

NCAA 2023 Women's Basketball Championship

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Caitlin Clark

Teri Moren

AP Women's College Basketball Player and Coach of the Year Press Conference



BARRY BEDLAN: Welcome, everyone. RP thank you for joining us. I'm Barry Bedlan, sports product director for the Associated Press. I'm based here in Dallas. Welcome to Dallas, everyone.

It's my pleasure today to present the AP Women's College Basketball Player and Coach of the Year awards.

We will start with the Player of the Year Award first, and then allow Caitlin to make some comments and then turn to Coach and allow her to make comments. At the end, we will take some questions from the audience. We may allow questions from teammates.

The rule is the first few questions will go to Caitlin because the team has to scoot out. Then we'll wrap up with questions for Coach.

Since 1995, the recipient of the AP National Player of the Year Award has been selected by the same panel of journalists that decides the AP top 25. Voting for the award is conducted at the end of the season before the NCAA Tournament. Past recipients include Rebecca Lobo, Sue Bird, Candace Parker, Brittney Griner, and 19 others.

This year's winner is only the second to receive the award from the University of Iowa, as well as only the second to represent the Big Ten Conference with this award. The other being Megan Gustafson in 2019.

This year's recipient put together one of the greatest individual seasons in NCAA history. This Iowa native became the first player in Division I women's basketball history to record more than 900 points and 300 assists in the same season. She averaged more than 27 points, 8 assists, and 7 rebounds per game. She recorded five triple-doubles and 12 double-doubles.

Most recently, she had the first ever 40-point triple-double in NCAA Tournament history to get her Hawkeyes to the Final Four for the first time in 30 years.

After leading the nation in scoring the two seasons prior, her father's response upon learning that she would receive this award was, quote, It's about time. This year's AP Women's College Basketball Player of the Year is Iowa's Caitlin Clark.

CAITLIN CLARK: Thank you to the AP and everyone who voted. This is a very, very prestigious award, if not the most prestigious in all of college basketball. I'm very grateful and thankful.

Congratulations to Coach Moren. Tremendous season by you guys. We had some great battles. I think it speaks to the Big Ten and what the Big Ten was this year, absolutely incredible. I think that's prepared us for this moment, so I'm really happy for you guys and the season that you had.

To my teammates, I'm so glad that you guys are here celebrating this moment with me. It makes it a hundred times more special, and I love you guys to death. I know I had to drag you here super sweaty, so I'm sorry about that. No, I seriously love you.

To our coaches, you've believed in me since the day I stepped on campus and probably since I was in seventh grade you saw potential in me and wanted to help get this team and this program to this point, and we did it. But I feel like we can win two more games while we're here, and that's our goal.

I'm lucky enough to have my parents here today. My two brothers are on their way, but they couldn't be here. I'd be nothing if it wasn't for you two. You've made a lot of sacrifices to help get me to this point.

And obviously Dickson Jensen, all Iowa Tech repping here today. A lot of my teammates played for the same AAU program. I think what's most important to me is you care about us as people, more than a basketball player. That's what I admire about you so much, and you love us to death. I wouldn't be the player I am if it wasn't for you.



Just very grateful and thankful for this award, and I'm lucky I get to share it with all of you today. So thank you.

BARRY BEDLAN: Next up is AP's Women's College Basketball Coach of the Year. Again, an award we've given out every season since 1995. Past recipients include Geno Auriemma, Muffet McGraw, Kim Mulkey and Dawn Staley.

This year's recipient is the first from the University of Indiana, where she led her team to the first Big Ten regular season title in 40 years. The team also earned the school's first No. 1 seed in the NCAA Tournament and rose as high as No. 2 in the AP top 25. Under her leadership, the Hoosiers have established a winning tradition, appearing in the AP poll for 75 consecutive weeks, starting with the 2019-2020 preseason poll. That is the fourth-longest active streak in the country.

Before that, Indiana had been ranked only six times since the poll started in 1976. She is the first coach in Indiana program's 51-year history to lead a team to more than 21 wins per season. In fact, her teams have won at least 21 wins every year other than her first season nine years ago.

