

# NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: Regional Final: Indiana vs Arizona

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San Antonio, Texas, USA

Alamodome - Mercado

## Indiana Hoosiers

## Teri Moren

### Elite 8 Postgame Media Conference

Arizona 66, Indiana 53

TERI MOREN: First, congratulations to Arizona. What a great team. What a great effort that they put on display tonight.

Unfortunately we were pretty flat. I think a lot of that had to do with Arizona, how they came out, were aggressive to begin with. Then I feel like we got our footing a little bit. But then the fourth quarter kind of did us in.

Then our inability to rebound tonight. 42-34, I thought they were tougher around the rim than they were. I thought they wanted the ball more than we did. That hasn't been us. We've displayed a tremendous amount of toughness since we arrived here in the early rounds.

Unfortunately tonight, we didn't have that extra burst to get to the ball, the toughness to really get those rebounds and be strong with the ball, all the things that we talked about. We came up a little bit short tonight.

But still really proud of our group. The things that we've been able to accomplish here, you know, it's been a real fun ride I think for our student-athletes. Again, I think it also -- we'll reflect on this. We're going to have a lot of memories. But it also fuels you, right? It gives you motivation for wanting to be back here next year.

I'm hopeful that that's what it will do for us. But we had a great, great Big Ten season, great post-season here in San Antonio, in a real difficult, challenging season with the pandemic.

I can't overstate it enough, how proud I am of this group, what they've been through, what they've fought through, and what we've been able to accomplish.



We will be back. We will be back.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. You mentioned the tough circumstances of the season. You are in the bubble there in San Antonio. How special have these past few weeks or so been with this group being alone a little bit in the bubble trying to get these accomplishments? How much do you try to remind them, especially when they're dealing with the loss tonight?**

TERI MOREN: Well, I try to after. That locker room right now is a very disappointed group of people because that's not -- this isn't the outcome that we were hoping for.

But you're mindful of trying to remind them of the experience and the memories. As I said to them, we've made a lot of really wonderful memories that we're not going to forget. I'm an older student-athlete, but I remember very few games, what I remember is the time that I got to spend with my teammates and the memories and the stories. That's what I have for my lifetime. Once you get a certain age, you start forgetting about points, this game, that game.

To say that we're the first team in Indiana history that has made it to a Sweet 16, made it to an Elite 8, but also we've made a lot of memories, great memories, while we've been here. We just wish we could have stayed a little bit longer.

**Q. I understand there's a lot of disappointment after tonight's loss. Congratulations on the amazing season. Week in and week out you touched upon it a minute ago, toughness is what you've described in one word as this team from day one. With this experience, perhaps even with this loss, you have four out of five, at least, starters returning next year. How does this experience and perhaps even this loss build upon an even tougher squad for next year?**

TERI MOREN: Well, you hit it on the head. I think what a terrific experience this has been for us, but also will serve as motivation for wanting to be back here next year and wanting to get to that next game, which would have been

the Final Four.

I'm excited about our group that we have coming back. I feel horrible for them right now, really feel for those guys. Tonight was not our night. It was not an effort thing. I talk about their toughness. I talk about how hard they play all the time. I don't want that to not be something that I make sure that I say about my team. I mean, I'm really proud of the way that they handled themselves, how hard, the toughness.

We didn't play very well tonight, but this will serve as a motivation I think for next year. I know that we'll take a couple weeks off here to rest and get healthy and then we'll get right back to work. That's just what we do in Indiana.

**Q. You obviously talked a lot going into this about Aari McDonald, knowing she was going to get hers. Seemed like she was able to open up the floor. What was it like to have to defend her up close? What impressed you about what she did and what made it difficult to defend the supporting cast members who got some clean looks because of having to keep up with her?**

TERI MOREN: She's tremendous. She's as fast as a player that we've faced all year. There's a reason why she scored 2,000-plus points in her career, because she is a very difficult matchup.

You try to play off of some of their other pieces that they have out there that you consider non-scorers, non-shooters. Then you get caught in some rotation issues, then you give up some H-O-R-S-E shots as we call them behind of arc because you're trying to fly around, scramble around a little bit.

So, yeah, she's every bit as good as we thought she was. Obviously she's the reason why they're going to the Final Four.

**Q. Mackenzie was having success early on with 20 points in the first three quarters, then Arizona picked up their post defense. What did you see that was working for her early, in the fourth quarter what did you see kind of change towards the end?**

TERI MOREN: Well, I think early on she was just catching it in space and there were some broken plays. I thought some of our guards were making some really great reads putting the ball in there. She was scoring quick.

Then I thought in the second half the double came. I thought Mack started fatiguing, she got tired. She settled there for the second-to-last shot was a six-foot jump shot,

not that she can't hit that, but that's not Mack. Mack is normally trying to get closer to the basket and go off the bounce, use some of the shot fakes and up-and-unders that she has to her game.

So I thought she fatigued in the second half. That's one of the things when you look at our stat sheet, just the number of minutes that our kids have had to play. We've played a lot of games in a short period of time. We didn't have the luxury of having the 48 hours -- this is not an excuse, but we've played a lot of games here in a short period of time. We have a very short bench.

