

# Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Friday, March 6, 2026

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Gainbridge Fieldhouse

**Oregon Ducks**

**Coach Kelly Graves**

**Ehis Etute**

**Katie Fiso**

Postgame Press Conference

Michigan - 80, Oregon - 58

THE MODERATOR: We welcome Oregon to the dais. Coach Kelly Graves and student-athletes Katie Fiso and Ehis Etute. Coach, if you would make an opening statement.

KELLY GRAVES: First, I just want to congratulate Michigan on moving on. They deserved it tonight. They were the better team; certainly the aggressors.

I think we played with them for a while. I thought we played okay in the first half. Certainly our first shot defense was pretty good, but we gave them too many second chance points.

Then that second half, I think we just ran out of gas. We were three games in three days -- not making that an excuse. That's real, though. We just didn't have as much left in the tank.

Again, I'm really proud of our team, especially these two. I think they showed so well. We're going to use this as an opportunity to now move on to the next tournament and hopefully have a nice run as well.

**Q. Katie, can you just speak to with the pressure they bring defensively on the boards -- obviously that's a challenge regardless, but to Coach's point, playing for the third game in three days, just how much tougher is it to deal with the pressure they were putting on you guys given you had two games in your legs?**

KATIE FISO: Yeah, definitely we knew it was going to be a mental battle and a physical battle coming into this game. We played two games already, this being our third. We did



our best doing recovery, treatment, and stuff like that to prepare for this game, but like Coach said, just got to play through that fatigue, man.

**Q. After the three games and how you all played, what's one lesson you both take away from the tourney as you prepare for the Big Dance?**

EHIS ETUTE: Well, we'll have to take away from this that we're a good team. We just have to be locked in for the four quarters, 40 minutes. We can't just play for 10 minutes and then quit, and when things don't go our way, quit.

That's the thing we've got to take away from this. We've just got to keep fighting for 40 minutes.

**Q. Your team has an incredibly adaptive defense and such a way of like reading the team and forming kind of like a wall around them. What's kind of your guys' tactic and outlook, and how has that brought you to this point in the tournament?**

KATIE FISO: We hold our hats on our defense. We know that, if our defense is creating chaos, it helps us push in transition. When we get stops, we find the open person on the offensive side.

When we're communicating, flying around, talking to each other, we're one of the most hardest teams to score on, so yeah.

**Q. Ehis, can you speak a little more to given that you two are both pretty young, what winning a couple of events this year can mean for you big picture, in terms of your development, whether you take confidence from it, whether there's other lessons you learn, not just for this year's team, but big picture, what this could mean for you guys in your career arcs?**

EHIS ETUTE: We are a pretty young team, I guess, like Coach always says. At the end of the day what matters is winning, so age doesn't really matter. What we took away from this is we have a lot of areas to grow on. We kind of saw where we lacked and what we're lacking and know



what we're supposed to work on in the off-season and also before the tournaments. So we'll see if that translates.

**Q. For either of you, the roles are significantly different from last year to this year for the both of you. How does it feel to get to contribute at this level after being with this team for two years and seeing your roles change so drastically?**

KATIE FISO: It's always been a blessing to be trusted with these roles. Coach has put a lot of trust in us, a lot of trust in this team to make these big plays when the time matters.

It's a blessing. I'm grateful for this opportunity. We put a lot of work in, both on and off the court. So it was only a matter of time where the work started to show. Continue to grow, continue to learn, continue to get better, 1 percent every day.

**Q. KG, can you just maybe speak to my question to Ehis, just given how young those two are, just what winning a couple games here can mean for them big picture and what they can take away from it?**

KELLY GRAVES: There's a lot to celebrate. I don't think many people thought we were going to come in here and win a couple. Any time you win in the postseason, that kind of experience goes with you, even into the next tournament and the next year.

I think they're just scratching the surface. Like you said, they had small roles last year, and this year we had to put them in. Quite frankly, they've carried us a lot of times this season. I still am amazed that Ehis Etute, what did she get, three double-doubles here? Didn't get a single, didn't get mentioned on the all-conference team.

It just shows you the greatness of the conference. There's a lot of really good players. I saw a bunch of them on the other team tonight. But I'm really proud of them seriously. They work hard. They're great teammates. They love each other. Seriously, bright future with these two at the head.

**Q. Sofie, Ari, and Mia, can you speak to their impact on games this week and just their growth in general?**

KELLY GRAVES: They all had their moments for sure. Again, Avery is a sophomore. She has an electric game last night. We probably don't win that game without her. Sofia is one of the better defenders in the conference.

She was big in different moments this year, especially from the 3-point line. She's just kind of our rock, quite frankly.

Everybody loves Sofia. She's the smartest kid in the room.

Then Ari, she's one of those that just makes things happen, a glue player that every team needs. So I'm really blessed to have three wings like that. Tonight you could tell those three played a little bit tired, but the one thing at the end of the night I never question the effort that those guys give.

Seriously, I'm really blessed as a coach to coach that caliber of people quite frankly, as well as player.

**Q. I know we just spoke downstairs, but if you could just in one word maybe kind of surmise your feelings on, now that the Big Ten portion of your season is over, how you feel that your team has done over the course of this sector of the season? What is one word you could attribute to that?**

KELLY GRAVES: One word. That was two, plus three more. Wow. I was actually impressed. I was impressed with our professionalism, impressed with we never complained. Three games, three days, late game each day. Just they're a fun group to be around. They really are.

Like I said, we have great chemistry, great camaraderie on and off the court. They're really professionals. They are. They go about their business. Good students, by the way. Yeah, they're the whole package.

That was a lot more than one word. I apologize. I'm a coach. You've got to remember we know Xs and Os. It's the other letters sometimes we struggle with.

**Q. Michigan usually runs through its guards. When Mila Holloway and Olivia Olson picked up two fouls early, that kind of shifted into going through their forwards. Can you talk about the difficulties that Ashley Sofilkanich and Kendall Dudley presented you guys tonight?**

KELLY GRAVES: Yeah, I thought they got good production off their bench from their role players. I'm kind of disappointed that we didn't create more with their foul trouble in the first half. We just couldn't ever really get it going. They've got a legitimate Final Four kind of team. I've been there. I know what it takes. They've got play makers. They've got depth. They've got size. They've got the ability to score in different ways from different levels, and they're tremendous defensively.

Yeah, Kim's got a heck of a team, and I'm looking forward to see how far they can go, not just in this tournament, but the next one.

**Q. Watching Katie Fiso play on a third game in three days, I was struck by how high her energy level still was. What does that mean to your team?**

KELLY GRAVES: I see it every day. There are times we actually have to tell her, stay out of the gym today. You need the rest. She's just that kind of player, that kind of competitor. They don't come along very often. I've been blessed to coach some of those great point guards, and she's got the makeup that they had.

You know, she's a little slight. For her to play as many minutes back to back to back nights as she did just really shows kind of the true mettle that she's made of. I could say that about a lot of players, but Katie is pretty special, and she's great to coach.

You can see she has a strong faith and has faith in her teammates as well.

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