

# Big Ten Volleyball Media Days

Monday, July 28, 2025

Chicago, Illinois, USA

## Nebraska Cornhuskers

## Coach Dani Busboom Kelly

## Rebekah Allick

## Harper Murray

### Press Conference



There have been a lot of opportunities for me to reflect, but honestly I'm just trying to live in the moment. I just want to play free, honestly.

I've had a few conversations with the staff that I just don't really care for the accolades. I feel like All-American, even the National Championship, those things, it's just a product versus the actual journey is where the joy is at.

Yeah, I just want to enjoy it. I have a lot of growth I need to do. I feel like the way I'm approaching the gym now is I'm thinking long-term and how I can just be of service to my teammates. You know, regardless of the moment or where I'm needed, I want to be able to serve that and serve it well.

But yeah, I don't think it's fully sunk in. I've had a few conversation, and I'm like, oh, wow.

**Q. Dani, I've got to ask you about Virginia, the Italian player, and how did you find her and how did you convince the NCAA that you could bring in a (indiscernible) accomplished, of that stature? How did that work? Because there are so many other instances where something like that could never have happened?**

DANI BUSBOOM KELLY: Well, she was being recruited before I even got to Nebraska, so I certainly didn't find her or go over to Italy and recruit her. That was already in the works.

I think the NCAA used the same approach they always do: What was she getting paid and what's her age. They deemed that she's eligible for three years, so we're going to take that. I know she's really excited for this new experience and a new culture and a new challenge.

**Q. You guys have been in the gym with her I'm sure; what kind of player is she and what's she like?**

REBEKAH ALLICK: Yeah, she's a joy. She's super fun. More quiet in her regular nature, but she's definitely come out of her shell a lot. She's actually quite a jokester as well. I think she's quite funny.

DANI BUSBOOM KELLY: Really grateful to be here, being my first Big Ten media days. It's just exciting to be at a place and a conference that appreciates our sport and is continuing to push the level of where we want to go.

We had an awesome spring season with these young women and just really looking forward to starting in a few short days. A lot of decisions to be made but exciting ones.

**Q. Dani, you've coached against Big Ten teams while at Louisville, but what do you anticipate is going to be the difference moving from a few Big Ten teams to the entire conference of the Big Ten?**

DANI BUSBOOM KELLY: I think just from top to bottom, obviously probably the strongest conference in the country. You might get by one opponent one night, but then you have another great opponent the next night. There's some back-to-back matches, which I think is a little bit unique where we're playing Friday, Saturday or Saturday, Sunday, so there's really no rest time. That creates a much tougher prep schedule of getting ready for an opponent.

But I think the travel piece is -- it's also a challenge when you think about going all the way out to the West Coast and then all the way to the East Coast, so being in Nebraska, we arguably have to travel the furthest.

I don't know if that's exactly true, but probably close to the furthest. So I think those two things are going to be the biggest differences.

**Q. Rebekah, you talked about this a little bit in the spring, but it's your senior year. Has that sunk in, and how are you approaching your last go-around with the Huskers?**

REBEKAH ALLICK: No, it definitely has not sunk in.



She's a great blocker. I love her range. There was this one line shot that my campers actually watched and they kept talking about it the next day. She has a lot range as an attack blocker.

HARPER MURRAY: Yeah, she is the sweetest girl ever. I always have a million questions for her about what it was like in Italy and how living there was different, playing there was different. But she's also -- I think our team does a really good job of opening the floor to let people be themselves and feel welcomed, and I know we've talked about few times. She has really been able to come out of her shell faster than she expected.

**Q. Dani, do you feel like you're settled into Nebraska? Have you had time to really settle into your life?**

DANI BUSBOOM KELLY: Yes, I feel like I got out of the trenches a couple weeks ago, the newborn trenches, so now it's time to focus on this season and this team.

I'm just really, again, grateful is a common theme here, but the team has been amazing and the staff has been amazing with this transition. I was talking to Bergen who was our summer captain, like oh, I would have helped more maybe in the past when I wasn't giving birth.

I think they've really understood it, though, and given me some grace in this new role. I'm excited for us to fully be together and present and in the moment here in a few days.

