

Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Wednesday, March 4, 2026

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Gainbridge Fieldhouse

Illinois Fighting Illini Coach Shauna Green Lety Vasconcelos Berry Wallace Lety Vasconcelos

Postgame Press Conference

Illinois - 82, Wisconsin - 70

THE MODERATOR: Illinois is here with Coach Shauna Green and Lety Vasconcelos and Berry Wallace. Coach, if you would make an opening statement.

SHAUNA GREEN: I need to get in shape. I'm out of breath after walking up those -- no. Just really, really proud of these guys. We had a tough couple games in the regular season and really, really locked in these guys the last couple days into getting back to what we do and defending and rebounding. That was the challenge tonight.

Then even at halftime, just really I thought we got away from it at the end of the second and came out and got 15 O-boards, and I thought that was the game changer. Just made plays when we had to. It wasn't perfect. We couldn't make a three to save our lives.

We found a way to win with 46 points in the paint and just really showed toughness and grit and great togetherness, which is something we've been talking about the last couple of days.

Q. Lety, five offensive rebounds and a career high in your first conference tournament game. What does this day mean to you to perform like that?

LETY VASCONCELOS: First I'll say it means a lot to me to get to contribute to my team and see everybody happy and just going 1-0 today. It really just means a lot to me for real.



Q. Lety, what was working differently for you today? I thought you had your best game of the season.

LETY VASCONCELOS: I think just the mentality of like getting 1 percent every day in practice and kind of watching a lot of film and fixing things I need to fix and just locking in on things I need to correct.

I feel like I was really intentional about that so I could be the best version of myself for my team.

Q. Berry, you've been so consistent all year long and in a tournament style game. What allows you to still come out and be the best that you can be on the floor?

BERRY WALLACE: I think just sticking to what we know our principles are as a team and trying to be as consistent as I can on defense. Then also just reading what the defense is giving me. They guard me differently every game and they guard all of us differently every game. So just trying to read that and taking feedback from my coaches during the game to kind of see what's open and see what we have to help us win.

Q. Berry, I wanted to talk to you about your team's defense tonight. Eight steals, one block, very efficient getting the points off of turnovers. How do you feel the defense played? And another tough opponent tomorrow. What are you guys going to do to make sure that you're ready to go?

BERRY WALLACE: I think we work our defense every day in practice, and we know how important it is to our success. I think we did a great job today. Even when they did make a couple runs, we always responded and came back and got some stops, which ultimately helped us get the win.

We're going to need that tomorrow. We know our offense fuels our defense and fuels our team in general, so I think it's going to be just as important against Michigan State. They're a good team, so we just have to stick to what we know is going to help us win.

Q. Lety, can you just walk us through what that third



quarter was like for you? And for you, is it just a matter of confidence as it continues to roll for you?

LETY VASCONCELOS: I would say I was just focused on like doing what I'm supposed to be doing on the court, which is like protecting the paint, making sure I'm really a presence in the paint and rebounding, being a good teammate, high fiving my teammates.

Making sure I was really focused on doing whatever I was supposed to be doing in the moment, and I felt like that carried me in the moment.

Q. Berry, just wanted to get your thoughts on how you felt the team adapted from the Iowa and Minnesota games.

BERRY WALLACE: I think we did a good job just taking what we messed up in that game and what we did well as well and just learning from it and tried to apply it to today as well. I think we know that anything can happen in March, and we used those two games to fuel us coming into the tournament today. I think we learned a lot, and we've played even more connected since then.

Q. Shauna, same question I kind of asked Lety; with her is it just confidence? I feel like we've been talking about it all year, but can you walk me through what the third quarter was like for you as the coach to see her succeed like that?

SHAUNA GREEN: Obviously the last couple games we've struggled with defending inside. I loved we -- on Monday our players had another players-only meeting, and they were in there for over an hour before we started up. They took accountability. All of our posts took accountability. They knew they weren't doing exactly what they needed to do to make our team the best that we could possibly be, and they took ownership in that.

Then Lety and I had a really good talk yesterday too, or the day before, and just again revisited that what I know -- I know she's capable of doing this, like I see it, and that you've just got to continue to leave everything out there and to give even more. I told her I'm going to continue to push you because she wants to be great, she wants to be elite, and we need her.

