

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: Regional 3 Final - TCU vs Texas

Monday, March 31, 2025

Birmingham, Alabama, USA

Legacy Arena

Texas Longhorns

Vic Schaefer

Madison Booker

Rori Harmon

Kyla Oldacre

Shay Holle

Elite Eight Postgame Media Conference

Texas 58, TCU 47

THE MODERATOR: We are ready to begin. We are joined by Coach Schaefer, Madison Booker, Rori Harmon, Kyla Oldacre and Shay Holle.

VIC SCHAEFER: Wow. Just first off, I'm humbled, I'm grateful, I'm honored to be able to coach this group of young ladies. The Good Lord has blessed me with some great kids. A team that, as you saw today, that will absolutely play their guts out when challenged and knowing that that's what it's going to take. I mean, I think everybody was talking about how efficient their offense has been all year and it has been. They're really, really good offensively. They got playmakers, they got kids that can make plays when offense breaks down.

I thought our press was number one thing. I thought it was really critical, even if we didn't get a turnover, we really made 'em work hard to get it in. Then when they got it in, they had to try to figure out how to run some offense. I think we had 'em pushed out on the floor quite well.

Other than the offensive rebounding piece that bothered us in the first half, they had 11 total, what did they have 8 in the first half?

RORI HARMON: Yes.

VIC SCHAEFER: We cut that back to in the second half.



That was a big issue for us, especially with Agnes. She was really big on the glass first half.

I thought first half we had some great looks offensively, I thought we had some great looks. We couldn't make a shot. That third quarter, you'll have to correct me, I think they tied it at 29 or 30 and then we went on a 13-3 run. Executed some stuff, got some great looks, and as I told Book, that's toughness. She had started off a little slow. I think the first half, get my wet book out here, she was 2 for 8 at half, but then she finishes 6 for 9. That's toughness.

Sometimes when the ball ain't going in, you can go one of two ways. Again, for her, that's why she is as special as she is because she can put it to the side. Plus I'm telling her to put it to the side and telling her in timeouts, hey, let's get the next one and her teammates were, I thought her teammates were really good in the huddle with her.

I thought the press, Kyla Oldacre down here is denying their 5 player in the press, really making it hard. Rori is always going to make it hard on somebody and I thought she did an amazing job on Van Lith. Defended her exceptionally well, go the her in the press, made her work for everything. So, you know, I think it's just a combination of a lot of things that had to happen for us to have a chance to win. And this group did it.

They played their hearts out, y'all. I think everybody in here would agree to that. They were tough, they made plays, and when we had to have some good offense they came up with it.

So, again, I thought we missed shots in the first half that were good looks. You just gotta make shots sometimes. But the defense never wavered. It was never, ever a problem, to hold them to 47 points is -- ain't nobody standing out there in a 2-3 zone playing an okey miss defense. This group was really, really phenomenal and really special and I'm really proud of 'em.

Q. Rori and Shay, you guys drew a lot of the defensive assignment tonight on Hailey Van Lith. What was the strategy that you talked over with Coach going into tonight's match-up and what allowed you to have



success guard be her?

RORI HARMON: I would say, you know, team defense always is the number one thing, trying to limit her touches as much. She's a three-level scorer and a great basketball player, and she played really well for them.

But, yeah, just kind of staying in front -- I think with a good basketball player and ball handler like she is, like me personally I can't gamble on dribbles and hezies, have to cut her off, get her to let go of the ball. A lot of their offense runs through her and she makes good plays. So getting the ball out of her hands is definitely one of the keys.

SHAY HOLLE: I think to add on to that, when me and Rori got into switches, we did a really good job of switching out hard. Just trying to get the ball out of her hands. She is a super talented guard. Just being really consistent and just, like she said, not biting on her things. She is just really talented.

But I think we pressured her a lot and made other people try to run the offense a little bit, which was one of our goals for sure.

Q. Kyla, could you describe your coast-to-coast play and the impact that it had. And I thought I saw you smile once on the court. Was that an accident?

KYLA OLDACRE: Probably a slip-up. In the moment I mean, it was just an intense moment for me and my team came and just surrounded me, a lot of positive energy. So I had to smile, had to break a smile.

But Coach gets on us fives a lot to deny it, since our guards work so hard to deny the ball, and I saw it as an opportunity and just went on with it, got the ball and made sure I made my layup and I didn't miss my free throw.

