

# Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Friday, March 6, 2026

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Gainbridge Fieldhouse

## Michigan Wolverines

## Coach Kim Barnes Arico

## Ashley Sofilkanich

### Postgame Press Conference



Michigan - 80, Oregon - 58

**THE MODERATOR:** Joining us from Michigan are Coach Kim Barnes Arico, Kendall Dudley, and Ashley Sofilkanich. Coach, if you'd make an opening statement.

**KIM BARNES ARICO:** Oregon is a great basketball team, and they were coming off two really big wins. They have a dynamic duo in Fiso and Etute. So we knew it was going to be a challenge for us tonight.

I was really proud of the way that we played and we defended. We took care of the ball, only had nine assists on the night, shared the basketball, got to the free-throw line, made our free throws.

I just thought we played really well throughout the entire game.

**Q. Ashley, Kendall, how did you guys adapt to Oregon's defense, especially in the paint, given that a lot of Michigan's points come from the paint?**

**KENDALL DUDLEY:** I think that what helped spread out the defense was just hitting inside out. Like we had a lot of big time shots from Macy Brown, Syla Swords. I think that opened up the space for us to get post touches and gave us a clear lane to score.

**ASHLEY SOFILKANICH:** I think we just moved the ball really well on offense. It's a great day when you have someone with 10 assists on your team and four people in double digits.

Just sharing the ball, getting everyone involved, and it makes defenses really question who they want to guard that day.

**Q. Kendall, you've really shown a willingness to attack off the dribble. How has your confidence grown in this area, and what does that element add to your game?**

**KENDALL DUDLEY:** I think that I've gotten a lot of confidence from my teammates and my coaches, and I think ultimately it helps continue to move the offense. We need everyone to be aggressive, and that's kind of my mindset. Just keeping aggressive, hitting people who are open, and that's kind of allowed me to become more confident.

**Q. Kendall, you had 10 points, part of your 20 bench points. How vital is it that your bench is ready to go in big games like this? Can you kind of speak about your mindset about tomorrow's game?**

**KENDALL DUDLEY:** I think it's super important, and we kind of talked about it before the season. We need everyone from bench to the last person, the first person on the court, and that is something that we think that will take us far.

So I think that's just my mindset of just knowing my role, facilitating, getting rebounds, and setting good screens.

I think that will help us go far in this tournament and the rest of March.

**Q. Ashley, last time you guys played second chance points, you dominated 20-0. Second chance points were a big deal tonight as well. Was that a big priority coming into the game tonight for you guys? Do you talk about that a lot?**

**ASHLEY SOFILKANICH:** You bet. We really emphasized rebounding, especially looking at our numbers from last game. It was a close game, double overtime with them, and we were up 30 on their boards.

We just knew coming into this game the rebounding battle was something we really had to win, and Coach emphasized offensive rebounding at halftime, and we really went in with that mindset for the second half. Just to get o-boards, those second chance points, and facilitating



the ball once we got offensive rebounds, and we kind of went from there.

**Q. For both of you, did you notice -- as Kim mentioned, they played two tough games going into this game. Did you notice them wearing down in the third?**

ASHLEY SOFILKANICH: I thought Oregon was a great team, really solid. They have some great players. I don't know if I really noticed a wear down, but we got more aggressive offensively and defensively and fixed our mistakes from the first half, and that really elevated our game in the second half.

**Q. How much are you two looking forward to facing Iowa?**

KENDALL DUDLEY: We're super excited. Like this, we want to get this back. We didn't feel great about how we showed up in the last game, just off the rebounding battle and a bunch of little things. We're super excited. We're excited to have a good game and have a good crowd and do good for Big Ten.

ASHLEY SOFILKANICH: Iowa is a really hard environment to play in. Any game where you're playing on someone's home court and there's 15,000 fans is really difficult, but I'm hoping with this neutral site and just a better mindset coming into the game and kind of knowing what we did wrong in that last game, we can fix our mistakes and come out with a win tomorrow.

**Q. Ashley, your two best scoring performances both came against Oregon. Can you just talk about what in that matchup allowed you to just kind of go and execute the game plan?**

ASHLEY SOFILKANICH: I think, especially this game, just confidence from my coaches, especially Coach Arico, always emphasizing like, Ashley get in there, get in the post. Like we want to throw you the ball. Just that kind of confidence from the coaches.

