

Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Saturday, March 7, 2026

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Gainbridge Fieldhouse

Michigan Wolverines

Coach Kim Barnes Arico

Syla Swords

Olivia Olson

Postgame Press Conference



Iowa - 59, Michigan - 42

THE MODERATOR: Joining us from Michigan will be head coach Kim Barnes Arico, student-athletes Olivia Olson and Syla Swords.

KIM BARNES ARICO: Obviously we're bummed and disappointed about the outcome of the game. We feel like we have a really great basketball team, and Iowa just got the better of us today, especially in the fourth quarter. They really took over the game.

They're a great team, and we have a ton of respect for them. But we're excited to move on and to play in March Madness. We feel like we play in the best league in the country, and this conference and this tournament has prepared us for March. We're excited about that.

Q. We know how impactful the two of you guys are on a nightly basis. When you add Mila to that, just how when the three of you maybe aren't combined on your best night, what do you think it will take moving forward to just get over that hump?

SYLA SWORDS: With that responsibility comes a lot of reflection after these type of games. We're involved with so many actions. We're playing 30-plus minutes. So a lot of the accountability has to come from our part.

I think just leaving this game, the bus ride home, we're going to talk to each other, talk to Coach, and reflect on what we can do to better support our teammates, better support each other, better support our coaches to come out with wins in games like these.

Q. Obviously last time around you guys were in kind

of a low-scoring tight game and then Iowa pulled away at the end. In what ways did this game feel similar to that one?

OLIVIA OLSON: I thought we came out better in this game just staying to our defensive plan. Obviously their defensive pressure is heavy and we didn't have a great offensive night, but I just -- I think we stuck to our game plan, but the fourth quarter got away from us.

Q. They were just talking about their scouting report. The two of you were circled at the top of it. What do you think it was that was able to limit you guys so much this game?

SYLA SWORDS: They're very active defensively, but their guards are really good at staying attached the whole time. Whether it's coming off screens, whether it's coming off handoffs, we have to work to get the ball every single possession. Credit to Iowa for that. They did that both games, and that's not easy to do.

Q. Ashley fouled out in the game, but can you speak to how she has impacted your team and how she has added to the competitive spirit that you all have?

OLIVIA OLSON: She brings a lot of competitiveness and length in the post for us. She works hard every possession. So just being able to get her to guard the big post, like we didn't have that last year. She's brought a lot to us.

SYLA SWORDS: And the bigs in the league, you have multiple people in All-American contention at the 5 spot. So Ash has to match up with some of the best players in the country. We're just really glad she's in maize and blue and just want to praise her as much as we can and happy that she's here with us.

Q. Tough six-game stretch here at the end of the season. How do you think that prepares you for what's coming next in the NCAA Tournament?

OLIVIA OLSON: I think we're really prepared. After the last Iowa game we played, we talked in the locker room



and said we could either crumble these last couple games where we play ranked opponents or we could come out prepared for March.

Today didn't go our way, but we talked in the locker room after, and we have so much basketball left. We're just looking forward to the opportunity to still be playing.

Q. You talked about the depth and how impactful it's been all season, players like Macy, Kendall, and Te. How impactful will that depth be in the NCAA Tournament?

KIM BARNES ARICO: Yeah, the three you just spoke about, they're incredible pieces to our team, and they're all going to be crucial for us moving forward. We're going to lean into them to help us score, to help us defend, to help us be successful at a really high level.

Q. You guys preach a lot that anyone can have a night, but a lot of times it's the weight on Sylla Swords and Olivia Olson to have these second-half turnarounds and help propel your team. What do you think that pressure is like on them, and how do you think you can seal the deal in the future?

KIM BARNES ARICO: I think it's the same pressure that every single great player on every team has. Tonight that might have been Hannah Stuelke and Ava Heiden. On Ohio State it's Jaloni Cambridge. I think every great player feels an enormous amount of pressure to help their team be successful.

For Olivia, Sylla, and Mila, they want to be great, and they carry that load every day, but I think that's something that they want.

Q. You guys have talked a lot in your losses about feeling like you've been sped up. How do you want to work on slowing down the pace and making sure you can be collected, especially in these high-pressure games coming up for the rest of March?

KIM BARNES ARICO: Yeah, I mean, Iowa's been our only loss in a really long time, and the rest of our losses have been 3-point losses with the exception of Iowa. Hopefully we don't have to play them in the NCAA Tournament.

I'm excited to see what other matchups we'll have. I'm excited for somebody else that hasn't seen Michigan to have an opportunity to play against Michigan because, like I said, I think we have an unbelievable team. I think our schedule, whether that's our conference or nonconference schedule, has prepared us for March. And I'm excited for whatever that is.

Q. Olivia mentioned after the Iowa game, you talked about not crumbling, or the players did. What was the conversation, or have you had it yet, after this game on how they respond?

KIM BARNES ARICO: I think after the Iowa game, we had to play Ohio State on the road and then we had to play Maryland before heading to the Big Ten Tournament. We talk about every day trying to get better and buying into the process of trying to get better.

I think sometimes we want to feel as if we arrived, and then we look on the court and we have five sophomores out there. So I think we're still a work in progress, and just continuing to stick together, to continue to come to work every day to try to improve, and our kids do that.

After that Iowa game, we beat two ranked opponents. So I think we definitely did respond, and I'm sure after this one we're going to go back and reflect and try to get better and be ready for the NCAA Tournament.

Q. Coach, you guys seized on that momentum heading into the fourth quarter, but then obviously Iowa was able to flip it back on you guys and fully extend their lead to double digits. What did you feel was the opportunity you missed there or need to do differently to start the fourth?

KIM BARNES ARICO: I think we had a couple possessions where we failed to score. We were stuck on 34, that was before the fourth, where we had a bunch of possessions where we didn't make plays. Then Iowa, Chit-Chat got a 3 off through a staggered screen late in the shot clock. Then I think that opened the gates, the floodgates for them, and they started shooting with a little more confidence. I think they went 3 for 4 from three in the fourth quarter where they had only made two 3s up until that point.

Once they extended that lead, they were really playing loose, and we were playing from behind.

Q. The first quarter and the fourth quarter you scored a combined 10 points. That's pretty uncharacteristic for you guys. When you break that down, how do you prevent that from happening moving forward?

KIM BARNES ARICO: Just continue to get better. I mean, I don't -- in the first quarter we settled, and then the second quarter and the third quarter we outscored Iowa in both of those quarters. Like I said, in the fourth quarter we were not able to do that.

So it's just continuing to improve.

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