**Q. Coach, you mentioned in your opening statement you have some decisions to make and there's a lot of things you have to decide on in the near future. With the opportunity of the first tournament being played in Lincoln, how much can you learn about your team in just those first couple of matches against Pittsburgh and Stanford that weekend?**

DANI BUSBOOM KELLY: Oh, we're going to learn a ton. That's the beauty of that first serve, is you're playing early but you're playing great competition, and teams that typically return a good amount of talent.

We're going to be pushed right away. We're going to be allowed to make some changes right away, see kind of what sticks for this team and learn about maybe some players that haven't been in those type of situations.

A big chunk of this group has been in the National Championship game, so there's not much more pressure than that. But how can we learn as fast as we can about some of the new players, so it gives us the opportunity to

do that.

**Q. Dani, you said that Bergen is going to be your captain this year. What's the process? How much coaching input and how much player input goes into that? And for all three of you, why is Bergen deserving of that role?**

DANI BUSBOOM KELLY: Well, she was our summer captain so we'll reevaluate our captains after two-a-days when everyone has been together. We added four new pieces, so Bergen was voted after the spring season.

But regardless, she's an awesome leader and I think she's one of our most consistent players. She is super competitive, but she also is very empathetic in my opinion, and she really works really hard to understand her teammates, which I think makes her a really good leader.

We're going to have a player vote like we always do, and in the spring the coaches didn't vote but coaches will get a vote moving into the fall. Captains might change, might not. We'll see.

**Q. Obviously (no microphone) Lexi meant a lot to you guys last year, a special relationship. For Rebekah, being that senior now, what does that mean to be the leader? And for Harper, the relationship between you and Lexi, how do you find those bonds with your team now?**

REBEKAH ALLICK: Yeah, I think in any community, in any group, typically the oldest in the room, they kind of do set the tone. Like she talked about, the girls will get to decide who gets the title for captain, but there is also a responsibility in being a senior and keeping the culture alive.

It's other intangibles. I've noticed that I've had to call on just the way I interact with my teammates in tense moments. I'm a very intense individual, especially in the gym, and I think just with some of the younger ones, just one, them having to step to the plate, but also meeting them where they're at. So I've had a couple and I probably will have more conversations on knowing the moment and knowing the individual.

And yeah, I think it's just a lot of character development and leadership skills development coming in the future.

HARPER MURRAY: Yeah, we have 17 people on our team this year. I don't know about Bekah, but that is the biggest team I've ever been on, and I'm on older end of it now. This spring we really just focused on our relationships and how we can get to know each other

better, because we have six freshmen and then Virginia and Allie coming in as a transfer.

With so many people you have to figure out one way to make it work, and that's kind of our goal right now. As upperclassmen it's our job to hold that culture and hold that team tradition alive, because we know the expectation and we know what to expect and we know what needs to happen.

We have to teach the younger girls what to do and how to help them and guide them. Anything that they need from us they know that the door is always open, but as upperclassmen it's really on us to keep things moving.

**Q. Who are you most excited to go up against in the alumni match?**

REBEKAH ALLICK: That's a good question.

HARPER MURRAY: We've been giving Kelly a hard time recently. She's been playing with us a little bit at open gyms just for fun and we want her to go all out. We want the high socks, the spandex, everything. I don't know if she is going to do it, but I am really excited to play against Kelly for real this time, because she hops in a few times at practice and then --

I mean, Jordan would be exciting, and then Allie, too. I haven't seen Allie in a few months, and I know she's killing it in beach right now, so it's going to be fun to see her back indoor. Honestly all of them I think Kelly and Allie the most.

REBEKAH ALLICK: That's hard to say. They're all incredibly talented. I played with Allie but I feel like she is a whole 'nother beast now having a season of pro under her belt. Yeah, I don't know if I have one specific individual.

**Q. Harper, I think there was 600 people in the first session of camp last week. What do you enjoy about getting to interact with the next generation of young people, put on events like that, and get to be a role model?**

HARPER MURRAY: Sometimes I take it for granted for sure. Someone asked me at the camp if I went to camps like this growing up and my answer was no, and I didn't realize that I had not really gone to anything like that because back home in Michigan I didn't have people like Jordan Larson and Andi Jackson and Lexi to look up to like that. I took it for granted for a while, but when I'm able to do those camps and see how many little girls just don't even really care about the volley. They just want to be in our presence and give us a hug. We got a million hugs

that day.

It's super sweet. It warms my heart. It fills my bucket for sure. Because at the end of the day that's my goal. I want to give back and I want volleyball to continue to grow, and I'm grateful and appreciative that I've been able to be a face in that.

