

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

Friday, March 22, 2024

Corvallis, Oregon, USA

Gill Coliseum

Nebraska Cornhuskers

Coach Amy Williams

Alexis Markowski

Logan Nissley

Media Conference

Nebraska - 61, Texas A&M - 59

THE MODERATOR: We'll get started. We'll open it up to a statement by Coach Williams followed by questions for the players.

AMY WILLIAMS: I'm incredibly excited for our team to be advancing in the NCAA Tournament. Just a ton of credit to Texas A&M. I think they played us defensively just very aggressively, physically, pulled us out of any type of rhythm that we really wanted to get into offensively.

But we found a way in the end. Made some huge plays down the stretch. I thought Callin Hake coming in, taking a big, big charge late in the game, and made some free throws down the stretch and the plays that needed to happen to survive and advance.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the players.

Q. Lex, what means the most about winning in a game in the NCAA Tournament with this team this year?

ALEXIS MARKOWSKI: Yeah, we talked about it before our season. When I came here, I wanted to play in the NCAA Tournament and win games. And to finally kind of get over that hump and do it, it feels great.

I'm excited to be moving on with this team and program into the next round.

Q. Logan, your team has gone to you in close games late now for the last couple weeks. What does it mean to you to feel that confidence from your coach and



teammates?

LOGAN NISSLEY: I think it's something that every player dreams of. I think the confidence that my coach and my team instills in me is something that's very important. And to feel that is just really special.

And to be in this tournament with this coaching staff and this team, I think it's something that you don't find anywhere else. And the chemistry that we have as a team, I think it really showed tonight and paid off.

Q. Lex, you guys lead by 17. Then when you finally win the game, rallied there in the last minute, what's the emotion right when the game ends?

ALEXIS MARKOWSKI: Just a tough, gritty win. They were chipping away. I felt like our turnovers, they were really capitalizing off those and scoring.

And I think we really struck together and leaned into each other. And there's no doubt in our mind that we weren't going to win this game. And just finishing the game out with a win is huge.

Q. Were there any late games, both of you, that you referred to there late in the game in the huddles that you could draw back on from earlier this year, any of those games from before come to mind?

LOGAN NISSLEY: I think we just talked about it in the hallway, actually the Rutgers game comes to me. And finally being able to win one of these games, a close one like that, is really special for us.

We talk about every part of it matters and every part of it means something to us. And so being able to capitalize, like Lex said, on all of their turnovers and their mistakes I think is just super special for this team to finally start going forward.

Q. Logan, tie game there with 15 seconds left and you go to the free-throw line. What are you thinking at that moment, and what did you tell yourself in that moment?



LOGAN NISSLEY: We practice these every day. Coach talks about it before every game, trust our training. Just being able to step up to the free-throw line confident, knowing that I don't want to go home, this team doesn't want to go home, so just smacking down some free throws.

Q. Lex, what's most impressive about what Logan did in this game for you and how she helped the team get to this point?

ALEXIS MARKOWSKI: It's huge. Logan always steps up in huge moments. And it's pretty rare to see that out of a freshman. I can think back to when I was a freshman playing in March. I would not have been able to do what Logan's doing.

It's really impressive to me how she just continues to step up in huge moments on the biggest stage. And when I was a freshman, I definitely couldn't do that.

So proud you, Lo.

LOGAN NISSLEY: Thanks.

Q. Obviously a huge part of this game, I guess, when you got a rebound, did it feel like an accomplishment in a game like this?

ALEXIS MARKOWSKI: We talked about it, we needed to rebound. If we wanted to win this game, we needed to rebound. And I think coming into halftime we wanted to keep them less than eight rebounds, offensive rebounds, and they had eight at half. So we knew we were going to have to rebound better.

But I think they still out-rebounded us and we ended up winning. But I think that needs to get better if we want to continue moving forward in this tournament.

Q. Coulibaly had a big second half. What did she present that was so challenging?

ALEXIS MARKOWSKI: She's just physical and tough. She's really long, really athletic, can get to the rim, finishes really well. She had that huge offensive rebound at the end of the game, the and-one. Just making plays like that, it's pretty hard to guard.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you to the players. You guys can go to the locker room now.

Now questions for Coach Williams.

Q. Amy, just kind of go through that fourth quarter,

what was the bad and the good of the fourth quarter.

AMY WILLIAMS: Yeah, the bad was we watched a pretty substantial lead kind of slip away. I thought they picked up their pressure. We kind of panicked a little.

Coulibaly was amazing. I thought she did some really good things to spark them. Got a steal that led to a layup, got offensive rebound put-backs, just found ways to get to the paint and finish. Was incredibly dangerous there and went on a run kind of on her own.

I think I'm looking at game minutes, and I'm thinking, okay, Lex didn't get to play very much in the first half because of foul trouble and so maybe we can keep her -- I think maybe I didn't keep everybody as fresh as I needed to right there in the fourth quarter, if I had that to do over again. But I feel like the right players made the right plays to come back and find a way to win.

We talked in the locker room before the game. We kind of reminded that this season has been a season of some really awesome wins and some losses that taught us some lessons.

But this is a team of fighters that continues to get up and keep fighting and learning and having positive response when things are not going well.

And so when we lost that 17-point lead and went down by a point, lots of teams would cave in that moment. But our kids stayed locked in and focused. They made some big free throws down the stretch and found a way to continue to compete.

Q. Coach, tough night offensively for Jaz, but she was on the floor for a lot of the game. What did you see from her even though she was having a hard time getting looks?

AMY WILLIAMS: Yeah, I thought they played her a little differently than anybody else on our team just off ball screen coverage, they were very aggressive, they tried to make every single catch of hers difficult, and she had to work so hard just even to get open and had great ball pressure on her the whole evening.

But she still found a way to get six assists. She's just a calming presence for our team. She made a huge bucket kind of when we needed to stop the bleeding down there, kind of a little floater.

Just also defensively just anchors our defense. She means so much to our team that even if she's not scoring points or they're making things very difficult, we need her



presence with us.

Q. In a close game, you're 19 for 22 from free-throw line. What is your reaction to that?

AMY WILLIAMS: Yeah, I'm just proud of that. I think Lex kind of started us off, and Lex went 6 for 6 from the free-throw line, and then down the stretch we had the right people there, Logan, Jaz. They're very confident free-throw shooters. And so those two stepping up and making the big ones under pressure were good and just important.

Q. First tournament for this program since 2014. What does that mean to you?

AMY WILLIAMS: It means a lot to me just because I just love coaching this team. I just love coaching this team, and I just -- I'm so excited to get to continue to do that tomorrow and preparation for the next game.

And I just -- they love each other. They love competing with each other and for each other. And so for them to get another opportunity to keep doing that, it feels great.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for being here, Coach.

AMY WILLIAMS: Thank you.

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