

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: Regional 1 Semifinal - Indiana vs South Carolina

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Albany, New York, USA

Times Union Center

Indiana Hoosiers

Coach Teri Moren

Yarden Garzon

Chloe Moore-McNeil

Sweet 16 Pregame Media Conference

Q. I was just wondering when you're facing a team of South Carolina's caliber, undefeated, expected to win everything, what's that do in terms of pressure on your team? Is it less pressure because you're not expected to win? Is it more pressure because of how much you want to get past this game? How is it?

TERI MOREN: Yeah, I think it's both. Right now, we're just so grateful to be in this position. A year ago we had the tough loss at home, and it kept us from getting to a Sweet 16.

For us, I do think that -- I always think there's something good with pressure. I think we all athletes, we're all competitors, we want to win the game as much as South Carolina. We know it's going to be a tall task because they're so terrific and so not just well-balanced but they really have 10 starters, the way I look at it, when we're preparing for them.

But I think you've got to make sure that you can separate the pressure from also -- I want our kids to enjoy this, as well. I want them to play with not just enjoyment but joy, and they realize it. These kids aren't -- they know how good South Carolina is.

We feel like we've been tested throughout the season, and our charge is just to come in here and put our best foot forward and play as well as we can.

Q. There's talk of the tournament and changes potentially. Obviously the attendance was through the



roof and record breaking, viewership record breaking. You've played at home the last couple years, you've won and you've lost. Do you think it's the right format having top 16 host, knowing that you've seen both sides of it?

TERI MOREN: Selfishly I'm going to say yeah. There's something about -- it's just a goal of ours every year is to want to be able to host and play in front of our crowd. I think a lot of that has to do with we've been building this thing, and part of the build has been because of our fans.

It's always been important for us to have that as a goal, but it's for us, but it's also for Hoosier Nation to come and be able to watch us and support us. I do think there is an advantage. There's no doubt about it.

For us right now, a program that's drawing a crowd like we do, I think it's really good for our game as we continue to try to grow it.

Q. Obviously you guys have a tall task in Kamilla Cardoso who's four inches taller than Mackenzie. What's your game plan for her, for how you're going to try to limit her?

TERI MOREN: It's not just her. Like I said, they're loaded with talent. But I think you try to crowd her. You're not going to keep her from scoring. She's too talented for that, and this is too good of a basketball team. They intentionally find ways to get her the ball.

I think you have to try to do your work early and try to keep her away from the rim as well as you can, but I also think it requires help from others, whether that's doubling, digging, just trying to crowd her as well as we can.

Q. South Carolina is obviously a very good team, but specifically in the first half they have an ability to jump out first and build that momentum. Is it just about stringing together stops on the defensive end? How do you stem that?

TERI MOREN: I think it's both. I think you have to string together stops, but I also think you have to score. We're



not unlike any team in the country that really feeds -- our offense feeds us defensively, so when we can put points on the board, that helps us on the defensive side with not just our intensity but I think the connectedness that you have to play with in order to guard a team like South Carolina that has so many threats on the outside.

I do think you've got to string together some stops, but you've certainly got to put points on the board, too, or it can get away from you really quick.

Q. You talked about obviously coming into a game like this, at least from the outside, you guys are the underdogs against the undefeated team. Can you use that to your advantage at all going into a game like this? You don't have a lot of those games anymore because you are such a good program that it is a little bit different mindset sometimes going against a team that hasn't lost?

TERI MOREN: Well, yeah. As I said to our kids, I think, yes, we're the underdog, but I think everybody else except for South Carolina right now is the underdog because of their perfect record. I don't know that anybody believes that South Carolina can be beat.

You can certainly use that. Like I said, our kids, as I mentioned earlier, they read. They know that we are not expected perhaps to win this game. But does it fuel them? I hope it does. I hope it motivates them.

I do think there is an aspect of that that you can use it to your advantage. You're playing with house money. You have nothing to lose.