And then my teammates throwing me great passes into the post today really just helped elevate my game. I don't know, you never know when your day is going to be your day, so just stepping up when you're needed.

**Q. There is talk about the excitement of playing Iowa and how that loss kind of sat in the back of their minds. I know a lot of coaches want to focus on the next game and focus on not trying to look back at those different things, but for you, though, thinking back to the Iowa game, have you seen your players**

**wanting to play them again? Even for yourself, are you hoping for another chance to face them?**

KIM BARNES ARICO: Yeah, that was a really tough game for us, and that was a tough environment. Actually, our end of February stretch was really tough. We played 14 ranked teams in a row -- I mean, 4 ranked teams in a row, and 2 of them were on the road at Iowa and at Ohio State. Then it was Maryland and Michigan State. So we had a really, really tough stretch.

For I think everyone, with the exception of two people on our team, they had never played at Iowa. So it was their first time, and we always talk about life in the Big Ten, life on the road is challenging. But that was the first time in that type of environment on Senior Day on a Sunday at 11:00 a.m.

So they jumped on us. They were super physical. The score didn't indicate really how close the game was, but they're a tough team to play there for sure.

I think for us that shook us a little bit because we hadn't had a loss like that in -- I don't know if we have had all season. So we really wanted to respond at Ohio State, which was our next game a couple days later, three games in that week, and we were able to respond at Ohio State. I think that gave us a little bit of confidence back.

We know that they're going to defend. We know that they're going to be physical. We know that they're going to be gritty. We know that they're tough as heck. But our kids are super competitive, and they want an opportunity to play against someone that beat them. I think that's what they want.

So they're going to have another opportunity tomorrow.

**Q. After Liv and Mila left with two fouls, it really seemed that the approach kind of was driven through the paint. Could you just talk about Ashley and Kendall, what you saw out of them today. Then also, just what you saw from those minutes that they were playing on the floor together?**

KIM BARNES ARICO: Yeah, going back and watching Oregon for the first time, Ashley was awesome the first time, and they really tried to play the zone against us. So we knew that she could really attack in the middle of the zone.

That was kind of a point of emphasis for us this week at practice when we were working on our zone offense. We really wanted to get her touches inside. I thought she had a little bit of a size advantage on Etute as well, so that was



something that we were focused on.

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I think Kendall just gives a different matchup. You bring in -- Ashley comes in, and she's a back-to-the-basket post player, and you bring in Kendall, and she's a face-up, rip-and-drive player. So I think it gave them two different types of matchups defensively, and it played to our advantage.

But that was definitely a key for us going inside and trying to establish Ashley early.

**Q. Ava Heiden is a remarkably gifted player. She poses unique challenges. What can you do specifically to try to limit her tomorrow?**

KIM BARNES ARICO: I think we actually did a really good job until the fourth quarter. I think she was very limited prior to the fourth quarter, and then she got going in the fourth quarter. They wore us down a little bit.

You have to be super active. You have to catch her early. She's really physical. She scores very quickly. We just have to have an understanding.

Etute had a great night for them, and she's similar yet different than Ava. Just having an awareness, catching her early, and trying to be physical. And then limiting those around her to -- you know, if she has hers, trying not to let everybody else go off on the outside as well.

**Q. Talking about rebounding, especially your offensive rebounding, the last time you played Oregon it was your highest offensive rebounding of the season. Tonight was your third highest in Big Ten play. Can you talk about what worked tonight, especially on those boards, to get the boards and get the second chance points?**

KIM BARNES ARICO: We emphasize rebounding all the time. We're not always necessarily the biggest team on the floor, but we're going to pursue the basketball on both ends, on the defensive end and on the offensive end. Brooke Daniels is usually the smallest player on the floor, and she's usually the highest offensive rebounder.

I'm trying to find out if she was tonight. She was for our team. She finished with six and four steals. That's just something we really focus on, we take great pride in, and we always want to make sure we're out rebounding our opponent.

I knew that stat was important after the first time we played Oregon, and it also gave us 20 second chance points to their 4 tonight. So that was key for our success as well.

