

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - Texas A&M vs Nebraska

Thursday, March 21, 2024

Corvallis, Oregon, USA

Gill Coliseum

Nebraska Cornhuskers

Amy Williams

Alexis Markowski

Jaz Shelley

Media Conference



know, I joke all the time about being in the 30-30 club, where if we were up 30 or down 30, I was going to get 30 seconds of playing time.

Sometimes when that's what your role is, you learn a lot from being over on that sideline, and you look at and think the game in a different manner. My dad was a high school coach my whole life growing up. I think I always craved watching film, breaking down film. I think I've had that coaching in my blood for a long time.

So I feel honored to have the opportunity back leading this program that I loved being a part of as a player. I don't think I saw it back then, but incredibly grateful for that opportunity now.

Q. Jaz, a lot of people point to that game against Iowa as kind of the defining moment of your season, but what would you say is the defining moment of your season, and when do you think that the team kind of coalesced?

JAZ SHELLEY: I definitely think we showed glimpses throughout the season, but I really think we've come together through the Big Ten Tournament. Everything we learned through the wins and the losses, we put together and were able to show out there in Minnesota.

I think we're kind of going to run with that, and we're all really positive right now.

Q. For either one of the players, what are some things you've seen from Texas A&M that's going to make them such a challenge in Round 1?

ALEXIS MARKOWSKI: They're a really physical team, and they're really good at rebounding. I think they average about 14 offensive rebounds. So that's really important for us to just rebound the ball and keep them off the boards.

Q. Jaz first and then Alexis, you were sitting on that podium and in the gym two years ago in Louisville. How different is this experience so far, and how different do you want it to be than two years ago in Louisville?

Q. Alexis, what are the things that led to success at the Big Ten Tournament a couple weeks ago that you hope to carry over into the NCAA Tournament?

ALEXIS MARKOWSKI: I really felt like we leaned into each other. We leaned into our scouts. We were really focused for four days, and we just took it one game at a time.

I think that mentality here in this tournament is going to be really important for us.

Q. Jaz, what happened at the Big Ten Tournament that you'd like to carry over into this tournament?

JAZ SHELLEY: I just think we were ready. We felt really fresh. We all had positive attitude. Everyone was ready to come out and fight, and we had that belief throughout the entire tournament.

Q. Coach, you're one of a handful of coaches in the tournament field that actually went to that school that you're now coaching. When you were a student-athlete at Nebraska, did you ever envision you'd be here coaching your alma mater?

AMY WILLIAMS: Honestly, back then there's no way I could have envisioned this scenario. I walked on the basketball team at Nebraska, and eventually after a couple of years earned a scholarship and was just so honored to be a part of it and now to be back actually leading the program.

I think sometimes when you're in that role where, I don't



JAZ SHELLEY: I think we have a lot of people on our team right now that have been in that position two years ago, and we felt like we fell short. We believe that now that we're here, we're ready to keep fighting and go deep into the tournament. We believe we can do that, and we know how to do that.

ALEXIS MARKOWSKI: I think a lot of us that year didn't have a lot of experience in the NCAA Tournament, and now us both being here, this is our third year here together, we're ready to be here and win games. I think that's kind of a different mentality.

And we're excited to be in the tournament, honored to be a part of it, and now we're here to finish some business.

Q. Lex, what are the ways that this week has felt different, that the NCAA Tournament is something different and not just like going to play Michigan State or going to play Minnesota or something?

ALEXIS MARKOWSKI: There's obviously a lot of excitement around it. It's the most important part of the year. This is what you prepared for all year is making this tournament and winning games in this tournament. So there's a lot of excitement around it. There's a lot of fun things that you get to do that you don't usually get to do in your regular season.

Q. Jaz, any particular emotions with being back in Oregon and just down the road from where your career started? Specifically, what are your memories of -- what memories come to mind being back in this building?

JAZ SHELLEY: It definitely feels a little weird. We flew into Eugene and just some memories come back. Then we drove down here to Corvallis, and obviously I played here a couple of times. I just remember walking down the hallway, which is kind of like a sad memory. The last time I was here was when Kobe Bryant passed away. So it was kind of a weird feeling there with Sabrina and stuff.

It was pretty cool to be able to relive those memories with the people I had it with, but also some sad ones, like Kobe passing away.

Q. What are the fun things you get to do in the NCAA Tournament that aren't normal? What are examples?

ALEXIS MARKOWSKI: You come a few days earlier, just kind of get to explore like the city. Obviously just you get like gifts and nice fun gear and just stuff like that. So it's a lot of fun.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, if you would, we'll start off with a quick opening statement on your thoughts being here, and we'll open it up to questions.

AMY WILLIAMS: I am incredibly excited with another run with this team. We just had so much fun at our Big Ten Tournament, really having a lot of things come together and play our best basketball. It feels like it's been a really long time since we got to tip it up. So we're just super excited for the opportunity that's in front of us.

I love coaching this team so much and to have that opportunity again here tomorrow. We're incredibly excited to get it going.

Q. Amy, the team has done very well with Logan Nissley in the lineup. She has been very good in the Big Ten Tournament. How excited are you for the three freshmen, but particularly Nissley and I guess Natalie Potts, for them to get to experience this? How big of a difference has Nissley made since she's been in the starting lineup?

AMY WILLIAMS: We are incredibly blessed to have three outstanding freshmen that have contributed throughout this entire season for us and made a huge difference. I think that all three of them have been able to throughout the early part of our season kind of work through some growing pains to the point where they were ready to step up and contribute.

When I look at our Big Ten Tournament and Jess Petrie coming in and playing huge minutes when Lex was in foul trouble in a couple of those first round games. And Natalie Potts being the Freshman of the Year, having huge roles, getting a double-double up there in the Big Ten Tournament in one of our games. And Logan Nissley went on an 11-point second quarter in one of our wins, or third quarter maybe, just contributing.

I think we as a team set the record for the most three-point field goals made ever in the Big Ten Tournament, and that doesn't happen with a player who's not a confident shooter like Logan Nissley.

Early we knew just how special her mentality and confidence was. She was maybe struggling in our first three or four ball games three-point field goal percentage-wise. Her team would see her in practice, what a great shooter she was, and they'd say, Keep shooting, Logan. And she'd be like, Oh, I will. I think that just shows the level of confidence that young lady has, and it's really paid off for us that she plays with that kind of confidence.



Q. How many Texas A&M games have you watched so far now?

AMY WILLIAMS: I'm pretty sure in entirety it's 13 full game films I've watched with clips and highlights from several others. But just taking some tidbits from -- they played Purdue early in the season, which is a conference opponent that we're obviously very familiar with after having played them three times this year, so kind of the common opponents like that. Then obviously their most recent games.

Just a ton of respect for what that team has out on the court and the talent that they're able to really play with.

Q. When you got done watching those games, what did you think that Nebraska will have to do well to beat them?

AMY WILLIAMS: Obviously we know that we're going to have to keep them off the glass, and that's a huge key. They're very, very dangerous in transition. I think they can really get going. They have a lot of people that can rebound and then just bring the ball and push their pace in transition. So that's unique.

They don't have to get the ball out of their forward's hands. Their forwards can bring the ball up the floor and handle it and make good decisions and push pace. So our transition defense and then our ability to sit down and defend and keep the ball in front of us will really be a big factor.

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