

2026 Phillips 66 Big 12 Women's Basketball Tournament

Wednesday, March 4, 2026

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

T-Mobile Center

Arizona State Sun Devils

Coach Molly Miller

Marley Washenitz

Heloisa Carrera

Postgame Press Conference



obviously there's the in-state rivalry. That's an underlying story every time you play. They have some good guards. They're scrappy. They mixed up defenses. They play hard and we play hard.

So this game is a rock fight. It's not always going to be pretty with these two teams. But we battled, found a way, cleaned up a bloody nose or two, and got after it.

Q. The Big 12 is unveiling this new court. What did you think of it? I saw, Marley, you took a hard fall on the nose. Did it feel different than hardwood, and if so, how?

MARLEY WASHENITZ: We kind of talked about this obviously when we first got here. It was just different. Super cool to kind of be the first year of that and being a little trademark for that.

But I think when we were dribbling we were talking about it, it was little different. It took a little getting used to, like with some of the lines, stuff like that. But overall, I thought it was a really cool experience.

When you are playing, I don't think you really pay attention to it as much as most people would think. I think probably for my knees, personally, it felt a little bit better, as opposed to the hardwood, but when it comes to falling, usually I don't even feel half of what happens.

HELOISA CARRERA: I think it felt great. Playing with my team, I honestly don't care where we play. I just care about playing with them and winning with them.

Q. Another difference, I noticed you're guys are playing Wilson Evos instead of the normal adidas or Nike balls. Did that feel any different? You know, there were a couple ball security stuff during the game. Did the different basketball contribute to that?

MARLEY WASHENITZ: Not really, I think what Hel said, just being able to be on the court with my team and playing. And our staff does a good job kind of recognizing

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THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Arizona State head coach Molly Miller and student-athlete Marley Washenitz, and we are waiting on Heloisa Carrera. Coach, we'll have you start with a couple of comments on the game.

MOLLY MILLER: Well, here's March. We've been prepared for this moment. We've been prepared for this moment in the non-conference when we had some tough road games. We've been prepared for this moment playing a team for the third time. We've been prepared for this moment in March. That's why I'm excited for this team and the momentum that they're getting at the end of the year. I think we can hang with anyone.

You look at those teams with the double bye, we beat one of them and we were single-digit losses to West Virginia, Texas Tech and Baylor.

It's been fun to see what we're potentially capable of. And now we've had to have different people step up in different moments. That's been fun to see this late in the year. And we're just grinding through. But we'll take this one. So 1-0 after our 0-0 clean slate.

Q. This is your third time playing Arizona. Your first time you played them you beat them by eight. Second time you beat them on the road, came back in overtime. Tonight you beat them by three points. What is it about Arizona that brings the best out of you all?

MOLLY MILLER: Yeah, they're a tough team, and

that stuff, even when we play on the road and we're playing a Nike school they usually kind of start implementing those balls into practice a couple of days prior to.

And so we played with probably every different kind of ball you could imagine at this point in the season. And so I don't think that's an excuse for us in this game. I think ball security and stuff like that, we knew they were a tough team, and we knew that they're scrappy. So like we have to be tougher with the ball.

So I think just overall we've kind of been in this position before, and not really a big focus for us.

Q. You all jumped -- you were down 10-2 early in the first quarter. What adjustments did you all make going forward to end up taking the lead by half?

MOLLY MILLER: We didn't really need to make adjustments. We just needed to settle in. I could feel that. You can get a feel and vibe for your team. We were a little tight. We needed to get stops. We talked about three stops in a row, energy being our edge on defense, getting it started on that end will help our offense.

Marley saw the ball go through the basket, which was helpful. Then we got some deep touches with Hel. That opens up -- when Hel and our perimeter can score, it opens up one or the other.

So it was a slow start, it was a sluggish start. But I'm glad that we could kind of rally together after that first media and come out with some more defensive energy to help us.

Q. Molly, in a one-possession game late, what gave you the confidence that your group would close it out?

MOLLY MILLER: We have before. We've been there before. I think the biggest thing with this group is we know what this position feels like. We've had road games where we've had to close it out. We've managed time and score and practice. We've done end-of-game situations. A lot of that is being strong with the ball, making it a sure thing.

We said no live-ball turnovers either. And when there's a physical game like this, you want to attack the rim. That's what we started to do, attack the rim. We wanted to get it inside to Hel, because she's the hot hand and she was being really physical down there.

When we step back and look at this game as coaches, we're probably going to be, like, there's a lot of mistakes made on both sides. But if you can just kind of grit your teeth and pound your hand in your fist and finish it, then that's what we did towards the end of the game. And they

were strong with the ball. And I was proud of their effort and their toughness.

