission that we said, hey, we're setting out on.

Perri said it in her postgame presser; everybody just bought into that, and I think they're really breeding that within the team that we're in control here.

**Q. How do you think they did that, because trusting someone to step into that big role is not automatic. Does it start with one person or two people and then bleed down? Do you say anything? Do you just let it happen organically? What's that behind the scenes do**

**you think?**

MEGAN GRIFFITH: It's a lot. It's a lot of conversations. It's long bus rides back from Ithaca.

No, I'd say that honestly, I would think the thing that has empowered me the most are Maria and Fliss, which is -- talk about humility and amazing teammates, they're still so -- we have something where they're our point guards so they text me every day before games, hey, what are we running, Coach, this is the game plan, and they've invited their teammates into that space.

So now my point guard meetings are with Mia and Nasi and Perri and Riley and those two, and Maria has watched three Wisconsin games just to get play calls two days ago.

I would just say they've done the work of the mind of the point guard so that Mia can go be the point guard on the court, and they have just poured confidence into her, in her decisions. Huge credit to those two.

**Q. Perri obviously comes out of that Friday night game, we're going to win the WBIT. I don't know if you had that exact same thought at that moment. When did you finally figure or realize, this team has the mental toughness to take it this far into the tournament?**

MEGAN GRIFFITH: During the St. John's game. That's when I realized it. You never know how a team turns a page until you see them against another team, an opponent. Practices like -- I would say 80 percent of our practices, we call them 0s or 1s, I think we've had a lot of 1s this year, and we've minimized the 0s.

But for me it was like, can we turn the page and go dominate an opponent now right after that, because there's so much heartbreak after that game. To lose the fourth championship and then to lose the Ivy League Tournament and the automatic bid to the NCAA Tournament was absolutely gutting for everybody in the program.

I would just say that their response -- when I saw the ball tip and I saw the way we attacked that game, I knew there was no turning back.

**Q. Walk us through the preparation over the next 48 hours for either of those two teams?**

MEGAN GRIFFITH: We're going to go watch this game right now. That's the beauty of being in this tournament is we have a live scout, so we get to go see two great teams battle it out against each other. We get a little bit more rest than them, so I'm happy by that. Our players are going to

go back to the hotel after they watch a little bit, rest, recover.

We'll do scouting tonight, some film, get them to bed early and then tomorrow is just a lot of preparation, meetings, a lot of walk-through, just get us feeling as confident and fresh as possible.

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