

Big 12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Sunday, March 9, 2025

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

T-Mobile Center

TCU Horned Frogs

Coach Mark Campbell

Hailey Van Lith

Sedona Prince

Madison Conner

Postgame Press Conference

TCU 64, Baylor 59

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by TCU Head Coach Mark Campbell, student-athletes Madison Conner; All-Tournament team selection, Sedona Prince; and Most Outstanding Player, Hailey Van Lith. Coach?

MARK CAMPBELL: That game was everything you hoped for a Big 12 Championship. It came down to the last possession, literally. Baylor is a really good team, great coaching staff. We have had three great games against those guys.

At the end of the day, we always found a way to get it done. It's hard to beat a team three times. Shoot, we didn't beat them in 35 years, and now we've beat them three times this year.

Just so proud of this group and everything they have accomplished. They're just so resilient and gritty and tough, and it's happened all season over and over. They just find a way.

It's going to be fun to enjoy this. We get a week to finally catch our breath. But we're going to celebrate this one and really enjoy this.

Q. Mark, we sat in a very similar situation a week ago, and you called this team hard to kill. We saw a very similar end to the game tonight. There was a sequence where Agnes got three offensive rebounds in one possession. How does that exemplify that "hard to kill" attitude?



MARK CAMPBELL: It is, these guys are just winners, and they find ways to impact the game. Each of them -- they're so talented in their own ways, but each of them has different gifts and things they bringing to the table.

And Agnes, that's Agnes. She is just the backbone, the warrior, and she finds ways to impact winning.

Again, I think that's one of the reasons we are hard to kill. There are so many weapons. There is so much talent. Each of them complement each other. And we talked about it yesterday, they all just want to win, and none of us want this journey to end or this ride to end. But, yeah, that's a great example.

Q. Hailey, this is your first conference tournament title, right? How rewarding is the experience after everything you went through in March, not only to win this title but with your teammates and your coach?

HAILEY VAN LITH: It means everything. And, again, it's just more evidence of how perfect God's timing has been in my life. I was thinking about it even at the beginning of the tournament, and, you know, as humans we always question, like, why things are happening to us, why we're going through things.

If I wouldn't have had the experiences that I've had in the past, I would not be able to realize this blessing that I have in front of me with TCU to its fullest potential. Like, I would not be the person that would be able to capitalize off of what this opportunity has been for me.

So, you know, it's God's timing, man, and this was my year that He decided it was time to give glory to His name. So I'm just super grateful.

Q. Hailey, in the last year, Olympic medal, Big 12 Player of the Year, Big 12 regular season championship, and now a tournament championship --

MARK CAMPBELL: That's a pretty good run.

Q. Yeah, you're on quite a run. How does this one stack up with the rest of them?

HAILEY VAN LITH: Honestly, team achievements are -- it's such a flex to say that your team is good. Anybody can go out and average 20 a game and play on a bad team and never get to postseason. To say that your team, like, kicks people's butts, that's the ultimate flex. So anytime my team, like we do something, that's the best feeling.

At the end of the day, I think things have started coming to me more, and I've been actually able to, you know, really get over the hurdle of certain things. Because I've stopped living for it. Like my self-worth isn't teetering on whether I win Big 12 Player of the Year or not.

So, yeah, I'm proud of myself for that growth as a human, but at the end of the day, anything that we win as a team, that's the ultimate flex to me.

Q. Mark, when did you figure out this team had what it took? You talked about being one of the worst programs in the Power Five two years ago. When did you figure out that this team had what it took?

MARK CAMPBELL: Yeah, it's similar to Hailey's story. As you build something, there is adversity along the way. And you need part of that adversity to become what you need to become.

So a year ago we were 14-0 and off to the best start in school history. At that time that group, before the injuries hit, was a special group. But we just didn't quite have the depth and the firepower.

So you knew you were on the right track. But that was a really hard and challenging year as you take over a program.