This season the Hoosiers won a record 28. This season she became the winningest coach in Indiana history. This season she earned her 200th win. Despite her team's early exit from the NCAA Tournament, it is hard not to see why Indiana's Teri Moren is this year's AP Coach of the Year.

TERI MOREN: Thank you, voters from the AP, Associated Press. Just really humbled by this award, prestigious award. I want to start by, again, congratulating Caitlin and her teammates for representing not just Iowa, but also the Big Ten.

Caitlin said it best, we've had some great battles, and I do believe that the battles that we've faced in the Big Ten have prepared you guys for this moment. So on behalf of Indiana, we wish you guys nothing but the very best.

So our -- I have some staff members here. I have people that have continued to support women's basketball in Indiana. Thank you. It's not done. It doesn't fall short on me that this award is not an individual award. It never is. It's all about the people that you have inside of your program and the ones on the outside that support you.

So from our friends and our family, Hoosier nation that show up every day, and Iowa has enjoyed it, we have enjoyed it. The fans of women's basketball that show up every day and support what we're doing has been

tremendous. So I would be remiss if I didn't thank all of our fans for this award as well. They've created an atmosphere where, one, it's hard to play in in Simon Skjodt Assembly Hall.

But it's such a great thing for our game. I know Caitlin as well I sit up, we just want to grow this great game. She is obviously a superstar and has a tremendous future ahead of her. First things first, though. You just go out and win.

But just thank you. I'm grateful for this award, and I appreciate all the people that are here today, once again, supporting women's basketball. This is what it should look like. Attendances are up across the country. That's what we've dreamt about, and that's what women's basketball should look like as we move forward.

So once again, thank you. I'm grateful for this, and thank you to Indiana for allowing me to coach this great sport but also to represent them and our program and our players. I wouldn't be sitting up here without those tremendous players that I get to coach every day. So very, very grateful. So thank you.

BARRY BEDLAN: As I said at the beginning, we'll open it up first for questions for Caitlin, out of respect to her team and her own time here since they have some other things going on. Any questions?

Q. Caitlin, you said to me how tough you are to surprise, and you like to know everything ahead of time and such. Most people have already seen the video, but just what did it mean for them to surprise you at the Children's Hospital, which obviously has a huge meaning to you and to all of Iowa athletics and all of Iowa, for that to come together for you to find out you won?

CAITLIN CLARK: I think my teammates would be the first to say, if you ever have a question, go to Caitlin because she knows everything that's going to happen.

I went over there because I was visiting a kid, and I didn't really think anything of it, even having a photographer or videographer with us, I just thought, it was probably something for the hospital, because we go over there quite a bit. Then they asked if I wanted to see where we did the wave up on the top floor, because I've never been up there just due to COVID things. I was like absolutely. I've never seen it.

So we go up there, and we started talking. Two nurses who I'm very familiar with, who do a lot of things at the hospital with younger kids who are battling illness and things like that, started talking. And Coach J pulls out her

phone and shows me a video. The first person on the video is Harper Stribe, someone our team has adopted, and that's when I started to get pretty emotional because you don't realize there are so many more things that are way more important than basketball, and it just takes you back for a second. Those people are fighting for their lives, and we're lucky enough to get to go and compete with your best friends every single day.

So, yeah, it was definitely a very, very special moment. To be able to share with my parents after that was definitely emotional. More than anything, I'm just really grateful that I have the opportunity to inspire young people and change their lives because that's way more important than any award or any basketball game or even playing at the Final Four. It's just the joy that this team can bring everybody.

Yeah, it was a very special moment.

Q. Caitlin, how are you going between getting ready for South Carolina and pausing to accept individual national honors like this?

CAITLIN CLARK: When I was doing this last year, a lot of this stuff, I said, I told Coach J when we were traveling around for some of those things, which I didn't win, and I said, I just want my team to be with me next year. Whether I won or not, it means we're at the Final Four competing.

It makes all of this stuff all the more special. When it comes to game time tomorrow, I'm going to be completely locked in, 100 percent locked in. We've had plenty of time to scout, watch film, and practice, and do all this other stuff as well.

