

# NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - Princeton vs West Virginia

Saturday, March 23, 2024

Iowa City, Iowa, USA

Carver-Hawkeye Arena

**Princeton Tigers**

**Carla Berube**

**Kaitlyn Chen**

**Madison St. Rose**

Media Conference

West Virginia 63, Princeton 53

**CARLA BERUBE:** First off, want to congratulate West Virginia on a great game and advancing to the second round. Coach Kellogg is doing a terrific job with that program with only one year under his belt. I thought they were really aggressive and really came at us, especially in that third quarter, and I felt like that was a big, big turning point. I thought we started the game off well. But they really, yeah, took it to us. They are very good in the full court but they are clearly a very tough defensive team in the halfcourt as well.

But this is one game and one loss on an amazing season that we had and I couldn't be more proud of these two, of my entire team, of our senior class in particular, our captains, Ellie, Chet and Kaitlyn for just giving this program everything that they had. You couldn't find three people that care more, that want to be great, that get in the gym and just amazing people to be around. Going to miss them very much. But I think they have left an incredible legacy. Left it better than when they came and Madi now has the blueprint of how to be a Princeton Tiger. So it is definitely -- this stings. I didn't think our season would be over tonight. But it's basketball. Things happen. Games ebb and flow and you know a lot of credit goes to the Mountaineers for playing a terrific game.

**Q. For both of you, can you just talk a little bit about what you felt like was working in that first half to kind of get in rhythm against their defensive pressure and maybe what felt a little bit different in the second half?**

**KAITLYN CHEN:** In the first half we took care of the ball



really well. We really valued every possession and we were able to sort of get into it. They came out with that 1-2-2 at the start of the third quarter and that sort of put a little more pressure on us. We got a little antsy with the ball and was a little careless with it a few times. I think there was maybe four minutes in the third quarter we didn't take care of the ball and that was sort of what hurt us.

**MADISON ST. ROSE:** And kind of like Kaitlyn said in the beginning, we were playing with poise. We were moving the ball well, finding open shooters, and then I guess that kind of changed once we went into the third quarter and they started to apply a little pressure and we were not being as strong. Yeah, they just got a lot of deflections.

**Q. Wonder being if you can just pick up where your coach left off for a moment about the legacy that you're leaving behind for Ivy League titles, three Ivy League tournament MVPs for you personally. What has it meant for you over these last four years?**

**KAITLYN CHEN:** I mean, playing for Princeton has meant everything to me. I couldn't have done anything without my amazing coaches and, teammates, and I think that's what I'm going to miss the most (fighting back tears) it's going to be tough not being able to play with Madi, Elli, Chet, play for Coach and our amazing coaching staff. But this place and this program has given me the best three years, four years of my life, and I've met such amazing people, and I'm so grateful for that experience. I couldn't be happier here than anywhere else.

**Q. You went from two points in last year's March Madness to 22 points today. What changed for you year over year, and how to you take today's performance and try to lead the team going to the future?**

**MADISON ST. ROSE:** Yeah, I would say my confidence definitely changed from last year to this year. But I can only do that with my teammates like Kaitlyn and Ellie and Chet, they put so much trust in me to be me and just play confident basketball. I just I feel like without them, I wouldn't be the player I am today, and just moving forward and thinking about how much we are about to lose, and



how much -- the amount of, I guess, heart and just, I don't know, life that these seniors have put into this team, it's really going to suck. I'm really going to miss them so much.

**Q. For either or both of you, can you look forward to next year a little bit, and what do you think it's going to be like coming back, Madi, for you, for your third year, and Kaitlyn, what do you think, you're leaving this team behind now but how do you look at what the prospects are next year and the group that's going to be available next year to lead the way?**

KAITLYN CHEN: I think this year has been really good for especially our younger players like Madi and Skye. Like they really stepped up and stepped into their role. I think they have done a fantastic job all year. I'm honestly just really looking forward to seeing how they will grow and develop next year and become the leaders they have, and the whole coaching staff, they are going to continue to develop the players in our program. We are getting really great recruits the next freshman class. I'm really looking forward to watching this team play.

MADISON ST. ROSE: I'm just looking forward, since we do have a lot of underclassmen, I feel like we learned so much from this experience from the seniors, and I think what we've learned from this season is definitely going to carry over into next season and I feel like we are just going to be more ready and prepared and hopefully we'll make it back to the March Madness Tournament.

**Q. Same question I asked the players, but what did you see as the biggest difference in between the first half and second half when it came to breaking the press and kind of, whatever your game plan was coming in, how much do you feel like you stuck to it versus got away from it versus made adjustments to it? How did that play out?**

CARLA BERUBE: They had a couple different presses they used against us. Yeah, I that thought we had a good game plan. They just turned it up, turned that pressure up, and yeah, just got a little bit careless. There's a couple times they just kind of ripped it from us, as well.

And then they took advantage, you know, just of those opportunities on their offensive end. I think that they did a great job with just their ball screen and getting us into switches and maybe we could have done something differently with a ball screen action. But you know, I trust all my players out there to guard any of them but I thought Quinerly was just awesome. She's a really, yeah, tough player the way she can change her speed. She's going fast at one point and all of a sudden it slows down so much

and it gets you off your defensive rhythm. I think those two things were a combination of kind of what happened in that second half.

