

Big 12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Sunday, March 9, 2025

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

T-Mobile Center

Baylor Bears

Coach Nicki Collen

Sarah Andrews

Aaronette Vonleh

Postgame Press Conference



it to her on the possession before, she ripped and drove it, and so we just -- Sedona plays drop coverage, it's the easiest way to get a three. They would have switched on our guards. It was a good look and looked like it was going in.

Q. Sarah, in all three games against TCU, teams like you guys didn't give up. What is it about late-game situations where you turn it on and get over the hump going forward?

SARAH ANDREWS: Just being vocal, letting everybody know we're okay, there's a lot of basketball left. I just kept talking throughout the whole game, like, Come on. We were one stop away every time, I just felt like we couldn't get over that little hump when we go to about two or so. So everybody being seniors and kind of knowing it's our last time to play together with this group, just being vocal.

Q. Sarah, going along with that, looking at the team and how y'all performed in the tournament, how did you feel the team was?

SARAH ANDREWS: This team was great. We battled back from down at halftime. I'm going to give us a day to hang our head on it. But at 11:59, 12:00 tonight, it's time to move on and get ready for the NCAA Tournament.

Q. Netty, what are your take-aways from this tournament to take into the NCAA Tournament?

AARONETTE VONLEH: I think the biggest take-away is we have what it takes to play against really good teams and beat them. I think there is this little switch that has to go off in our heads, and we're going to work towards that. We have what it takes in our locker room to win against anybody, and we just have to believe that.

Q. Second year of the Big 12 Tournament here at T-Mobile. Curious as to your thoughts of the venue and then Kansas City as a whole.

NICKI COLLEN: Obviously Kansas City always shows up. When you don't have a local team playing in it, you don't have a Kansas, Kansas State -- I know they refer to this as

TCU 64, Baylor 59

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Baylor Head Coach Nicki Collen, student-athletes Aaronette Vonleh and Sarah Andrews. Coach?

NICKI COLLEN: Well, congratulations to TCU. Kinda led tip to finish. Felt like when Bella Fontleroy and Netty were in foul trouble in the second quarter is probably when the game got away from us a little bit. I don't think we were effective at either end of the floor, and I thought we just clipped along.

Played really good offense in the third, still made some defensive mistakes, but then I thought we really locked down in the fourth.

Turned into a really good basketball game. I really thought Netty was going to make that three and we would be playing overtime. I thought she was good all night long, and I thought Sarah was the leader of that comeback. She got in her bag and was leading us in that stretch. So I thought these guys were a big part of why we ended up with a chance to win it.

Q. Coach, was that play to Netty for three at the end of the game, is that how you drew it up? Is that the look you wanted?

NICKI COLLEN: Yep. I know analytically, maybe, it looks like I wouldn't do that, but I think it was the easiest way to get a clean look for three. And I've seen Netty make a lot of those. We made her shoot 'em in preseason a lot, and I've seen her knock down a lot of them.

When you are trying to play quickly -- we were trying to get

Hilton South. The building felt like we were playing for something, you know, and so I think it's treated us well.

We certainly spend no time in Kansas City when we are here. We like our hotel. We like staying as long as we can stay because it means we are playing in the championship.

But T-Mobile, the change to T-Mobile had to happen. The women needed it. I understand there were advantages of playing at the same time and playing at Municipal, but the brand of basketball we play deserves a building like this. I'm grateful to be here, and I'm grateful for the way it's run. It's been good to be here.

SARAH ANDREWS: I think, you know, it was great. Women's basketball needs stuff like this, especially for a game like this that was just played. It was a great environment. And I was joking with the Commissioner earlier about it being Louie on the floor. That's what he said, looked like we were playing on a Louie court. It was a good experience.

AARONETTE VONLEH: It was a really cool experience for me personally. I will say I've never really been here, used to Las Vegas, but Kansas City was cool. It treated us well. We made it to the last game. So it's a good place to be.