So I'm just trying to enjoy every single second. It's so hard to get to this point. It's hard to make the Sweet 16, let alone the Elite Eight, let alone the Final Four. So I'm just trying to enjoy every single second and take it for what it is and not worry too much about every single thing that's ahead of me. Just enjoy the moment.

Q. Caitlin, your mom immediately broke down in the video, and your dad, I think, just straight faced said, "It's about time." Did either reaction surprise you, or does that just sort of embody just the kind of support that they give you?

CAITLIN CLARK: I think, yeah, it embodies who they are perfectly. My dad was my first ever basketball coach and probably has believed in me and had more confidence in me than I probably ever had in myself. My mom is probably the more emotional one of the two. She probably doesn't know basketball as well as my dad, but kind of just my rock, my person I talk to every single day.

You probably saw my little brother in the video making fun of my mom for crying. No, they're awesome. I think that just explains the two of them really well. They balance me out really well. It's the reason I came to Iowa is to have them around all the time and have them travel to my games and be there and be able to support me.

It's really special, and I'm glad I can share this with them and my two brothers, who probably -- they're my best friends. I talk to them every single day. They'll be here tomorrow. I'm just lucky to have a family as supportive as them.

BARRY BEDLAN: No questions from your teammates. I'm shocked. I thought you'd have at least one.

CAITLIN CLARK: No comment. Next question. I love you all equally.

BARRY BEDLAN: We'll let Caitlin roll out. Congratulations, Caitlin.

CAITLIN CLARK: Congratulations, Coach Moren. Thank you to the AP.

BARRY BEDLAN: So no questions from the Iowa team for you apparently.

Now we'll turn to Coach. Any questions anyone in the audience has for Coach Moren?

Q. We talked about it, but just as Barry was mentioning, the success you guys have had this year and the last few years, how big is that for an Indiana girl, to what you've seen in the past from this program, to be able to win?

TERI MOREN: Being from southern Indiana and being able to come over to Bloomington and do what we've been able to do. Again, I have two of my staff members, Coach Box and Coach Say, and my graduate assistants are here as well. It takes so many hands. It takes a village to do what we've been able to do.

We've always just worked under this idea that we're always going to try to do more than what's required. Our mantra has always been do the work. It's been something that it's become a lifestyle for us around Simon Skjodt Assembly Hall. It's not a word that we use for a hashtag, for social media. That's how we've built it. It's really been one brick at a time.

Really it just falls back to the types of players and staff and people that we have in our program that have just come

together and just try to get better, a little bit better every day. That recipe has worked for us.

So I'm glad that I can represent, not just Indiana, but southern Indiana as well, the state of Indiana, in receiving this award.

Q. (No microphone).

TERI MOREN: Doug and I have talked about this. There's nothing better than being able to share an award like that. Again, it was a great surprise. The fact that they pulled it off, kind of like Caitlin, there's not a lot that gets past Coach Moren.

For them to be able to pull that off was a miracle in itself. But to be able to get that award and presentation from Mackenzie Holmes and Grace Berger, two of the all-time best in Indiana women's basketball history, was certainly special to have our team there, our staff there, my father and my sister were also included in that.

So really, really cool moment for me. As I get older, all those moments are becoming more precious to me. And we as coaches are always thinking about what's next, what's next, what's next. So it will be one of those memories for me that I will always cherish and certainly remember for a long time.

BARRY BEDLAN: I'll ask one: I understand you're a big fan of John Mellencamp. Caitlin was asked who her favorite teammate was. I'll have to ask what's your favorite Mellencamp song?

TERI MOREN: That's hard because every Hoosier Hysteria, I walk out to a different Mellencamp song. I will say obviously "Small Town," you would think it would be my favorite, but it's not. "Check It Out" and probably "Paper in Fire" are two of my favorites. I'm still trying to get John to show up in Bloomington as I come out. I really want him to be out there singing and not just have to come out to his -- whatever that is, the aux.

I'd much rather he serenade me as I walk out. Maybe we can make that happen.

BARRY BEDLAN: Maybe you could show him this.

TERI MOREN: Maybe. We're still working on that.

Thank you guys. I appreciate it.

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