And then just we couldn't score. I think we had some great opportunities, and then yeah, their pressure put us into situations where it was really low shot clock and we were struggling to get good shots. I think it was a lot to do with just the West Virginia defense.

**Q. Your team took 21 three-pointers tonight. 12 of those, I believe, were in the first half, and maybe what you were just saying a moment ago will be part of the answer, but is that what you wanted? You mentioned there was a lot of late-in-the-shot-clock shots. Was that part of the reason why you ended up settling for so many threes and did you want to be taking that many threes?**

CARLA BERUBE: Yeah, in the first half, they were playing their matchup zone, so I do think we were open on a lot of those shots. I thought we had some good corner-three looks. I thought Skye had some great looks, too. I'm not sure, the first half threes were really rushed. I thought they were pretty much good shots.

In the second, I thought there was some late shot clock. Certainly took quite a few at the end just trying to get back in the game. When you're down ten, you've got to make up kind of quickly. So I think a combination. Yeah, we don't normally take that many threes but I think it was a lot to do with their defense and what they were throwing at us that, you know, a lot of them were good looks.

**Q. Ellie and Chet only combined for five points and West Virginia outscored you in the paint 34-16. What specifically stopped you from having success inside?**

CARLA BERUBE: Yeah, I think they did a good job of packing the paint. I think we got a lot of good looks in there. They are strong. They are aggressive. They have some size. Blacksten and some of their players off their bench, it was hard to get just those looks inside. I thought we came down with a lot of offensive rebounds and just didn't get great looks to put it back up.

So yeah, I'm not sure. I think we looked inside but it was also a lot of -- it took a while for us to break their press so we couldn't get into sort of our typical sets. So credit to West Virginia.

**Q. How big a deal was it for that three from Harrison to go in at the buzzer at the end of the first half?**

CARLA BERUBE: Yeah, I mean, sure, you don't wanting

to into the half giving the other team momentum. Great look. Great shot. But you know, I think we came out in the third quarter ready to go. I thought we were focused.

I don't know if was Madi or someone hit a three to start the third quarter. So we were back into it. Just, yeah, that was a good momentum swing for them.

**Q. Would you be willing to take a look ahead to next year and talk about the group that you've got coming back? I know it's an amazing trio that is graduating but if you can talk about who is coming back next year and what your outlook is.**

CARLA BERUBE: Yeah, I mean, I feel like every year, when the season ends, you're like, gosh, that group, how are we going to replace them. It's just -- I think it's just hard because Ellie was there with me when I started, so we have a great bond with her. And Kaitlyn and Chet, it was just a different start with them, to their college experience during COVID.

You know, it's just a special class. But like I said, I think they have left a great legacy and a blueprint on how you go about things, how you work. How you care about this program and your teammates and your coaches.

And yeah, I think we have got some great, talented skilled, hard working players coming back; Madi is one of them, Skye, and there's a great group that we really haven't seen too much of that I am just absolutely excited to coach moving forward. It's a great group coming back.

It's hard to think about that right now because, you know, I care so much about these seniors and these captains, but you know, I know that my staff, who is absolutely amazing, is going to do a great job of developing this younger group.

**Q. What can you take away from a loss like this moving forward, you're talking about that class that needs to step into those roles and losing those leaders, what can you take away from a loss where things went south quickly and that got chaotic that can kick start next season?**

CARLA BERUBE: Yeah, this absolutely stings. It stings 1 through 17 of our players. Hopefully they are like, wow, this is a great experience. And you can never take away, being in March Madness and being at this stage, is just amazing.

And yes, we lost, but wow, what a season. Yeah, I'm assuming that Madi is like, let's go. You know, I'm sure she can't wait to get back now and get back to work and lead a younger group, and I think they are going to be

hungry for more. That's just the way we do it at Princeton, and you know, we want to keep developing, developing not only as baseball players but as leaders and be just amazing ambassadors to our incredible university.

So yeah, it's tough but I think they will be ready to go.

**Q. I'm not sure if you saw midway through the game but your kids showed up for an interview on the video board.**

CARLA BERUBE: It was so hard that I heard their voices, because I hear them all the time (laughter). I was focused but I heard something about ice cream and I was like, that was it, yeah.

**Q. There was ice cream mentioned and then they yelled "Go Tigers" which the fans seem to love. I know they have been around since your foreign tour but what has it meant having them around and get to go learn from your players, especially the senior class that you have here?**

CARLA BERUBE: It's amazing. It's amazing to have this job. I feel so fortunate. And then it's even more amazing to have your family around because it's Princeton basketball, but it's a family. These are amazing women and role models that I, you know, would love my kids to grow up and become people like that.

It's a joy. I can't emphasize that enough. And so for my kids to be loved by my team and vice versa, like it's just so meaningful, yeah, to be a mom and also get to coach women's basketball. I know I have been doing this for a while now, and it's just, you know, the greatest joy to be a working mom and not feel like you're ever working, and you're just, you know, just coaching basketball. Coaching the game that you love and giving back to -- I had an amazing career, and that's what I'm just trying to do is just give my players the same kind of experience that I had.

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