Q. Aaronette, did you learn anything about yourself or the team in a couple close games? You played well without Buggs. What do you take away personally from this tournament as a team?

AARONETTE VONLEH: I mean, we have been without Buggs for a few games, but I think it's still apparent that even without someone who contributes so much to our team, we all have what it takes to step up in different ways and make up for that void. I would say that's the biggest take-away, yeah.

Q. Coach, making it all the way to the end. The Baylor faithful that supported y'all throughout the double bye and Iowa State and Colorado and here, what was the reaction, the support you got at this tournament?

NICKI COLLEN: It was great. I said it the other day when we were talking about my 100th win. I'm grateful. When Baylor is in your heart, it stays there. We don't have the mightiest alumni base in terms of numbers, but I think we have a faithful fan base. So it was great.

I really want to answer the question you asked Netty. What I learned is that Kyla Abraham made a big 'ol jump this weekend. She started making layups. She even made two free throws today. It's been a long time since we played her, played double big.

I thought they did a really good job, Netty and Kyla, playing together. But Kyla hasn't played those extend minutes, and I didn't see the fatigue from her that we often see two or three minutes in. Because her job normally is to just give Netty blows and to play when she's in foul trouble. But I thought she was better than someone that just was a placeholder and rebounded and runs the floor.

I thought that was awesome. I thought Netty wanted the ball. And if she can score on Magassa and Sedona Prince, she can score on anybody in the country. That's what it told me; that we have someone we can play to and play through.

And I just thought her teammates embraced that, this one in particular with 11 assists the other night. She got her the ball where she needed it, saw her early in transition and started to understand when to screen and roll and play behind and when to bury deep. You know, she played a little too complicated to start the game. I thought in the second half she wasn't messing around anymore.

That's what I learned; that we're lucky enough to get Buggs back, yes, I'm not just saying that for the NCAA Tournament Committee. Buggs is already practicing. She is in return-to-play protocol. She'll be practicing with us the whole week for the NCAA Tournament.

It allows us to not play tiny. You know? Bella has played great at the 4, our bench has been phenomenal, and super proud of the way she stepped up. But when you don't shoot it great, and you're missing out on the best offensive rebounder in your league, it impacts you. And Buggs is going to get you a rim-run layup, she's going to get you an offensive rebound. And when you take that away, it makes you work that much harder for baskets. So we're going to be happy to have her back, too.

Q. Seemed like there was a lot of similarities when you played TCU in the first two games, with them going up and you guys making it a game in the fourth quarter. What would you say was the biggest difference, or was this the same game to you, Coach?

NICKI COLLEN: I think they were all a little different. We were down 22 at their place, so that one felt really uncomfortable, until we came storming back. It was furious. I think the last two games have been more similar, where we've had maybe a tough stretch, and then it hung around at 8 or 9 points. We didn't make the push probably soon enough. We started to score in the third but didn't get enough stops to make it close. But we certainly never quit.

We started to get stops late. I thought Tony did a good job

mixing up ball screen coverages. The whistle was blown on hand checks, and I think there were stretches where it was a parade to the foul line on hand checks, and no one wants to watch that in a championship game, but I thought the last two games were very similar.

Q. Coach, NET rankings is a mystery, but do y'all think you made a clear enough case to be able to play back at Waco for the first two rounds?

NICKI COLLEN: Yeah, I thought if we got to the championship, there was no way that we wouldn't be in the top 16. If our NET was there, we knew we would get another quad 1 win, with the semifinal win, so I have zero doubt that we have done what we needed to do in this league. I know we haven't always gotten the respect this year, the Big 12, that say the Big Ten or the SEC have gotten, but I think this league is better that people give it credit for.

TCU is a Top-10 team. They've been a Top-10 team. They beat NC State, they beat Notre Dame, and those teams are projected obviously to be 2's and 3's, so I feel like we've done everything we needed to do down the stretch, playing our best basketball at the end of the year, and only losing to a Top-10 team twice, so I would be disappointed. Surprised, but mainly disappointed.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports