

2026 Phillips 66 Big 12 Women's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 5, 2026

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

T-Mobile Center

Arizona State Sun Devils

Coach Molly Miller

McKinna Brackens

Gabby Elliott

Postgame Press Conference



we're going to be in the game every single day.

So I mean, my staff's incredible. They sacrificed. This is a sacrifice, especially in March. We're burning the midnight oil, but we wouldn't want it any other way because they motivate us to do that.

Q. Gabby, that was, in my opinion, a very super human effort that I saw out of you tonight. How are you feeling, and where was your head out there for 40 minutes?

GABBY ELLIOTT: I'm feeling great. Me and McKinna just talked about it, like, we were out there running on vibes. Like the energy we were feeding off from each other was so high that I was in the moment for sure. I wasn't thinking about being tired or the refs' calls or anything like that. I was really enjoying the moment with my teammates, and it showed, for sure.

Q. This seemed like a totally different game than the last time you guys played Iowa State. What changed this time around?

MOLLY MILLER: Don't give away too many secrets, you might see them in the Big Dance.

GABBY ELLIOTT: Just really preparation. I feel we were in tempo, especially with the quick turnaround. We had to make sure we were prepared. Like Coach said, it started last night, making sure we were in bed as a team and making sure we were up and ready for the scout this morning, along with shoot-around. And that was the biggest difference, for sure.

Q. Molly, talk about the game plan. Your help-side, your triple teaming Audi. I know she's a force down there. Talk about, I would say, they wasn't able to hit from the outside. How much of that helped your game plan as far as the triple team?

MOLLY MILLER: Yeah, it was. We wanted to dictate where the ball went. So if you're big showing from the

Arizona State - 77, Iowa State - 68

MOLLY MILLER: I'm just so proud of this team. They locked in. I asked them, when did we win this game, and the answer was, the first five minutes. I said, no, sooner. The second answer was, shoot-around. And I said, no, sooner.

Last night, we got in. They had a look in their eye, like they're going to get hydrated, fed, go to bed. This morning, we did film, and every single person was so locked in, and I told the staff, we're going to win this game.

And it's a testament to them in how much they want it. They're not just going through the motions. They do things with intent, they do things with purpose. And this was the result today because of that.

Q. Can you just talk, Molly, about your preparation, not just as the head coach, but also your staff. You have a really, in my opinion, a really elite staff in the way they prepare. You talked about the team, but what's it about your staff that gets the team ready to go?

MOLLY MILLER: I have an incredible staff. This was definitely a team effort. Daniel Barber headed it. We had not quite a sleep over, but it could have been close in the junior suite last night. And we were all in.

The amount of experience that I have on this staff and the ideas that they bring to the table, and the collaboration, with every single scout, makes me believe that I'm going to be in the game, that they're going to be in the game, that

weak side towards Audi, we know the next step in the offensive mind is to make that skip.

We want to be a play ahead. So we wanted to do both well. We wanted to show on the interior, but we wanted to get out to shooters and rush their shots. And they missed a few. But I think that's because of their sense of urgency to get out on shooters.

So it's a tough scout. But I mean props to them. They implemented everything that we went over. We did a lot of mental scout these back-to-back days. We did a lot of film. It was probably about 45 minutes, which is double or usual film. But they were locked in the whole time.

Q. Just could you talk about the ability to be able to hit the free throws down the stretch.

MOLLY MILLER: That's huge. We do pressure free throws at the end of practice often for these moments. And they stepped up and hit them when they counted.

Q. Gabby, tonight you had 22 points on the court. Just describe what was the mindset going into the game today.

GABBY ELLIOTT: Really just making sure that I can do whatever it is my team needed. Tonight it was scoring. Next day it might be rebounding or anything like that. My job is to make sure that I'm the best version of myself so that my teammates can rely on me in any aspect, and I did that tonight, for sure.

Q. Yesterday and today, you guys have forced a non-3-point scoring threat to take the final shot. What goes into those last, end-of-game scenarios on defense?

MOLLY MILLER: We talk about if we switch, how we're going to switch, when we're going to switch. But it's all them because they have to communicate that on the court. We can have a game plan in the huddle, but once you break and go out it's up to them to communicate. And I thought they did a really good job of talking.

Q. Gabby and McKinna, what was the communication on that last shot for Iowa State?

MCKINNA BRACKENS: We say SO -- oh, sorry. I wasn't supposed to say that. That's my bad. We knew we needed to switch. We didn't want them to get a 3 off. We did not know that that was --

(Audio difficulties)

Q. Molly, whether it was the intensity and aggression or the fact that the environment was full of Iowa State fans, what did you like about the team keeping its composure?