Anything we can do as Nebraska volleyball players to help grow the sport and grow our own brand, like I'm willing to do it. It was super fun and we are just grateful that we had amazing sponsors that put that on for us, because it was a really fun two days.

**Q. You both have been on the Tom Osbourne Citizenship Team for the past two years. What does that mean?**

REBEKAH ALLICK: We kind of shared a little bit when we were live with Big Ten but I think it's important to give back to the people that support you. Honestly, like the relevance of Nebraska volleyball is because of everyday people. Sometimes it feels like the bare minimum when we give back, but they are always so appreciative of it. We have like 30 girls on one court and they don't care about the actual camp. They just want to talk to you.

Yeah, it means a lot to take time and interact with the people who support us.

HARPER MURRAY: Well said. I think at Nebraska we talk about that a lot, we want to give back. I think a lot of athletes, I'm sure other athletes are on that list too. But they make it super easy. They make the options for us real easy to go out on off days or in between classes to go do little things just to give back, whether it's dropping off food or going to a middle school taking pictures with kids.

It's easy stuff that you don't realize how much it means to the other people until it's done.

**Q. Walk us through the preparation of playing a Big Ten schedule, because the conference has had six of the last eight years a representative at the title game match, which is pretty incredible. Walk us through the general preparation ahead of a season and in the season.**

REBEKAH ALLICK: Yeah, I think it's a lot of conversation with our weight lifting coach and with Dani. I think it's important that the players are honest with where we are at. The expectation is that you're always giving 110 percent, so if the body is not up to par we have that conversation so we can be in a good position starting competition. Because you don't want to be completely dead starting.



So it's a lot of conversation and honesty, but in my opinion it's just going hard in the paint. I feel like there's only so much time you have to actually beat up on yourself, because by the time you're actually in season you have to have like a load management, because when postseason comes around you've still got to kick it up into gear for about three, four days and pretty much whatever you have left is what you're going with into postseason.

I would say the biggest thing is a lot of conversations are at play.

HARPER MURRAY: I touched on it earlier. As upperclassmen we know what to expect. We've done it. We've been through it before. So I think a lot of it for this year is just going to be teaching the younger girls and guiding them through the Big Ten season, because it gets to a point where it's really hard when you're traveling, you miss class, you have missing homework assignments, you don't know what to do because you're leaving the next day and you get really stressed and it can get draining.

I think that's part of the culture at Nebraska. We want to be there for each other and be there side by side, so I think a lot of it also has to do with the upperclassmen being able to take charge.

**Q. For Coach, can you reiterate on this stage what excites you about coaching here, especially with the team you're bringing back this season?**

DANI BUSBOOM KELLY: I'm excited just to get to battle with this team. It's pretty apparent the first day I came in the gym that this group is really hungry to win, and I think falling short for two years in a row will eat you alive a little bit. This team is getting eaten alive, and it shows when they play. So I'm excited to see what they can do on the court when we're all together.

Of course being back at Nebraska, it's the fans and the culture and just the game day. I can't wait to have the first game in PBA, and again, share this journey with so many people that care so much about it.

**Q. Dani, is it strange getting ready to start a season and not be with Dan?**

DANI BUSBOOM KELLY: Of course. Dan and I coached together for eight years, so we were pretty good together. We're a good team. I'll miss him a lot. But it also was great to leave Louisville in such good hands and know that they're going to be very good as well.

**Q. Have you and he compared notes much in the last**

**-- since you left?**

DANI BUSBOOM KELLY: No. More talking about non-volleyball things, but a little bit. I'm sure we'll be bouncing ideas off each other throughout this whole year.

**Q. Did the Gucci jacket go with you?**

DANI BUSBOOM KELLY: Oh, yeah. That was mine. That was not in Louisville.

**Q. Have you done anything with it yet like framed it?**

DANI BUSBOOM KELLY: I did wear it to Keeneland horse track once. Maybe it'll come back out this year. It's not going to get framed. I'll wear it again.

**Q. Dani, why did you decide to bring Rebekah and Harper with you to represent Nebraska?**

DANI BUSBOOM KELLY: I think it's a pretty big deal to be asked to represent your school. I thought Bekah being a senior and the work she put in this spring was certainly deserving and I wanted her to get to experience this day before she left.

