

Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 5, 2026

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Gainbridge Fieldhouse

Illinois Fighting Illini Coach Shauna Green Cearah Parchment Maddie Webber

Postgame Press Conference



Illinois 71, Michigan State 69

THE MODERATOR: We welcome Illinois to the dais. Coach Shauna Green and student-athletes Maddie Webber and Cearah Parchment. Coach, if you would make an opening statement, that would be much appreciated.

SHAUNA GREEN: Just a really great basketball game. Michigan State, give them a lot of credit, they're really good. Blair is extremely difficult to defend. So it was just a hard fought game.

Really proud of our resilience, our toughness down the stretch. To end the season, we had two really tight games that came down to the final minutes, and I thought we really did a good job of learning from those scenarios -- our staff, our players -- and putting them into action.

Even though we had the turnover late, in that timeout, all we talked about was the next play. We've just got to get a stop. This is what we're doing defensively.

I thought we were able to flip our minds quickly and come up with a big stop down the stretch. So just really proud of our guys. Great balance in terms of having five people in double figures, had some foul trouble, but just the toughness and again the ability to execute down the stretch is something that we struggled with in our final two regular season games.

Could not be more proud of this team from being able to learn and execute.

Q. Wanted to get your thoughts on how you responded to adversity when you get into these

games?

MADDIE WEBBER: I think we've experienced a lot of adversity this whole year. Usually we just beat ourselves in most of the games, and I think this time we were able to respond. We had that turnover at the end, but we just stayed together and said we need to get a stop.

We just stayed together. At that moment we didn't separate. We knew what we needed to do, and we just executed on the defensive end.

Q. The 13 assists that you ladies had tonight and the five players in double figures, how did that aspect of selfless basketball, how big of an impact was that to win the battle tonight?

CEARAH PARCHMENT: I think that's just the type of team we are. Like if you take away one person, we have so many other people that can just go off. So I think that really showcased tonight, and I think we did a really good job of just passing the ball. One person could go off at this point, and another person could go off at this point.

Q. Maddie, in those first couple of minutes, I know that the team kind of showed maybe a little bit of rust or maybe nerves with some of the turnovers being committed in the early phases, but how did you recover from that, get settled in, and ultimately go on a run there late in the first quarter in order to get some momentum going in your favor?

MADDIE WEBBER: Yeah, we just weren't playing like our usual selves. We weren't dictating really, and then we brought it together and said we need to be stronger in general and not allowing them to dictate.

Playing together, that's been a huge emphasis, and I think we just continued to execute all the way. It wasn't perfect but we made it work, and it was great.

Q. Maddie, I wanted you to run me through that final defensive position going against Blair. She had it going tonight, but just wanted to get your thoughts on that final position.



MADDIE WEBBER: We knew it was going to go to her. Me and C talked about it coming out of the timeout, and we talked about what we needed to do to switch and just do what we needed to do to stop her. That was the main thing. We did it and it obviously worked, so yeah.

Q. Cearah, having lost at Michigan State and this being kind of the revenge game, what did that mean to you and this team? Then also setting up a potential revenge game in the quarterfinals.

CEARAH PARCHMENT: It was really great. When we played Michigan State the first time, we did not play our best basketball at all. It was nice to come in and get a second chance at them. We didn't play perfect again, but I still think we played way better, and I think we had a bit more toughness tonight.

And then going into Iowa, I think we have that same mentality: We can beat anybody, and they're just in our way.

Q. Can you speak of the game of Aaliyah tonight? She had two threes and then three rebounds, and factor in how she played in the last game and speak to what her impact has been.

SHAUNA GREEN: Liyah's been huge for us. She's had big time shots tonight, great defense. Really the last month she's just been playing at a high level. Just another option.

She was in some foul trouble tonight with the four fouls. So she didn't play as much as she normally does.

Again, that's the nice thing that we've seen about this team is other people are stepping up and making plays. I'm extremely happy with Aaliyah and her progression this year.