MOLLY MILLER: We've been in these environments before. So when you have past experiences, I think we get dialed in and locked in. We have a saying, "Just us." And today it was just us in that huddle.

And you know however many Arizona State fans, we were loud and mighty. But we've gotta lock in on what we're doing. We can't let any outside factors -- whether it's a crowd, whether it's runs, officiating -- we can't let anything from the outside affect us. And I thought they did a good job of keeping the main thing the main thing, which was getting stops and scores.

Q. Speaking of keeping composure, you've had two big wins in two days. What does prep look like for tomorrow?

MOLLY MILLER: Run it back. They'll be ready. We're a dangerous team right now. Especially when they're focused like they are, when they prep like they have been, we'll be good. I know these leaders will get them in line.

Q. Last few losses you guys have been right there at halftime, or even leading at halftime. The third quarter has really gotten away from you guys. What was the message at halftime to make sure that wasn't a repeat thing?

MOLLY MILLER: They're probably better to answer that one, third quarter, because we've had some droughts.

GABBY ELLIOTT: The biggest thing -- of course, you always want to be third quarter intentional, but today she really got down to our eye level and we really felt what she was talking about and it showed. We came out and I feel like this is one of the best third quarters we had coming out. We were intentional. They hit some shots but so did we. And it showed.

Q. There's always a debate no matter what sport it is with, come playoff time, where you're playing everything in a row, is it an advantage or disadvantage if you're playing before. What do you guys think as players, you don't get as much rest, but maybe a little momentum heading into the next day?

MCKINNA BRACKENS: I think I like playing every day especially with that court. It's new. And you get to feel it out. You get to feel your shots, you know how the rims are.

And then just coming in the first time you don't know how you're going to miss, but we got to feel all that yesterday. And so I feel like coming in here we hit a lot more shots today as well.

Q. Molly, your Missouri roots run so deep. Your first Big 12 Tournament, your first year at Arizona State, just what was it like preparing for coming here? And just were you -- I mean, what were the expectations for the Kansas City vibes?

MOLLY MILLER: It's been awesome having my family here. My college head coach was here yesterday. I was talking to Graham, our AD, and he's always said it's the people who you take on the journey. And I've been very fortunate to have an amazing village every step of the way.

So to be here in the home state and see all those supporters that, when they took a chance on me as a D-II head coach and were in my corner, and now they're supporting me with what we're doing, it's an amazing feeling.

Q. Molly, three games today. All three lower seeds ended up winning. Can you just talk about Big 12, the parity in the league, the level of competition in the league?

MOLLY MILLER: That's why I want to focus on the Big 12 as a whole and getting these tournament nods because back in the day, you had to be .500 at least to get a tournament nod.

That's hard in the Big 12. And we've got teams that are right there. As you look into deeper and deeper the schedule, and even you don't just look at wins and losses, you look at how close the games have been. And I think that's a huge upside for this league is it's not only competitive, but you're looking at really fun basketball towards the end.

And I think that's a strength of ours, it's fun to watch, because any game's going to be competitive. It's fun to watch because it's back-and-forth, one-possession games.

And it's been fun to see these bottom seeds -- I wouldn't even call them bottom seeds. This is an upset conference to me. Because any given night.

Q. You really emphasized your last timeout versus Iowa State that you guys needed to slow down Audi Crooks. You guys did that tonight really effectively, what. Do you think the key was to just slowing down a force such as dominant as Audi?

MOLLY MILLER: Team defense. We can't just rely on our 5-player to guard Audi. We had to -- she had to field bodies, but then, like I said, we had to have a sense of urgency to get out on shooters. Just their ability to help on the interior but close out on the perimeter was something we did over and over and over again in our small shoot-around. We didn't go over many of their sets, to be honest with you. We went over concepts, and conceptually they did a good job on the game plan.

Q. Coach, would you consider this a signature win for the season?

MOLLY MILLER: Absolutely. Absolutely. They are a really good basketball team, (inaudible) their players in the country in my opinion. I really have a lot of respect for Jada and Audi. So we got our signature win today.

Q. What is your message to the NCAA Tournament committee after today?

MOLLY MILLER: I mean, look at what we just did. We played really good basketball. This is our 11th win against conference opponents. This is our -- is it 24? 24th win. I mean, that's an NCAA Tournament team. And we're playing, you can see, really good basketball, good team basketball. We're fun to watch, and this Big 12 has not been easy to come through. And we're doing it at the right time.

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