Q. For the athletes, in the final timeout towards the end of the game, this game was super close, what did the energy look like for you, the message that Molly had for you? What did you and the team talk about? What really pushed you to get this win?

MARLEY WASHENITZ: Yeah, I mean, we knew they were going to come in fighting. We knew this game meant more on both ends -- we're not only playing for the name on the back of the jersey but the name on the front and the communities and the support.

And we knew it was going to be scrappy. Just coming in trusting our coaching staff. They've been in this position. We've been in this position. They knew what they're doing. And so we just trusted them.

And down the stretch we knew we had to get stops. I mean, at one point we were just, like, trading baskets. And that's when we kind of said in a timeout was, like, we need to get stops. And that's kind of been our identity since the jump. So to get back onto track with that.

And then at the end of the game we had a great defensive effort by everybody. I mean it was such a team effort on Sugapong at the end because, like the staff told us, we knew where it was going and it went there, and we were able to get a stop. It was a team effort, for sure.

Q. Hel, you guys end up doubling them up in the paint for points, 36-18. What was working down there for you and McKinna? And do you like being in the position of having the ball on those last couple of plays?

HELOISA CARRERA: I do. And I love that my coach trusts me and my teammates trust me, to me to have the ball and score for them. So being in that position, it is a lot of pressure, but I love the pressure.

Q. Despite this game, this tournament being in Kansas City, Missouri, I feel Arizona State had a really good turnout for fans. How did that make you guys feel?

HELOISA CARRERA: Like home. When I saw, like, the band and the fans and they were playing music and they were going at each other, the two bands, it really made me feel like home. And it was great.

MARLEY WASHENITZ: Definitely, just to see the support we had, being in Missouri, just means a lot. I mean, to see the growth we've had just for our women's program in

general this year has been amazing.

So super grateful to all the fans, the cheerleaders, the band, like she said, they were like going back and forth. And it was so funny because we were talking about it. But, yeah, no, just super grateful and blessed to have the community we have here at ASU.

Q. So you get .2 seconds to enjoy this win. What does the next 12 hours look like in preparation for Iowa State?

MOLLY MILLER: You know, it's not a hard prep. It's an obvious prep of what you have to stop. We played them recently, and we can make some adjustments. But, really, we're going to have to defend and we're going to have to score -- as easy as that sounds.

We didn't put the ball in the basket at their place. We got into early foul trouble. We have to be aware of that when we're guarding a player like Audi. You can't just play her one way. When we look at prep, we're going to have to see what worked, what didn't work, and we're going to have to be sure that we're on the same page and game plan.

But we're excited for the opportunity. You know, this is a team that has won 23 games now. We've had 10 conference opponents wins. And we're ready for this moment. We're ready for March. We're primed. And they'll be focused. And we will hit the books and the film and come out and give it our best.

Q. It's almost like you knew my next question. There's been carnage in other conferences. I know you're not following that right now, but I certainly am. Talking about, not just the bubble, but can you expand a little bit on the strength of the Big 12 and some of the disrespect that this league gets?

MOLLY MILLER: Yeah, it's not a bad thing when you have teams beating up on each other. It's actually a really good thing. That means it's extremely competitive. Every night it's going to be a fight. These players are battling. No game on the schedule is a given. And you're seeing that and you're seeing the parity.

And when you have these teams that go into a place and have upsets, the amount of upsets we did, when you have these bubble teams that are going on the road and winning, the Big 12 is strong. And if you're .500 in the Big 12 that's tournament-worthy in my mind.

You can see the road games that we've played, the in-conference games, the good wins we've had. I think the

tough thing for our schedule that just happened to line up, we played all the top teams on the road, and we had some good battles on the road where we were winning, or we were close to winning or a possession-away from those ranked teams.

That's why I believe here we are, we could have been from the seventh seed to the 10th seed or 11th seed, and here's where I believe that, you know, we could have easily been the last game of the year we could have easily been the seventh seed just by jockeying, that's how much the last game of the year meant to all these teams.

So to me that's a pretty competitive conference that deserves a lot of teams in the tournament. There's a lot of teams that should be in the tournament. And the teams that will be in the tournament will have a really good showing.

Q. In tomorrow's game, kind of like what's the locker room mindset going to be for you, for all the players, and the main message going into tomorrow?

MOLLY MILLER: You don't get another chance. We've talked about you're done, one-and-done in this tournament. So your chance to prove yourself, to bolster your resumé, to get a signature win is tomorrow.

And we'll prep. We'll be ready. I'm excited. I asked some of the kids that were in foul trouble if that was their idea of getting some rest so they're fresh tomorrow. But we should have some fresh legs with hanging out on the bench with foul trouble today. So that's a good positive.

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