

# Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Wednesday, March 4, 2026

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Gainbridge Fieldhouse

## Wisconsin Badgers

### Coach Robin Pingeton

### Kyrah Daniels

### Laci Steele

#### Postgame Press Conference

Illinois - 82, Wisconsin - 70

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Wisconsin head coach Robin Pingeton, student-athletes Kyrah Daniels and Laci Steele. Coach, if you will make an opening statement.

ROBIN PINGETON: I appreciate everyone that was able to come out to the tournament. Hat's off to Shauna and her ball club. They're a gritty team, really well-balanced. They've had a great year.

Proud of our players. Disappointed obviously in the outcome, but I think when you look at a month ago to today and how we competed, really proud of the resiliency. I thought we did play hard. I thought we played gritty.

Obviously the free-throw line was hard for us. We really wanted to keep them off the free-throw line knowing what a great free-throw shooting team they were. We gave up several possessions early in that second half where it was multiple and-one plays, and they capitalized on their opportunities to get to the free-throw line. So that obviously hurt us.

Then just the turnovers, learning how to play gritty and hard. We want to push in transition but made a lot of 50-50 passes, trying to make the home run play versus keeping it really simple.

I'm proud of that locker room. Right now we ended on a tough stretch of the season, and just the way they continue to show up in that locker room and who they are and the foundation that they've laid for our program, I couldn't be more proud of them from that standpoint. A lot of times there's small victories within the big picture, and a lot of you guys don't get a chance to see that, but I get a chance



to witness it every day.

I'm proud of the foundation they've laid, and I'm looking forward to hopefully having an opportunity to play in the postseason in one of these tournaments and get some fresh legs under us and stay after it.

**Q. Laci, talk a little bit about the program with Robin. You guys have been competitive. I mean, every game you watch, you're more competitive than I've seen Wisconsin in a few years. Talk about what it means to you to get in there with your teammates and to give everything you've got.**

LACI STEELE: I'd just say for me it's something that I take pride in is competing. I think Coach P recruited all of us to be competitors, and I think we all lock arms and we all compete to the highest ability we can, and I think we definitely did that today.

Obviously there were some stretches where things didn't go our way, we didn't execute, but I felt like we gave it all we had in terms of that.

KYRAH DANIELS: Like Laci said, locking arms and competing I think is really important. Yeah, wouldn't want to be doing it with a different group. I'm really proud of our heart posture and what it means to step on the floor with everyone every day. It really means a lot.

**Q. You guys really got a lot of momentum towards the end of the first half and then going into the second half had a lot of momentum, too; cut the lead to one point. What should you have done to have kept the momentum going afterwards?**

ROBIN PINGETON: Like I said, I felt like we gave up a handful of possessions of 3-point plays, gave up some offensive rebounds. They're so efficient in the paint. We were really trying to guard inside-out, but missed some defensive opportunities to not allow those second-shot opportunities.

They're relentless. I thought we played gritty. I think they're a really blue-collar, hard-nosed team from top to



bottom. They had some of their star players really show up for them. Hit the offensive boards hard, got to the free-throw line, and converted, you know, that's really the biggest difference to me in this game.

They got to the free-throw line 29 times, shot 82 percent, so made 24 for 29. We knew they were one of the elite free-throw shooting teams in the country, and we wanted to be really intentional about playing inside-out too, trying to get the paint points, trying to get the and-ones, but they executed at a higher level than we did.

**Q. What changed after you cut it to one point?**

KYRAH DANIELS: I think just, like Coach said, the rebounds, offensive rebounds and 3-point plays really took away our momentum. It's a game changer when you're letting them get the rebound and can't get out in transition. So just some of those undisciplined plays we could be better at.

LACI STEELE: I would just say it's a game of runs. We cut it to one, they hit us back, and we didn't convert on that end.

**Q. Kyrarah, what was going through your mind in the fourth quarter when you were perfect from the field and on free throws?**

KYRAH DANIELS: Not a lot. I think I'm at my best when I'm not overthinking. I think my teammates did a great job finding me in transition, and being able to convert was really big.

**Q. For both players, getting a first round exit in the Big Ten Tournament doesn't make you stand out a lot, but what do you think makes this team special?**

LACI STEELE: I think just how we come out and play. It was a good game, the whole game. We competed hard. I think that we're just a hard-nosed team. I think that's what stands out about us.

KYRAH DANIELS: I think our ability to respond and stay together is what sets us apart. Something we talk about all the time is being connected, and I think we're the most connected team. So continuing to lean into that even when it's hard. Take a deep breath, look at each other, sometimes a good wink, but really keeping each other centered and leaning on each other.

**Q. Coach, can I ask you about 21 assists on 26 field goals made? What does that tell you about your team as you head into the next chapter of Wisconsin basketball?**

ROBIN PINGETON: Yeah, and that's the thing. That scoreboard is really important to all of us. None of us like to lose. It's hard, but I think when you're building a program, it's important that you find those small victories within. Things that we get a chance to see every day in practice that maybe you guys on the outside don't, but just the way that they continue to lean into the culture in that locker room and the standards and behaviors that we want to exemplify.

I think tonight, having 21 assists, we did a really good job, and we've been trying to move the needle in this area, but I thought we did a really good job sharing the ball. Just really some unselfish plays -- working together on our screening action, keeping the ball hot. Gifty obviously was having a really good game for us.

I think collectively, to kind of piggyback off what Kyrarah said, just that connectivity is so important to us and the style that they want to play, it's just really unselfish basketball. I think when you have 21 assists on 26 field goals, that's a good sign for your team.

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