Q. Rori, as time was winding down you had your hands on your knees and your head down. What was going through your mind?

RORI HARMON: Yeah, I don't really like crying but when I think about obviously like this team going through what it goes through with the adversity we have gone with as far as injuries, just anything, I just was kind of being selfish and thinking about what I've been through as a player and to come back from my ACL injury in ten months and obviously it's physical and mental. It's all mental, too.

So just to see us get to the Final Four after recovering and coming back from my ACL injury in ten months, I thought it was an amazing thing and I was just really proud of myself in that moment.

And of course I was proud of my teammates and whatnot but I had a little moment for myself, just so grateful. I was so excited to play today. I didn't get this opportunity to play too many games with my amazing teammates, but I was just very excited and very grateful.

Q. Madison, so much is asked of you and Rori as leaders on this team. Is this win possible without what Kyla did and the little plays that Jak made, offensive rebounds, steals, those little plays that don't show up in the box score?

MADISON BOOKER: I just think all season they made big plays throughout the game. I'm not surprised. I expect that from them. Kyla dominated the paint. Jak is a great rebounder for us. She is a baller. She is a hooper. Just, you know, when Jak and her, patient, she'll be a great basketball player once she settles down.

I expect these things, I expect all my teammates to step up. I think the thing is, like, kinda like throughout this tournament, everybody stepped up. Everybody. It's been like this throughout the season. Throughout conference, we had different people step up, and me and Rori we're just being leaders. We're just talking, trying to set an example for the team.

But I expect it. It's been like this all season so, why not keep doing it?

Q. Rori, when you look back on this team in the future, what intangibles do you think led this team to this point and what you will remember about this team specifically as opposed to others you've been a part of?

RORI HARMON: I will remember just the passion, how bad we just really want it. Coach showed us a picture of his team what was it?

VIC SCHAEFER: Mississippi State.

RORI HARMON: All five of their players were on the court hugging each other on the side and he said basically like when it gets like, tough, y'all are going to say you're not going to let it happen basically. And I think just to see that in everyone's eyes, you can see the locked in and how focused everyone was during this whole game.

Of course we're not perfect but for us to be able to capitalize and not make the same once that really would hurt us, I think that speaks a lot of stuff about our team and I think I will remember we're always going to play hard, no matter the circumstance, make a mistake, play hard, do



this, play hard. I just want everyone to understand this is what Texas is all about and it's not going to change.

Q. Madison, in October we were asking y'all what the team goals were for the season you said first goal was to get over the Elite Eight hump. I'm wondering how does it feel to accomplish that and what's next?

MADISON BOOKER: I mean, I was trying to tell somebody it means a lot to us but I think it means a lot more to Coach Schaefer. If you had a camera to follow him around, a day in the life of Vic Schaefer, you will be in the gym all day, you will be watching film all day.

Just the dedication that this coach has and the want he wants for us to be a great basketball player, especially a great team. I think he deserves it. He puts in the work. He's not playing a minute, we are. I just think, you know, for us to kinda come out today especially and play this great TCU team, great offense and play defense, that's the name of the game for him is defense. Defense wins games. Just to be focused, locked in, first five minutes, I just think that means a lot to him. I'm happy to be part of that and to help him get to the Final Four.

I watched him at Mississippi State and I'm happy to be part of it at Texas now. It means a lot to us. When I think about the summer workouts, the conditioning, like, it's paying off. You know? I was just thinking about that in the locker room, dang, I really be on this team all the time. We've been through everything conditioning, tired, on the ground, locker room, gassed out. But, no, I mean, these are the moments that you work for and you dream for and it's fun. But, you know, sometimes you look back and you're like, dang, we been through a lot. But also for this man, Vic Schaefer right here, I'm happy doing it for him.

Q. Shay, you've been part of this program for five years. All five years with Coach Schaefer. What does it mean for you to finally get to the Final Four as your role was continuing to increase?

SHAY HOLLE: Yeah, I mean, it means everything to me. I know it means everything to every single one of us. Being able to be here for five years I've gotten to see Rori's whole career, Coach Schaefer's whole career at Texas. I'm just so blessed and so grateful for the experience. We've made it -- it's my fourth time in the Elite Eight, that is a blessing in itself, but to be able to go to the Final Four with Coach Schaefer my last year, it's so special. This is something I will remember forever, tell your kids about. It's one of those moments and I'm just so blessed, honestly.

Q. Rori, what was it like having Vic give you directions and pointers as you climbed up the ladder about where

to cut the net down and how to do that? And now that you have advanced to the Final Four, how do you reflect on the Elite Eight losses that you've been through and that you guys have been through in this moment?