Then this next year, the first glimpse -- in college basketball, you get a chance to play two exhibition games or two scrimmages. And we chose to play two SEC games behind closed doors. After those two games was the first chance -- you know, you come back and you meet as a staff and you're breaking film, and you start going, gosh dang, we might be pretty good this year.

And then the first ah-ha moment was the NC State game. And they were in the Final Four a year ago and returned everybody. But that's when you got to see the star power and the bright lights were on, and it was our first nationally televised game. And you came and you got to see what these guys are made of. And they didn't flinch. Now 34 games into the season, they still haven't flinched.

Q. Coach, adding on to that, thinking back, when you were at your lowest, did you think you could get this

dominant this quickly?

MARK CAMPBELL: Yeah, no question. No question. A huge part of college athletics is recruiting and attracting talent and identifying -- one of my favorite parts of the job is assembling teams and finding young women and getting the locker room dialed in and right and your culture right.

Our style of play insists on that we play, you know what kind of pieces you have to get. You never know how long it will take, though. But we did the same thing at Sac State. Our second year was the best team in school history.

But, again, you're at the mercy -- the Lord has blessed our labor, has watched over us, has brought each one of these kids -- the story of how they showed up here is amazing.

I want to say this. In an era of NIL and all this stuff, in this story -- I haven't shared much, but, you guys, Madison Conner, Sedona Prince, they came to TCU, and I didn't have a dollar. They came to TCU because they wanted to build something and they had a chip on their shoulder and they wanted to hoop and prove something.

And Hailey, she didn't come here because of any money. Hailey loves basketball more than anything. And she had nine months left to try to get her career right and accomplish her childhood dream. Each one of these kids have dreams to play in the W and play at the next level.

And these three came to TCU, and that's our whole roster for the right reasons. So it's been magical. It really is. It's hard to even truly put into words this journey that's unfolded these last two years.

Q. Can you describe how much fun this team is for you?

MARK CAMPBELL: Yeah, I get to sit courtside and watch the show every game. I'm truly along for this ride. And you guys, it's so stinkin' hard to do -- well, it's never been done at TCU, but to win 30 games anywhere, at any school in the country, is incredibly hard to do.

So, yes, I'm enjoying every moment. I know how fragile winning and losing is and it can change like that. A year ago it did for us.

So I think one of the things -- you guys don't get to see this group behind closed doors, especially these three. I got three characters that are sitting next to me that are fun-loving people, that enjoy each other. Their teammates enjoy each other. So just this whole journey, they're freakin' kicking everybody's butt and having fun along the

way.

Q. Sedona, teams haven't been able to do much with you guys except muck it up and be physical, I'm sorry, just trying to keep it real. What sort of message do you think you sent in terms of we can be physical, get a little grimy too?

SEDONA PRINCE: Yeah, that's been our biggest growth area this season I think. It's been a challenge for us all along the way, and we saw it early. It's a compliment to us that says we're going to try to turn you over and make it a nasty game to slow you down and force turnovers.

It's been a challenge for us all year. We have worked on it, focused on it, and we faced it head on and said this is going to be what we need to overcome to be the best team as possible.

So it's been fun. It's been a challenge learning how to pick that apart and be calm, patient, and have trust in each other and play the right kind of offense. So it's been fun.

Q. Coach, 31-3, regular season champions, conference champions, Player of the Year in the conference, Defensive Player in the conference, best three-point shooter in the country. Why are teams still not giving you respect when it comes to bracketology?

MARK CAMPBELL: That's a good question. I don't spend a lot of time on it. I don't know the inner workings. I try to pour my energy into winning and focusing on the next game and scouting, and that's all you can do.

As they figure out 1 seed, 2 seed, 3 seed, I do know we get to host, and I do know we are 31-3. And I think there are teams like Notre Dame and NC State that are ahead of us. I don't totally understand how that works. And we don't have a bad loss on our schedule after 34 games.