I think Harper really embodies a lot of what this team is hoping to accomplish, like get through some hard times and rise up and come out even better than you were before.

I just thought she has done the work and is a great spokesperson for our program. Just thought it was a cool opportunity for both of them.

**Q. Obviously you all knew Coach Cook very, very well and obviously he spent a very long time leading the program. I'm curious what it's like for you guys in a first year with a different head coach, but also for you, Dani, but what's like to enter a program and follow a coach with such a long successful tenure?**

HARPER MURRAY: Well, I mean, it's not a secret that I had a great relationship with John. I think we were just really lucky to have him as a coach and then also have him bring someone like Dani in because not many programs would be able to bring a coach like Dani in and have everyone stay.

We had no one leave, no one go in the portal, and I think that's just a testament to how much we trust John and how much we trust Dani within that.

It's been really exciting and it's been a learning curve for everyone just because they coach differently. We have





different expectations. Things are different on the inside, but at the end of the day, we all just want to win and we all want to be a team and do it together. That doesn't change. But there's little things along the way that's going to be a learning curve for sure.

We're not necessarily sure how the season is going to go yet obviously, so it's going to be interesting when it gets really hard how we can rise up and figure that out and get through that together. So we're just really excited and grateful to have Dani.

REBEKAH ALLICK: Yeah, it's definitely been weird, in a nutshell. Change is hard, guys.

But I mean this from the bottom of my heart: I don't think there is anyone more deserving of this role than Dani Busboom. I think the timing made sense, the person made sense, and everything -- down to what she believes to the practice plan, I just feel like what you embody is exactly what we need for this time.

And I meant that what I said in her debut conference, like my mom loves her so that means I love her. It just makes sense, guys. I do believe in divine intervention and I believe she was placed here at this time for a reason and I am excited and I am grateful for John. I do miss his sappy jokes sometimes and just his presence, but this was the right thing to do.

DANI BUSBOOM KELLY: Well, for me I think you're not going to replace John Cook. It's just how can you carry his legacy and how can you live up to the work he's done to make Nebraska what it is.

I think there's comfort in knowing that he didn't pick me, obviously it was the administration's call, but I know he had a lot of say, and it was important for him to get the right person. So there's comfort in that.

I also know that he's just a phone call away and he'll probably be in Lincoln quite a bit this fall. We'll be asking him for advice and bouncing ideas off him and talking with him through hard times and good times.

But it's just, again, knowing you can't replace him. We've got to be ourselves and move on, and we're going to do a lot of the same stuff John always did, but we're going to add a little bit of new stuff, too.

**Q. They say pressure is a privilege, but Bekah, Harper, you guys have talked publicly about the down sides to that pressure. Can you talk as a team what you've done to help keep yourself grounded coming into this season where there's, as always, if not more pressure**

**than you've had in the past?**

HARPER MURRAY: I talk about my relationships with my teammates a lot because I feel like at the end of the day that's what grounds me and that's what I fall back to.

After two years ago, like honestly, I saw the worst of it, and nothing can really faze me anymore, and it sucks that that was how my story had to go, but it is what it is, and I'm glad that I was able to come out stronger than that and have my teammates by my side.

Now that I'm past that and I have them by my side no matter what and even through all the positive stuff, that's what makes it so easy, for the freshmen, I'm sure that's going to open up a whole new world that they have never experienced before, and because we've experienced it, we're going to be able to help them and be there for them.

But it's unfortunate that that's where sports has taken things more recently, but at the same time, there's give and take, and we've also had so many cool opportunities and so many cool memories that have come from the growth of volleyball.

We're super grateful for it, but it's definitely something that you have to learn to cope with and find ways that you can push through it, and I do that by leaning into my teammates.

REBEKAH ALLICK: Yeah, I think the biggest thing that has kept me grounded is my faith. I love God, I love Jesus, and it's allowed me to love others around me better, and it just reminds me that there's life after college. There's life after your job. There's just a whole 'nother way to live and it's allowed me just to play free.

I feel like I've really stepped into being myself in these last six months, and it's weird, I don't really know what to do with all of it. It's like, oh, my gosh, I haven't tapped into this energy since I was in high school. It's kind of scary but I was talking to my mom about it, and she just kept saying, you're just getting started; you haven't even hit your potential. And I believe her.

I feel like just connecting with people in my community and my church, having real hard conversations with the people I'm here with today, it has allowed me to just remember what's really important.

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