

Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Wednesday, March 4, 2026

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Gainbridge Fieldhouse

Oregon Ducks
Kelly Graves

Katie Fiso

Ehis Etute

Postgame Press Conference

Oregon - 82, Purdue - 64

THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome Coach Kelly Graves and student-athletes Ehis Etute and Katie Fiso.

Coach, if you could start with an opening statement.

KELLY GRAVES: Well, happy we won. I do want to say how much I look up to Coach Katie. She had that team ready. They continued to fight the whole time. So I give Purdue a lot of credit for making that second half interesting.

We played a great first half obviously. One turnover, we shot the ball well, we distributed the wealth, so to speak. It was one of our better halves. But we're still a relatively young team, and we've got to learn how to close teams out when we've got them down. We just kind of putzed around a little bit -- I don't know if I can use that word here -- in that second half, and they tightened it up a little bit.

Real physical game but we are excited to be moving on.

Q. Ehis, not unusual to give up a little bit of size in the post. What were some keys to be productive tonight in those specific matchups?

EHIS ETUTE: Before the game, I had film with Tre (Simmons), and he told me that I should square up and use my speed against them rather than try to power them up, and that would be much easier for me. So I think that was one of the key factors I changed in this game compared to the last game we played against them.

Q. Katie, as the floor general, what were keys you think to starting so well as a group? Then maybe what



are some things that you look back on the second half you guys could have done a little bit different to maybe match their intensity when they counterpunched?

KATIE FISO: Echoing what Coach said, when we move the ball and distribute the ball to all players on the court, we're a dangerous threat. We have a lot of threats on the floor. So utilizing those threats, finding the open person, finding the hot hand, whoever's hot, continuing to feed them the ball.

Into the second half, I felt like we dimmed that a little bit. It started to stick a little bit more. So just moving the ball a little bit more.

Q. Katie, something I thought that was especially impressive about your game, especially in that third quarter, was your ability to get two feet in the paint and use your footwork to kind of finish. Can you talk about how important that aspect of your game, your footwork is for you and how you kind of build upon that over the course of your career?

KATIE FISO: Yeah, obviously I feel like it's not on the scout. I'm more of like a get downhill, finesse type of player. But slowing down, being patient off two feet, finding the open person or finding the open cup has been key for me. Coach always says finish off balance, making the plays on balance.

It helps me. It makes the game a lot more easier for me.

Q. Katie, this is the second time you've faced Nya Smith, a former AAU teammate of yours, limiting you to two points compared to the first matchup. What was it like going back and forth, being former AAU teammates, and what was the key to getting comfortable shooting against her tonight?

KATIE FISO: It's great facing a former AAU teammate on a big stage like this in the Big Ten tournament. The Big Ten is the best conference. Seeing former teammates, I'm just proud of her. She's come a long way. She's developed such a great game.



Just the key was no catch-and-shoot threes, no downhill. She's a great ballplayer off the dribble. So taking that away really helped the team get this win today.

Q. Can either of you speak to the accomplishments Mia Jacobs had tonight, 14 points, 9 rebounds, pretty much on the floor, and she really helped you guys out?

KATIE FISO: Having her back in this game, obviously we didn't have her for the first matchup, it kind of was showing in the game. Having her today, she's just another threat on the court that the defense has to scout on. So many players, so many threats, Ehis, Mia, Sofia, Ari, Sarah. All these people have all these threats, and I think that's what makes our team so versatile and so dangerous when we tap into those threats.

Q. What was it like playing this game, knowing potentially you could play several days in a row, you'd like to play several days in a row? Did you guys try to manage your energy level at all, or did you just have to think one game at a time?

EHIS ETUTE: That's a great question. Did we try to manage our player load, Kelly?

KATIE FISO: You go hard. Every time we step on the court, you got to go hard. That's just our motto. I feel like that's the type of players we are. Ehis right here, she never takes no breaks.

EHIS ETUTE: Never.

KATIE FISO: Most hard-working person on this team. (Laughter).

Q. Could you speak to that as well, just how you approach the game like this, particularly as you start to open up a little bit of a lead. Do you have to stay focused on this one? Do you start to think about the rest of the week?

KELLY GRAVES: That's where our immaturity comes into play. I wish we could have come out the first five minutes of the second half and kind of put our foot down and build on the lead we had, so that we could give them some rest. If we hope to win this thing, it's a five-game gauntlet, for crying out loud.

Any minutes you can give your kids on the bench, you take them. But again, credit Purdue. They really battled and fought back.

Rest at this point. I already told them we're not going to

use our shootaround tomorrow because we've got to sleep in. It's West Coast time. They ask you to have a 9:00 a.m. shootaround. Yeah, good thinking.

Q. Ehis, since we got into conference play, has come around and been a lot more productive. She does a lot of things for you guys that doesn't show up in the box score -- setting screens, her passing, her knowledge of the game overall. When you look at how she's grown from the beginning of the season till now, what are some of the things you like the most about that growth?

KELLY GRAVES: It's a great question, and if you've watched her growth, you've seen her grow right before our eyes. Last year just didn't play a whole lot. Even earlier this year she was kind of a role player and continued to work hard and get better and be productive on the court. I think now you're starting to see the realization of all her hard work.

It's a shame she didn't receive any kind of mention in our All Conference, and she averaged 15.1 and 9.7, top five in field goal percentage and number one in rebound percentage. She's a heck of a talent.

So it's really been fun, and I think she's just scratching the surface, I really do. Once she develops a perimeter game, she still struggles sometimes against length -- not necessarily skinny length, but broad length. She's an Adrian Dantley type -- look his name up if you don't know who he is. Our generation does but these young ones.

He was 6'3", 6'4", and able to get it done around the basket. She's got a little bit like that. She's a warrior. She really is. We have to keep her on the floor, keep her out of foul trouble.

She'll have her work cut out for her against Maryland. They're long and skilled inside.

Q. Since you mentioned Maryland, the last time we saw you guys play Maryland, Ehis did have a really good game against the length and the size. When you look at this matchup that you guys are going to have tomorrow night, what are some things that you think that you guys can do differently to make sure the outcomes are the same, so you guys can move on to the next round of the tournament?

KELLY GRAVES: Yeah, we'll try to anticipate what they're going to do differently and counteract that. Where we did a great job the first time we played them, we took the two and three ball away from Poffenbarger and Garzon. I think they made one between the two of them.

Now, we didn't do a great job on their penetrator. We'll have to do a little bit better there. We certainly did in the second half. They come at you in so many different ways. They've got five or six different players that can get you 20 on any given night. So they're really difficult to guard.

We'll have to be on point, do what we always do. Try to mix up the defenses a little bit to try to keep people off balance as best we can.

Like I said, we're not playing with house money. We're here to win games and do the best we can, but we're just going to go out and let her rip tomorrow. That's all we can do.

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