I know there is a committee that works hard to get it right, and they scrub those top-16 seeds. And at the end of the day, they have done the different reveals and there is transparency in the process, which I really like.

That's really the only thing I follow, is when the committee does the NCAA top-16 reveal throughout the year. And I kind of keep an eye on the NET overall.

I believe the committee will get it right. We've handled our business. There's not many teams that have won their league title and have won the conference tournament and don't have one bad loss on their resume.

Q. Coach, you mentioned that obviously we don't get

to see these players behind closed doors. What kind of impact have these veterans made on this team, especially Hailey and Sedona?

MARK CAMPBELL: All three of these guys, they can have an absolute blast and have fun, when it's time. Which you have to, because we've been doing this ten months now, I think.

But when it's time -- when it's "go time," one of their greatest gifts, all three of these kids, the switch flips. When they go on the court and step into the ring, they become different animals.

They're truly -- they're like pros that way. They've experienced so much in their college career. You know? And part of that -- I mean, Hailey has played in Final Four, Sedona has been part of a No. 1 team in the country, and Madison played in a National Championship game. So they understand the ebb and flow of a year and when to pull back and have fun and let loose and when to also crank it up.

Q. Second year the tournament has been hosted at T-Mobile Center, and I'm curious as to your thoughts of the venue and Kansas City as a whole.

MARK CAMPBELL: Conner, start us.

MADISON CONNER: We got drove around in a bus. I don't know too much about the city. But T-Mobile Center is a great venue, and I think we had good fan support here. It was awesome to play here.

HAILEY VAN LITH: We won here. So obviously we love it.

SEDONA PRINCE: It's good as well.

MARK CAMPBELL: The truth is, they don't leave the hotel unless there is a pregame meal. They have film session, ice baths. We have three games in three days. Last night after our game, we came back -- they did ice baths here. Once they did that, you have the media window you have to knock out. Then they had a postgame meal. Then they had massages that were a two-hour window for everybody to get their massage. We started film at 8:00 at night, finished at 9:00. And then the two kids, after the film session ended, they had two more massages, and they were in their rooms by 10:00.

So I know Kansas City is an awesome place. I think this venue is great, and I think it's beautiful. It's absolutely beautiful. I know it takes a village to put on an event like this. And there are so many moving parts. From our end,

there wasn't one hiccup that I noticed at all. So it was a first-class job by everyone here.

Q. Madison, you've been through a lot. You started at Arizona, you ended up here. What's it been like over the last two years getting to stand on the court and watch the confetti fall?

MADISON CONNER: Hailey touched on it, we've all been on different parts of our basketball career and been through things, and I think that's why we're having the success that we are now, because we've endured a lot of things over our years. And it's just awesome to see this program go from 1-17 to the work we have put in and the work the coaching staff has put in and all the players buying in. I think that's something that's really rare about our team. We all buy in. We all want to win. We're all here for the right reasons. And I think that's super hard to find nowadays.

Q. Sedona, you've talked about your experience at TCU and what the university means to you and this program. You had the broom out today, I think you bought into the rivalry with Baylor. What does it mean to have the opportunity to win a championship, a tournament championship over a rival and continue to make history with everything that you guys do?

SEDONA PRINCE: Yeah, I mean, all glory to God. You can feel it when you're in this program. I think everyone has. It's undeniable that God has been along with us from the start, on this journey.

It's amazing. It's a blessing to be a part of something, to be the first to do something. It's very rare in human history that you get to be the first at something. So it's a blessing. I'm so grateful. I just really can't believe it.

It's taken a lot to get here, a lot of patience and adversity and just kind of looking up and being like "Why? What is this for?" for so long. And to be in the moment that it kind of all makes sense and clicks is really special. Just trying to take it in and enjoy every moment. I know when the season is over, I'm going to miss it for the rest of my life. So being in it now and soaking it in every day.

Q. Madison, I think you brought it up, talking about buying in. Sometimes I think it takes a lot from teams to buy in totally. How long did it take for you guys to put your egos to the side and buy in as a unit?

