

# NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - Liberty vs Kentucky

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Memorial Coliseum

**Liberty Flames**

**Coach Carey Green**

Media Conference



high. I know some great junior high, high school coaches. And Kenny has progressed in this process. He's, what I would consider, reached a pinnacle in one of the best programs in the country, and he's already, already, got that team there.

So I think that indicates his skill set as a coach, his ability to be relational, not only with his players, but with the media and the community. And I just admire him, and I know he's doing a great job. And we've known each other quite some time. And I've seen it, and I certainly respect what he's doing.

**Q. It's been seven years since you've been back to the NCAA Tournament, a pandemic in between. What's changed for you, the team, the NCAA Tournament that you've seen in your day or so since being here?**

CAREY GREEN: Good question. What has changed, I've had to go deep in the back of the closet to find my dancing shoes, and they're a little dusty.

The game has continued to progress to a point to where, you know, it's becoming an outside game. And if you have an inside scorer, that's a little unusual. The game has become more, I think, progressive in a guard play. So it's a little bit quicker.

I guess they thought moving the three-point line back would probably reduce the scoring. Scoring has gone up. And I think behind that, too, was to open it up for the post players. And I'm not sure it's really done that because now the post players are moving out. And I think every one of the post players think they can shoot a three.

I was in here earlier, and I think you asked a question about parity, and I think it's probably there. And it's happening all around on the men's side as well. And if you look at the history, you still have these upsets. And I think it's with the format of women's basketball, there's more and more neutral courts, obviously, we're not the only one, okay, and that makes it even tougher.

But 20 years ago when we went to the Sweet 16, we were on a neutral court. And that's where I think there's a little

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for joining us for this press conference with Liberty women's basketball head coach Carey Green. I will open it up for questions.

**Q. I'm interested in your thoughts on this front court matchup between these two teams. Obviously you have a really experienced, talented center leading the way for you guys. Her matching up with Clara Strack, what are your thoughts on this?**

CAREY GREEN: I think it will be a good matchup. Bella being a little older, I hope that that will translate into some maturity and some wise play. She's certainly hungry and excited about this opportunity.

And Clara is a very good ball player. We certainly respect her. They're a little different type of players. But they'll get the matchup, and I think it will be exciting.

**Q. I would love to hear your perspective about going up against Coach Brooks so many times, and now he's come to a different school, you're at Liberty, and you're facing up against him and his team here at Kentucky?**

CAREY GREEN: Yeah, I've known Kenny for quite some time, at JMU and also at Virginia Tech. He does an excellent job. He's very competitive. His strategies are excellent. We certainly respect what he does. And coming to Kentucky, I think that's sort of a dream job. You have the resources to compete.

And sometimes these successes we have as coaches is really not so much what we bring, we can be an excellent teacher, and if you just don't have the players available because of injuries or recruiting, you're only limited.

Some of the greatest coaches are probably in the junior



difference -- no, there is difference in the women's basketball tournament play than men. I think there's more upsets on the men's side.

Coaching is still relational. And I feel very fortunate to be in this situation. And it's not about me because I've been here a few times, okay, it's about those girls. And that's exciting, and they're going to remember that.

They're already -- you know how they are in the locker room and things like that, they're taking all the pictures and just how culture has changed, society has changed. Everybody is selfie this and selfie that. And that's different in coaching.

And it can be discouraging from a coach that's been around, but if you've been around and you believe in what we believe in, that progress is impossible without change, and it begins with changing your mind. If you can't change your mind, you can't change anything.

So I'm sort of wrapped up and tied into that. And if we want to bring some biblical principles and truths, that's Romans 12:2. It says don't conform to the world but renew your mind. That means think different. Think different.

But there's still some solid, core, core truths that are out there. You're going to win a hundred percent of your games if you outscore your opponent. Okay? But there is other things. How good is your defense, how good is your free-throw shooting. Things that we can as a coach or a teacher, we'll work on them and try to keep them in a priority list and just spend our time right there and see what happens.

I don't know if I've answered your question. I went from A to Z on that one.

**Q. I was going to ask you a similar question that I asked the girls about parity, but you answered that a little. But how excited are you for them that this is a year where so many people are predicting more upsets than ever? It feels like this is the year where things have really went up a level in terms of how open it all is. How exciting is it to be here and this year in particular?**

CAREY GREEN: It's exciting. I appreciate it more after being out for a while. When I say out for a while, just not being in the big dance. We've been very fortunate, I think, you count the years, seven or eight years, we're probably in a championship five or four out of those eight years. So all we had to do was win one more game and we're here. But that makes me really want to step back, appreciate it a little bit more personally.

Real excited for the girls because women's basketball, like men's basketball, the NIL and everything is going to change everything. And then I would like to just zoom forward ten years when the money is gone, when it's all spent. I'd hate to be a freshman or a junior and I've had a little money put in my pocket, and then it's just gone. So it's going interesting how the things are going to happen and change. So we're in a different era where you can have a sorry team and go out and change it just in one year.

I've been fortunate that my opportunities personally was as a junior college player. So I've had that experience as a player and going on and getting a degree, really, from Coastal Carolina -- give them a shout-out -- in marine biology, and here I am. I've never -- I haven't done one bit of work in that area.

I've learned to learn and continue to move on, is that just seeing how this thing is going to change, and I really count it as a blessing. But I'd really love to see those girls have those experiences. Those are lifetime experiences they're having right now. So I'm excited for them.

**Q. We heard Emma say the team that lost back in November to Duke, you don't want to see what this team will look like in March. Can you speak to the development that you've seen in your roster this season and the idea of learn to learn?**

CAREY GREEN: She came across pretty bold and confident. I like that. You got to back it up. And I'm glad that she feels that way. I'm sort of a level. And she's fired up and ready. Emma Red, that's what we call her. She's excited to be here. She hasn't been here in the big dance. How do you really know how to act, okay? And for her, just stay -- be a basketball player and just play.

We tackled some people early and had some good games, had some bad games, competed. But just wasn't who we were -- we'd be. And we've stayed in the process. And Duke beat us by 16, and they're in the NCAA as a 2 seed, if I'm not mistaken. Very respectful team.

Tennessee was a crazy game. I know Kentucky did -- I thought they destroyed Tennessee, in my opinion. I watched that game. Tennessee was undefeated at that time. And if you'd asked me, Coach, they're going to score 93 points on Tennessee, and you're going to lose by like 18 or 16, I'd go, No, that ain't gonna happen. It happened. And they got a unique style too, so scoring points. That's all they sort of wanted to do, being a shootout.

And then losing only about two weeks ago, three weeks



ago to Louisiana Tech, historic national champion, great tradition, losing there by one point was sort of a wake-up call. And then making a last-second two-point basket to win.

So we've been winning by the skin of our teeth, but each time we're losing, each time just reality. This is what -- you can be disappointed really quick. So don't think you're there yet.

And that's just where we're at now. I think Emma is absolutely right. We're playing some of our best ball right now, and confident. And I think that's one of the first steps. You've got to believe in yourself.

And sometimes I don't even like myself as a coach. So I can imagine how they feel about me. And so I am the critical coach that, You're 9-10 from the foul line. Why did you miss that one, you know?

But I got to keep things in perspective. I think the girls do probably better than I do. So I'm just so excited for them to be here, and it's going to be a great experience and opportunity for them.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you very much.

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