RORI HARMON: Yeah, to answer your first question, you know, he's always going to be looking after us, for sure, in every situation, even climbing up a ladder. Which is actually kind of dangerous but he was going to be right there just in case. I appreciate him for all of that.

But that shows you what type of person he is, not what type of coach but what type of person he is.

But as far as your second question, can you ask it again? So I can gather my thoughts?

Q. You were talking about your journey, all that you went through in the last ten months but over your career here coming up short in the Elite Eight, how do you put those losses in perspective in this moment?

RORI HARMON: You know, we always complain about it internally within our team, how we're tired of not getting past that Elite Eight game, but when you think about it it's a really tough game to get across. So we shouldn't be too hard on ourselves but obviously we have a standard here. And our standard is what we're doing right now.

I mean, we're here for a reason, that's what I say. We're here for a reason. We worked hard for a reason. Everything happens for a reason. And we put our faith into that.

Q. Rori, if my math is right, I think you were two months old the last time Texas made a Final Four in 2003. I know you guys see Coach Conratt around and have been reminded about Texas history. But now you are going back to the Final Four what does that mean to you and your teammates from a Texas tradition and history standpoint?

RORI HARMON: Yeah, Coach Jody, she is the standard. Her being around us, I get the vibe. She has that aura to her. I mean, she laid the foundation for us, and, yeah, I guess, when you look back and see how long it's taken, and to see that we've been to all the tournaments, while Coach Schaefer has been here, the Elite Eights, won a SEC championship, a Big 12 championship, there are lots of things changing around here and we're laying more of that foundation and increasing our standard every day.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. You're dismissed. Questions for Coach.



Q. Coach, congrats on making the Final Four. I think you're the fifth coach to take two different teams in history to the Final Four, and Gary Blair one of your mentors is another one. Does it help you playing South Carolina the next round with a less day to prepare and you obviously know them pretty well?

VIC SCHAEFER: I'm just honored man to be here. I'm so honored and so humbled. I'm so grateful. God's blessed me with a 40-year career coaching this great game, coaching these kids. I mean, they're amazing.

It's hard. I've said this a bunch. Winning is hard, man. People think it's easy, till it ain't. I thank the Good Lord every day that he kinda showed me this path in my life and my career. I mean, there's difficult days and you have challenges with kids, but they're kids. I say it all the time, we're in the kid business.

But I'm really humbled and honored that He picked this path for me and that hopefully I've been able to instill some work ethic and some -- you know, what commitment and loyalty is into some young people that they can pass it on.

Because as you know, it's becoming more fleeting in life. The standard has changed so much in our society, it seems like, and yet I haven't. Because I haven't, it's hard. I can tell you.

Rori's parents, incredible, so supportive. Shay's, so supportive. Madison, Kyla, like I have unbelievable patients that are just incredibly supportive, and I've been fortunate with that, really in my whole career. Like Teaira McCowan's mom, Tracy, was off the chart.

So just really been blessed. You know? I look back and see the things that I've been able to see, experience, like today. I mean, I knew this team was good enough. I've been trying to tell them for five months they're good enough. And to see it come to fruition for them, it's what it's all about for me. To see the joy on their face, did you see how hard -- like those kids played today? Rori Harmon was -- Van Lith, I promise you, you ask her what gum she is chewing, she'll be able to tell you. But that's what it takes and to be able to impart that on kids and get them to go do it, it's gratifying and very rewarding.

As for your second question, obviously, you know, I think in '17 we played them three times also before we played them in the Final Four. I think that was our 4th time when we played them in the national championship game. So obviously we've had some experience with them. We played really well at our place, we had a bad quarter in the SEC Tournament. They came out and put it on us the first

half at their place. So we have tons of experiences to draw from and learn from, but, again, we've gotta learn and we've gotta be different.

That's the thing about their team, Dawn's teams, is that you know you're going to get the same from them that you try to impart on others, too. They're going to be tough, you know? They're going to be aggressive, they're going to be physical, and if you don't bring an edge with you to that fight, it ain't gonna be much fun. That's what our kids have come to know and learn. I've known it for a long time. I've got several experiences with them.

But, you know, for a day I'm going to let these kids enjoy this. Tomorrow we'll have a plan and there is no question in my mind these kids will embrace the opportunity.