I just want our kids to come in and play loose and together, which they have throughout the season, and again, just put forward our best effort because we know it's going to take a great effort.

Q. I want to ask a question about one of your players, Yarden Garzon. I thought I read last year you said in 30-plus years of coaching she was the most mature first-year player you'd ever seen. Talk about what she's like as a person and how she's developed and what her potential and development are player-wise.

TERI MOREN: Well, first of all, she is that. She is uber mature. She has had a difficult -- when I say difficult, it's been a tough year for Yarden with everything that's going on over in Israel right now and has continued to go on. She has continued to show great maturity. Her parents have been over to Bloomington a few times I think to offer their support because she knows how hard it's been -- they know how hard it's been on Yarden.

She is competitive. She is still, I think, getting used to the work that's required at this level. Not that she doesn't work when she plays at home in Israel, but the practices are a little bit longer in duration. Strength and conditioning, all of that's different. Everything that we have over here that they might have over there but not to the extent that we have. So the training for her has been something that she's had to get used to.

But she's continued to improve for us. We talk a lot about Mackenzie in the last game, but we had other kids that stepped up, and Yarden probably hit the biggest shot to give us the room to put us up by four there going down the stretch.

She is made for moments like that. She is not afraid of taking a big shot, and that's what I've always loved about her and we've respected about Yarden.

She's very quiet by nature. She's a great teammate. She's intelligent on and off the floor, understands the game. You can play her at 1 through 5, which makes it kind of fun for a coach.

But terrific young lady. Great that we have her in our program, somebody that's going to continue to improve and get better.

Q. You played South Carolina in 2019. The only player still on the roster is Mackenzie. But what's the through line with Dawn's teams from when you scouted South Carolina back then and now what do you see as the baseline of a South Carolina team under her?

TERI MOREN: Well, they're completely different than they were in '19 when we played them. What she's done is they've always been a very, very good defensive team. What they've added is shooters. When we played them in '19, I felt like we played off -- really off the arc, tried to bottle up Boston as well as we could.

But she's added some shooters from the outside. That's been to me what's changed.

But then now you look at some of the other pieces she's added, Fulwiley, who is just incredible, dynamic, up and down the floor fast, speed-wise, and Cardoso obviously is a little bit bigger than Boston was.

But she's just added some shooters which has made them more difficult to guard because you really can't sit in the paint and try to clog it up. You've got to respect those -- Bree Hall and Paopao from the outside.

Q. I don't want to bring up any bad memory, but you talked about last year. It was emotionally tough, you won the Big Ten regular season, but every program as it grows goes through the heartbreaks and the good times. What do you think you as a coach and maybe the program after you sort of processed that got from it in terms of them coming into this year and it didn't happen?

TERI MOREN: Yeah, well, I appreciate that question. It was, it took us a while. That was a tough one to get over, especially how it ended.

I think you have to remind yourself and you've got to remind your players that that one game couldn't define the season that we had because it was incredible. I think we were most heartbroken for Berger because we couldn't get her back to the Sweet 16.

I think the disappointment was there for her mostly, but it certainly fueled this group. Syd has talked about it, Mackenzie has talked about it, that last game, not wanting it to end like it did a year ago. We knew that everybody was going to have a little bit more experience.

That was Sara's first season in Bloomington and Syd's first season in Bloomington, so it was really a new team, although we had the holdovers of Berger and Mackenzie, Yarden was a freshman, Chloe had to play. We moved her to a different position.

The experience, though, as you mentioned, adversity gives you a lot -- it's just not about failure, it's about growth, too. I thought our program, even though it was -- we did take another step, but I certainly think that the memory of what happened a year ago really has helped us going down the stretch with Oklahoma.

Q. Coach was saying obviously you guys watch basketball. You read the papers. You know what South Carolina is and is expected to do in this tournament. How do you come into this in terms of feeling no pressure, feeling like you have nothing to lose, or do you feel a little bit more pressure and you want to show people who you guys are?