I think Mack, their doubles came, but I also think that Mack started to fatigue a little bit, as well.

**Q. I guess kind of along those lines, it's 54-50 with about five minutes to go, they kind of finish you off 12-4. You mention fatigue. Was there anything else you saw in the last five minutes in terms of offensively how you executed?**

TERI MOREN: Well, I think we gave up some open threes. I think that was the key. They averaged right around four, four and a half maybe a game. They had nine tonight. They shot the ball great this entire tournament.

The stats sort of need to go out the window tonight. We gave them some shots from the outside, and they knocked them down. So give them credit for stepping up in a big moment, making us pay.

That's what we were willing to I guess risk in order to keep Aari McDonald from having layup city on us. When she gets in the paint, you know...

**Q. Obviously a lot of support in the Bloomington area in general, a lot of the restaurants and bars packed tonight, trying to watch you guys play. Not the result you wanted, but what does it mean to get the support, kind of provide an example for women's athletics in the Bloomington area?**

TERI MOREN: It's tremendous. It's tremendous for our program. We've been building that thing for the last couple years. I think the people in the Bloomington community have fallen in love with women's basketball. It's been such a great thing to have the support, the text messages, the emails.

We can feel the love, right? We felt it since we've been here. Just the excitement. I hope those new fans will turn into season ticketholders for us and we will continue to grow our attendance and we will continue to grow our game.

We play in I think the best league in the country in the Big Ten. We offer some really high-level basketball. So I hope that this little run has just given them a preview of what they can look forward to. Our kids are tremendous. They have high character. They're humble. They work hard. They're great student-athletes. I mean, they represent myself and our staff and this university in a first class manner.

All those guys, those people out there in the bars tonight, the restaurants, these kids deserve to have the following that they've had because they're great players, but they're even better people.

**Q. Looked like they were kind of trying to trap Ali off of the ball screens. How difficult did that make things? Did you like the looks you were getting, especially from the outside tonight?**

TERI MOREN: We're 0-for-9 from the three-point line. Ali had some wide open threes that just didn't go down. Nikki had a couple that just didn't go down.

So, no, I was happy with the looks, but I wasn't happy that we didn't hit any of 'em. That would have been obviously helpful. We knew they were going to trap. We went into the game knowing that they were going to be super aggressive. They know we like to run ball screen action. We anticipated the trap.

What we didn't do a very good job of, especially in the first quarter, was getting to our spots where we could help the guy that was getting trapped, whether it was just having a relief pass in the back or another guard rise up, another guard flash to the free-throw line. Everything that we talked about today and last night in our prep, we kind of had forgotten that that is what we had planned to do.

There were moments. I think we got better as the game went on. I did. I thought both Ali and Grace handled themselves terrifically. We only have the nine turnovers. They have I think, what, Ali has two, Nikki has two, Grace doesn't even have one. We were led in turnovers tonight by our post.

I thought they handled themselves terrifically in those situations. But, yeah, again, credit Arizona. I mean, they're really, really good defensively. They're like us, they're stingy defensively, they just play defensively. We're going to play more scouting report defense and try to take tendencies away.

Tonight, like I said, they made us pay with the threes we gave up, then they hit 'em.

**Q. How important is it to use kind of this run to sort of set a new bar, a new standard of sort of expectation for you guys?**

TERI MOREN: Well, I mean, it's already been set, right? That's what we just talked about in the locker room before I came down here, was getting this tournament experience but also understanding that we want to be back here next year and we want to make that next step to the Final Four.

People sometimes think that we're crazy when we said that. We've said that from day one when we arrived in Bloomington, that our goals and sights were always going to be set high for this program. We're still after our Big Ten championship, but we're certainly still after getting into the NCAA and making deep runs. We've proven obviously that we can do that.

But we still have unfinished business. So like I said, this is just going to be motivation for this group and for our staff to figure out how we can just continue to get a little bit better every day.

But, you know, I'm so proud of those kids. I love this group. It kills me that we couldn't get them to Friday night or Saturday night or when we would have played, because they're such a fun, hard-working, high-character group that deserves a moment like this, but also a moment where they can celebrate getting themselves into a Final Four.

I think they're good enough to do that.

**Q. It felt like when we talk to the players before or after the game, they would credit the coaching staff about how prepared they were. How instrumental was your staff in the big run you had this year?**

TERI MOREN: I appreciate you mentioning them. Trust me, I try to mention them as much as I can. They've just been tremendous. None of this is possible without them.

I want to include Kevin, our strength and conditioning coach, Sadie and Will who are our grad managers, then Coach Box and Coach Rhet and Ash. Again, they are the best coaching staff, again, I'm biased, but I think in the country in terms of their preparation, how hard they work, the time that they spend with these kids, how important they are in terms of how instrumental they are in helping build character.

They're great coaches. But we're friends, we're a family. I hurt for them tonight also because I know just how hard they've worked we all have.

I will say this not only motivates those players, I think it motivates us as well. That's a good thing.

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