Q. Vic, a couple of days ago you were talking about how important the point guard is and you can't win without a good point guard. So to watch Rori put Hailey Van Lith in a straight jacket for 37 minutes, how gratifying was that for you as a defensive coach and what were your conversations like at the half when they closed with that 7-0 run? You couldn't wait to get off that bench and get to the locker room.

VIC SCHAEFER: First of all, a year ago today you wrote in the paper that we would have enough to get to the Final Four. So I'm not sure what your foresight is or who you're in contact with, but great job, they handed that to me as I was walking in. You did! Jeremy's got it. He handed it to me as I was walking in, he said, Cedric wrote this article a year ago today, it says Texas has enough to get to the '25 Final Four.

As far as Rori goes -- yeah, I got you. You know, that's vintage Rori today. The only turnover she has is the one I made her stand there and eat to end the game, she doesn't really have a turnover today, five assists and no turnovers. But that to me is vintage Rori. She embraces the defensive challenge. She loves it. She eats it for breakfast.

She was accountable today in huddles. We had a couple of empty possessions where I thought we might have been able to do something different, and she was like, Coach it's me, I got it.

I couldn't wait to get in the locker room because I was disappointed in how we let the half end, and it was all fundamentals to me. It was our fundamental defense that we shouldn't be making those mistakes. We helped off the shooter twice in the first half on ball side. Like, you don't help on ball side penetration. The goal was make them make a tough shot, make them make the spectacular.

So I was disappointed in the half on a 7-0 run after we had worked hard to get up, but as we were standing there talking and my staff was coming at me about all these things. I'm like, guys, really defense ain't our problem. We missed a bunch of shots first half. I thought were good looks. We just missed those shots.

You know, the offensive boards bugged the crap out of me. 21 had 6 at halftime. She had 8 total and she had 6 of them, she was physically whipping us. So I had to get in there and have a little come to Jesus on that. I didn't think we were denying a certain player on the floor that their offense ran through that we had talked about for two days. If you cut that piece off the rest of it dies. And I had a guard on her that should have been able to do it and we weren't doing it. So that had me a little bit upset as well.

We had forced 11 turnovers at half, so it wasn't like we weren't just doing a lot of things.

But I thought, again, we didn't have much of an inside game. Our effort to rebound offensively was poor. We only had three, offensive. There were some things I needed to talk to them about and say we gotta fix this, y'all, we can't give up a lapse of giving up a 7-0 run to close the quarter. So that was the conversation at halftime.

Q. The last game you had Bryanna and Jordan really come through for you. Today how impactful were Kyla and Jak?

VIC SCHAEFER: No question. Jak, when I immediately we want to 21 getting rebounds I said who in the heck in this room can keep 21 off the glass? She stands up, raises her hand and says "Coach, I can do it." It kind of juiced up my team a little bit. So, you know, for her to do that is what you want.

And Kyla, there is no question the impact she had on the game, 4 out of 7, 5 rebounds, 2 steals, had a blocked shot. She really neutralized Sedona to an extent and, you know, Sedona has, what, 4 points?

Had a couple turnovers, so I thought her and Taylor both were really good down there but Kyla wants to please, she wants to do well, she wants to impact the game. She wants to impact her team. Sometimes you want it so bad, it becomes an achilles for you.

So it was good to see her. I know she had a little sitdown and visit last night and I thought she came out of that meeting really, really good. I'm happy for her, because I know how bad she wants to impact our team. She certainly did that today.

I mean, she is up there in the press denying, because they were trying to get the ball in through their five player and she is up there denying like crazy and helping us get those five counts that we got. So special effort, kid playing her heart out.

Q. Coach, you fell to your knees as the clock was running out. What were you feeling in that moment?

VIC SCHAEFER: Yeah, been there before. You know? Like I said, I mean, want you can want something so bad for somebody and for this team I wanted it really bad for them. I'm emotionally invested in what I do. It's not a check for me. I'm in this game and I see -- and it's fine. It's okay if that's what it is, but it ain't for me. This is not a check. This is who I am.

And fortunately, a lot of people say it's not who you are, it's what you do but for me it's who I am. I can't sugarcoat that, there is no denying it. My family has suffered throughout the course of time with time away from them. My kids suffered when they were young because I was so invested with who I was and what I was doing for Coach Blair, but this is the life I've chosen to live.

So when you are sitting there and the minutes are ticking off, the second are ticking off and I have so much pride for my kids. I'm so proud of them, how hard they played today.

Like, nobody -- anybody that watched that game today when they turned the TV off they had to go, wow, that freaking team plays their ass off. Excuse me. But you just have to admire them. For me, I was just giving thanks to the Good Lord for blessing me with them and for that moment. Because I take it as a real blessing.