CHLOE MOORE-McNEIL: Yeah, we really don't feel any pressure at all. We know everybody expects South Carolina to win. They're a great team, and obviously they're undefeated.

But it's March Madness, so you kind of have to throw all those things out of the window and just focus on yourself and winning.

YARDEN GARZON: Yeah, I think we focus on ourself, what we need to do coming into this game, and we're going to bring our best.

Q. While they're undefeated, they would have a loss if Cardoso doesn't bank in a three at the buzzer against Tennessee. You probably saw that highlight. Can you look at a game like that and think they're great but they're not untouchable?

CHLOE MOORE-McNEIL: Obviously you see things like that on social media, but I think, yes, they are a great team, but any and everybody is beatable in the NCAA Tournament.

Q. Yarden, having to play a basketball season while everything is going on at home, can you discuss what that's been like for you? Have you had to deal with protests and worrying about family and that kind of thing, and can you talk about how your teammates have supported you?

YARDEN GARZON: Yeah, so it's obviously hard with everything going on at home with my family, friends who are serving in the IDF. But my teammates and the staff are doing a great job of supporting me, and they understand what I'm going through and they give me great feeling about being here and feeling like I'm part of something bigger than myself, and they are here for me for everything I need.

Everything I do right now is trying to raise the awareness about what's going on in Israel with the hostages. I have like this necklace that says, bring them home, and I'm trying to put it everywhere I can, on my social media and in the press conference.

So yeah, I have great support from the team, and I'm happy to be here.

Q. Obviously South Carolina goes 10 deep, and they have a lot of players who play a lot of -- do a lot of different things. What is the biggest focus for you on which poison do you pick to try to stop without giving away obviously the entire game plan. How do you attack a team like this?

CHLOE MOORE-McNEIL: I think they're pretty well balanced in scoring. Obviously any of them can have a great night offensively, but our focus is not giving them second chance, making them take tough twos and obviously limiting our turnovers and bad shot selection.

YARDEN GARZON: I think being aggressive and give everything we can on the court, obviously execute the

game plan will be a big part of the game, and be aggressive is the main thing of this game.

Q. Chloe, how important is it for you and Mackenzie to have the experience of having played in the Sweet 16 before that you can share with others on the team who haven't had that experience yet?

CHLOE MOORE-McNEIL: Yes, I think it's really important and big, and we're grateful that we have that type of experience. I remember my freshman year coming in when we advanced to the Elite 8. We were like the No. 8 seed against the No. 1 seed NC State.

So staying level headed and being confident within ourselves and our capabilities and just playing IU basketball.

Q. I'd like to ask you about Coach Moren, the impact she's had developing you as a person as well as a player.

YARDEN GARZON: So Coach Moren brought me to this program as a kid that didn't grow up in the U.S. I barely knew English that much. She brought me in with open arms. She taught us everything she can, and she keeps bringing the best out of us. I think she's doing a great job with this program from all of these years, our fan base is getting bigger every year.

I'm glad that I'm able to be coachable by her.

CHLOE MOORE-McNEIL: Yeah, Yarden said it perfectly. She brings out the best in all of us, whether it's the staff or us as team players. I think she's somebody that since I've been here from the jump she's instilled confidence in me, and she's always told me how much she believes in me, and I think she's done a great job of not only developing and growing people as players but the fan base, as well.

Q. Chloe, can you describe maybe just some of the things that have changed about the interest in women's basketball since you got to college?

CHLOE MOORE-McNEIL: Yeah, for sure. I think I came in freshman year with COVID, and obviously that was a big jump from comparing that to now. Our fans were nonexistent. We had to have posters and cardboard cutouts of people faces so it was a little odd to be in an atmosphere like that.

But when you fast forward to now and people breaking records, teams breaking records with fan attendance, it's amazing to watch, and I'm glad to be a part of it.