Yesterday in practice -- and we were joking about it on the way up here because she didn't do something and I just lit into her. I'm like, you want to be -- I know you want to be great. I know you want to be elite. It needs to be better.

I'm telling you that practice, she's up there flying in for rebounds. We were joking. Is that all I needed to do? I

could have done that like eight months ago or whatever.

She just was unbelievable today. She played with great pop. She played with great confidence. She played with some nasty to her, and she changed the game for us.

So for me in that third quarter, for me in that game to just see her playing with that confidence, I could not be more proud of anyone because, again, what she's been through, the journey last year, the surgery, the ups and the downs. You just love to see people like that have some success.

You saw a glimpse of what she can do for us, and I could not be more proud.

Q. Coach, Destiny was really assertive early in the game, ends up with a career high. What does it do for your team when she sets the tone like that?

SHAUNA GREEN: Yeah, that's what we've been talking about too. The last couple of games, I was all about getting in the paint and being aggressive and getting downhill, and she did that right from the start.

I think it's a really cool thing for a coach to see because her last two games, if you talked to her, probably didn't think she played the best either.

Again, through talks and conversations and film, she was ready to go, and she knew what she needed to do, and she knows what she needs to do at a high level to help our team be, again, the best version of ourselves.

To see the responses, to see the changes and the energy and the focus and the things we've been talking about the last couple days, and obviously the whole year, to see them execute that, especially our young guys, it's just awesome because that's what this is about. It's about progress. It's about getting better.

It's about these guys understanding, using past failures to apply and adapt and execute in quick time, and they did that from last game till now.

Q. Wisconsin started off the second half on a hot streak and was really able to shut down your offense. What adjustments did you guys then make to go on that 16-3 run to take back the command?

SHAUNA GREEN: I think with us it's our defense kind of fuels that. They started getting hot. The first time we played them, we held them to five threes. Really we still only held them to eight, which for them isn't as many as they normally get. But they started getting some confidence.

In our defense, when we're rebounding and we're able to get stops, then we're able to play in the pace we want to play. They got it to where they were hitting some shots; now it's a half-court game. Now they're able to get set in that zone and really muck it up in the paint. We weren't hitting threes.

And then I thought our defensive rebounding was the game changer in the second half, and I thought Lety was the game changer because they were just clogging the paint so much, and we were able to get her some. She was a presence down there, where we could throw the ball in and she could score or I thought she cleaned up some boards.

So I thought the defense obviously and the O-boards were able to get us going a little bit.

Q. With a predominantly young team, you had one upperclassman in the starting lineup; how do you hope they build off of this experience of winning in the Big Ten Tournament?

SHAUNA GREEN: For us, this whole year we've learned. Literally every day is something new because we have so many people who have never been here before.

Again, we have one junior that starts and two juniors really that play, and everyone else is freshmen or sophomores. This is great for us, and it's going to be great for the future.

But I tell them all the time we want to win now. It's going to be great for next year and all that, we'll worry about that when this is done. This team is locked in. We know what we're doing. We've played with or beat some of the top teams in this conference. On a neutral court in March, you never know what's going to happen. We're just happy to survive and play another day against a really good Michigan State team.

Q. Coach, I wanted to get your thoughts on just how the team kind of showed poise and just closed this game out tonight.

SHAUNA GREEN: I think that's something we learned the last couple games. Obviously we've been in two tight games, and we've had some of those instances where maybe we didn't make the correct play. I thought we were very intentional in our timeouts.

I thought our team did a great job of being intentional in their huddles of communication and learning and making sure we're speaking up to try to handle things on the court and not needing a timeout.

So credit to them. Again, they used some of the things we've learned the last few games, and we were always able to make a play and get a stop. That's what it comes down to.

You've got to be able to make those plays to stop a run. You've got to understand time and score and the feel of when you really need a stop and when you really need a bucket. I just thought we were more disciplined in those two facets, both on the offensive end and the defensive end, whether it's missing a shot and then we flew in and got an O-board and we were able to get it out and run something else and make a big play on the defensive end. We were able to get those in key moments tonight.

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