These times are fleeting, y'all. People want to talk about well, you been here seven out of the last eight years and you didn't make it five of the years, but we did make it two of them and they were pretty good teams. That's the media, right? Everybody's got their own opinion about things.

You know, when we walked out of the championship game at the SEC Tournament you got people want to complain about my offense and we can't make it to the Final Four because of our offense. I've watched other teams play and they're scoring 50 points, 54 points and ain't nobody complaining about their offense, but that's just the scrutiny that I guess I get, my team gets, I don't know. It's not very fair but that's the world, right? That's life.

So you just put your head down and you go to work. You



do what's got you where you've gone and you know what? In my mind it's what's helped us win. My kids embrace it and they love it. So, you know, we can be better, certainly, we can be better in a lot of things. We can be better in the offensive rebound. We used to be really good going to the offensive rebound. Two months ago we were one of the best team in the country, we got 40% of our offensive misses. We kind of lost that edge a little bit, I've got to help 'em get it back in about three days time.

I was just thankful and felt blessed by the Lord and felt like I needed to thank Him and honor Him.

Q. Eight years ago today Mississippi State beat UConn, in your program's first-ever Final Four victory, eight years later you get Texas back to a Final Four. How do you reflect on your own life journey from that point with Mississippi State to this night tonight?

VIC SCHAEFER: That was a pretty special moment. I think of Morgan William all the time. Not for that shot but for who she was and what she brought to that team. I've had some really great point guards over the course of my career and certainly to be in American Airlines Arena and for her to make that shot and hear the roof pop off that place was pretty special. Anybody that was in that building that day, they'll know what I'm talking about.

But it's not just an eight-year journey for me. In 2012 when I went to Mississippi State, so many of my colleagues thought I committed career suicide. I had never been in the state except to recruit the number one player in the country. That's the only time I've been there. I didn't know a soul. You want to get uncomfortable, go take a job for the last-placed team in the SEC, that just lost six seniors. That was probably a blessing because it was a 14-16 team. You got no staff hired and you really don't have much returning on your team. Great kids, but obviously there's a reason why things happen the way they did.

But you want to get uncomfortable, take that job. Drive down highway 12 every morning, go into the office with no staff and no team. And this is your first opportunity to be a head coach in the Southeastern Conference. As I tell my players all the time, you're only going to reach your full potential if you get uncomfortable.

It is the worst -- I told 'em this last night, being comfortable is the worst addiction in life. I told 'em this last night. Being comfortable is the worst addiction in life. It's so hard, especially with young people, because they just don't want to be uncomfortable.

For me, I had to get uncomfortable to, again, I'm not sure I've reached my full potential, I hope I haven't. I try to learn

something every day, but to be able to get to where I am now, in 2012, 13 years ago, you know. And now to be at Texas, and as I told y'all yesterday I see that banner every day in the practice facility, 2003, 34-0, national champions -- not 2003, 1986 but there is a 2003 for the last time they were in the Final Four. I see it every day. When I took the job five years ago that was something obviously that was on their mind and it's something that's been on my mind. It obsesses you. You're obsessed with it. It's the only way you're ever going to do it. You just think about it five months out of the year you're never going to get there.

It has to be something you live, eat, breathe, sleep, every day, 365 and when you do that it is a miserable way to live, because people suffer because of your passion. But these kids, it's why I do it. They know I'm up at the office, they know I sleep there at times. They know when I haven't changed clothes the next day and I'm in the same thing at practice that I was in the day before. It is what it is, y'all, but as long as I'm doing it, you can rest assured they're going to get my best shot, because it ain't never going to be a check for me. This is my passion. This is why I do what I do.

Like I said, I've been really blessed. I mean when I went to Mississippi State I had no idea how great those eight years were going to be. They were phenomenal, incredible, and now at Texas we've been able to get this thing right and I'm proud of that.

But last thing I'll say is my staff, I've said this out there, you can't have chemistry on your team unless you've got chemistry on your staff. My team sees our chemistry every day.

The preparation, the focus, the commitment that my staff has to help get these kids ready night in and night out it's unprecedented. I've had some great staffs. It's not a knock on the others but this staff, they're second to none. They absolutely leave no stone unturned. They know I'm not going to leave a stone unturned and we -- I'm smart enough to know I can't do it by myself, and I've hired great people. These kids are the benefit of that.

THE MODERATOR: Okay, Coach. Congratulations.

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