MADISON CONNER: Honestly I think from the first day we started training camp in the summer, which is crazy to say you have a bunch of transfer kids and some kids that returned, but it was crazy. All of us clicked. There was no

drama off the rip. We all just knew we wanted to come here and win, and we wanted to be the best basketball player and best person, and I think we have done that from the jump. So we haven't had to deal with egos or selfishness or anything like that from the jump, which is really crazy. Since June we have kind of been a family, and I think that's why we are winning at such a high rate and that's why we are doing the things because we are a family and care about each other. There are no egos in this locker room.

SEDONA PRINCE: I think it's cool as well. Maddy -- we all three sat down in the conference room, when Hailey was on her visit, no coaches, just us. And to hear about Hailey Van Lith, she is a massive name, and you never know, but Hailey -- her spirit going into her room and talking to her, we were immediately like, we can do something special here, Hailey. And the way she spoke to us, she was like, I want to make history, I want to win, be part of a great team.

And that's when I knew this was going to be something really, really special. So that buy-in from her immediately, we're going to do something special, and something people talk about forever. That was the moment for me, I was like, this is it.

HAILEY VAN LITH: Yeah, I mean, obviously they're all correct in what they have said. To me a lot of people throw the word "selfish" around, and I think it can be misconstrued times because if a girl takes a tough shot, a lot of people are like that's a selfish shot. If that's what you do for the team, it's not a selfish shot. It's not like we're perfect all time. Sometimes I take bad shots, everybody takes bad shots, but the intention behind it is never to be selfish. It's because that's what we think we can do to help the team.

So I think that's why it's been so easy getting along, because I've never questioned the intention behind why they do things. I fully trust them. If they think that shot or that read was right they're doing it to help the team. I've never once questioned anybody's intentions on this team so it makes it really easy when you have that trust.

MARK CAMPBELL: I want to give a special shoutout to Chauncey Franks. He is the FCA director at TCU, and Chauncey has been amazing, part of my journey, but came up with an idea to start a leadership group, a set of captains. We handpicked five of 'em, and they've done eleven meetings, once a week. To just invest and pour into the leadership aspect. You know in college athletics these guys -- so much of the time and energy and resources is spent on, you know, the weight room, and nutrition, and the basketball piece, and oftentimes the

leadership piece for young people.

They don't get that element. So it takes a village, and there are so many -- I think our staff is incredible at pouring into the players.

Chauncey has done such a fantastic job of just meeting with them. But ultimately it all comes down to the players, these three, but there are 15 of them that ultimately have to decide if they're all in with two feet. You can't make someone do that.

You can encourage them. So I think that's what really is special about this group of 15 young women. They have been all in and they're each other's biggest fans, which is rare.

Q. Coach, you talked about leadership, you also said you were at your lowest point mentally. I know we ask players this all the time, but as a coach how did you overcome it mentally?

MARK CAMPBELL: Obviously my faith is bigger than the basketball piece. A year ago I was really struggling. My wife had a message put on her heart that she kept telling me and she's here, but her theme last year was the Lord is setting the stage. That was the exact phrase that I heard all the time as I couldn't sleep and was questioning stuff and trying to figure out, you know, how to dig this program out of the hole.

And my wife kept telling me "the Lord is setting the stage." She was right, and I didn't know it was at this level. Like Hailey said, women are usually right. My wife was spot on. All of us, you have to go through adversity sometimes. Sometimes you need the rain to get a rainbow. That saying sounds simple but it's pretty accurate. So my family -- you know and -- this group -- last year even though it was hard, the underdogs is what we coined ourselves.

That group was so resilient, and it was so fun battling with that group. But it laid the foundation of hard work and no excuses and not folding and rolling up your sleeves. That foundation that was laid carried over to this -- now you have a league talent, but the foundation is still built right. And that's why we're champs, and we're 31-3.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations. Thank you.

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