Q. Michigan State seemed a bit disjointed in half-court and transition. What were some of the looks you guys were giving them differently tonight in this matchup?

SHAUNA GREEN: Defensively you're talking about? Yeah, I think we did a much better job this time around with our ball screen coverage. That was a huge problem the first time we played them. Granted that was our fourth game of the Big Ten, so it was early on.

We made some adjustments throughout the game in terms of how we were handling it. Blair started going and getting really hot, so we tried a lot of things. We were sending people, and we were going to double her at times. We

didn't really get to that.

Then we started switching late, which I thought was really effective. Probably should have went to that earlier.

Then we switched off. C was a little bit longer on her. Man, she's good. She is really hard to guard.

I just thought we showed a lot more toughness, a lot more togetherness defensively. We did a great job. In the first half they didn't have a three. They got a couple late.

But to hold this team down to three threes is a big deal, and they held Grace down too. Talking about Blair a lot, but Grace is an elite post. I thought we really did a good job. For her to only have 13, that's an elite win in my books because I know what she's capable of.

Just I just thought the consistency of our defense, and obviously our defense won it at the end. We had to get stops.

Q. A year ago you came to Indy, and it was one game and you guys were headed back to Champaign. Now you've got two wins under your belt here. How do you use that as momentum and an opportunity to continue to extend your stay here while also -- have you had the chance to talk with some of the players who were a part of this team last year and know what it entails in order to compete in the Big Ten Tournament?

SHAUNA GREEN: Obviously this is pretty much a brand new team with so many young guys. A lot of our team, it's their first time playing in this tournament. It's been fun to see them kind of learn throughout the tournament as well. I kind of think it helped us playing yesterday. Last year we were the 7 seed and came and lost in this game, right, with a veteran team.

This team, it's just a fun group to be around. Literally we go through so many new things every day, even in this game, there's so many situations that we just haven't been through together. We had been through some, and I reflected even in the timeout at six-minute mark, I told them, this same exact scenario was at Iowa. It was a six-minute timeout. I think we were up six. I think we were up six here.

I'm like we're winning this game. We're learning from our mistakes in Iowa, and we're going to come out, and we're going to execute this last six minutes.

To see that growth, the responses in real time after a costly turnover, to be able to quick response and be able to go out there and get a stop, it's just been really fun to see their

growth. We're having fun, so let's keep it rolling.

Obviously we've got a tough one tomorrow night, but we're learning and we're growing. That's a great thing. And I think we're playing well. You want to be playing well in March.

Q. Yesterday you guys shot just 11 percent from three. Today it's above 40 percent. Was there a certain message you told your team yesterday?

SHAUNA GREEN: Keep shooting. Keep shooting. I said, hey, we can't shoot that bad tonight what we did last night. Keep shooting the ball, and I have all the confidence in the world in these guys and our ability to make threes, and we did tonight. We made some.

Q. Just wanted to get your thoughts just on the evolution of the late game execution from your team?

SHAUNA GREEN: Yeah, that was a big -- we've been working the last few games. I thought we did a great job. We executed the one out of the timeout. We're getting Berry the ball downhill, and she got fouled. So that was big. We had the turnover late. We wanted to go late. Again, we're learning. We have a freshman point guard. We have this. And I've got to do a better job of making sure I'm adamant about when we're going to go with those plays.

Again, learning and being able to not hang our head after that, and coming down having the two-point lead and being able to get that stop, that's big time growth. I walked into one of those huddles late in the game, and everyone was talking. I actually had to tell our team to be quiet. I haven't had to do that all year. So we're talking, we're talking through plays. That's what I was begging them to do at Iowa. I walked into the huddle in Iowa, and not a peep. I had to get on them after the game.

They're young. I don't even know. They're just learning. Probably my favorite moment of the game was walking in that timeout and seeing them pointing and doing all this, and for me to have to say, be quiet, listen to me. It's an amazing, beautiful thing that, as a coach, I knew right then, okay, we're growing.

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