

Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 5, 2026

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Gainbridge Fieldhouse

Washington Huskies

Coach Tina Langley

Avery Howell

Elle Ladine

Postgame Press Conference



Washington 76, USC 64

TINA LANGLEY: Just really excited by the girls and the work that they've done and proud of them. I thought today was a great opportunity to come in and continue to grow as a team.

USC is a great team. They really play the game at an intense, physical level. They have some great players. They just do a great job.

I was really proud of our team coming in and being ready for that and understanding the game plan and executing. Good first step.

Q. Avery and Elle, you guys were locked in from the start to the finish. Talk a little bit about how you were locked in, but also at the third quarter or at halftime there was .4 seconds and you sunk it. I thought that was a huge play in this game. Talk about your game play during the day.

VERY HOWELL: Yeah, I think we had a big emphasis on winning the possession battle and taking every chance and opportunity that we had to either get a defensive stop or get a good play offensively to win that one.

Really just staying right in that present moment, and I think that's what we did sending us into halftime, and that was big momentum for us. I think that was one of our emphases today and we really executed that.

ELLE LADINE: Yeah, we also emphasized defense fueling our offense, trying to get in transition. We're really good in transition. We've got shooters all around the perimeter. We've got Sayvia going to the rim. So that was another

emphasis of ours. I thought we did that pretty well.

Q. Elle, you were very active off the ball today, moving. You had a couple really good cuts in the third quarter. Talk about leaning into that aspect of your game when you're trying to shoot with guards like Avery and Sayvia?

ELLE LADINE: Yeah, when the two best defenders have to guard them too, it makes me have a lot of open looks and they also know how to pass the ball really well. And they just hit me when I'm open, so thanks.

Q. Elle, you last time against USC had a tough performance. Today you had a season high performance for early scoring. Can you talk about motivation? Did that game sit with you in preparation for that one?

ELLE LADINE: I would say it's March and we're here to survive and win and keep winning. So when I had that mindset of just playing to win and not focus on other outcomes or anything like that and also having these guys instilling confidence in me, it just helped me play a lot freer today.

Q. You ladies had a huge advantage with the points in the paint battle and also the defensive rebounds battle. Can you speak to how intense the ladies played on the defensive end?

VERY HOWELL: Yeah, another one of our keys for this game was defensive rebounding. We know they're a really elite team getting on the O-boards, and I think that was one of our game goals. And everybody on the team knew that and we all dove into that and executed that.

Then yeah, our defensive transition D was really important. They're a great transition offensive team. So just trying to understand their strengths but play into ours. Because we're also a good rebounding team so we try to get to get on the O-boards just as much as they were. So just seeing their strengths, our strengths and trying to win those battles.



Q. 43 points between Elle and Avery. I want to talk about that last-second bucket before halftime. Coach, what was going through your mind on that play?

TINA LANGLEY: Yeah, I was just watching to see if we executed. They did a great job. Just getting the right people in the right places, and they know how to play and make the great plays. You've got to make the pass, make the shot. But the screens are just as important and the cut timing was just as important, so it took all five people.

Actually if you could just take that play and think about the way we want to play the game, understanding every person's role is very important, and I love that play because it showed that.

Q. Tina, I thought going downhill you really played some good basketball, in the paint especially, and just driving and getting lay-up after lay-up after lay-up. Was that your game plan coming in, to attack SC's middle?

TINA LANGLEY: Yeah, we want to be a team that attacks the paint. We also want to shoot the ball well from the three-point line. But we really want to hit the paint first, so it makes it a little bit easier, puts some pressure on the rim, gives us a chance to get to the free-throw line.

Really proud of them for understanding that philosophy. I thought we did a nice job of being physical. You have to be physical to drive against USC and to get into the paint. So I'm proud we were able to do that.

Q. Coach, you guys kind of had a tale of two halves. The first half was very dominant inside and then the second half you were able to open things up on the perimeter. As you look to the game tomorrow against UCLA, you have a very dominant force inside with Lauren Betts. What can you take from this to pull into that game tomorrow to have a similar result?

TINA LANGLEY: I'd love to take rebounding into that game. No, we understood the last time we played, I thought we needed to do a better job in the paint, being physical and understanding the rebounding battle that will occur. They're obviously big and Cori does an incredible job. Her teams play incredibly hard. They understand the game really well.

So we want to go in and understand, like Avery said, our strengths versus their strengths, our weaknesses versus their weaknesses and just make sure we're prepared to compete at a high level.

Q. I would love for you to comment on what you saw

from Brynn and Hannah in the game.

TINA LANGLEY: Absolutely. First of all, Brynn McGaughy is just really every day getting better and better. She's growing so fast. It's so fun to see freshmen this time of the year and their continued growth. She had to do a lot for us today, helped us with the ball on the perimeter and made some great decisions, took a lot much pressure off our guards.

And then Hannah obviously stepped into the 1 role, Sayvia had a little bit of foul trouble and she did a great job with that and Elle obviously together, helping each other. They've played together for a long time, so seeing these two handle the ball together is a lot of fun. A lot of fond memories, and we'll just create some more of that.

Q. Elle was just talking about the freedom of playing today, not thinking about previous performances. What did you see from Elle today?

TINA LANGLEY: Oh, gosh, that. Elle is just a tremendous player and she's been such an incredible servant leader this year. I think there's no one more happy for her than her team because she's incredibly driven to be great and to make the people around her great. We have this saying that we took from someone else: It's gradually then suddenly. Everything that's done that's hard, actually took a long time, but then suddenly looks like you had a day. But she's been working like that all year. So I think everyone is just really proud for her to have that day.

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