

# Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Friday, March 3, 2023

Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

Target Center

## Maryland Terrapins

## Brenda Frese

## Abby Meyers

## Bri McDaniel

### Postgame Press Conference

Maryland - 73, Illinois - 58

BRENDA FRESE: Obviously we're thrilled to be able to come out, and I thought we set the tone from the tip. Obviously having -- we've been off for about a week, so it took a little bit in that first four or five minutes to get our feet under us.

I thought defensively we were really aggressive and were able to turn them over for a lot of turnovers on the defensive end. Offensively just loved the 2:1 assist-to-turnover ratio as a team, just spreading the wealth, being really, really unselfish.

Bri, I shared with her, the first time we played Illinois to tonight, there's something about being from Chicago and liking to play against Illinois.

BRI McDANIEL: Oh, yeah.

BRENDA FRESE: I thought it was a very contagious energy she was able to provide us off the bench.

I can't say enough about Shauna and their staff and Illinois. I hope they make a deep run in the NCAA Tournament. Their staff has done a terrific job this year. Obviously we're thrilled about continuing on.

**Q. Bri, you kind of have that look in your eye like Northwestern again today. What was working so well for you, and how dangerous is this team when the bench is kind of clicking like you guys were today as a whole?**

BRI McDANIEL: One thing I can say, once I came on the floor, I just wanted to bring a spark on defense. That's one



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thing I can do. And just doing whatever Coach B need me to do or the team.

Once we're clicking on the bench, it's like amazing. This team can do anything that they put their minds to. So just sticking together has been a good thing for us.

**Q. For both players, in such a really solid game, Charlie Creme tweeted out the other day that Maryland could be in contention for a Number 1 seed. If you could -- I don't want to make you critique the game too much, but what do you think are some areas that you guys maybe get even better in to elevate the team even further?**

ABBY MEYERS: I think we're a great team, but there's always something to get better at. Defense wins games, right? I think today our defense held strong for most of the 40 minutes, but as we play bigger teams down the stretch, we've got to figure out ways to get those defensive rebounds and box out. I think that's something we work on every day in practice is sticking to our principles of boxing out, checking first, and then getting the ball. No middle drives, right?

So I think defense is going to be our priority in wanting to get better down the road.

BRI McDANIEL: Another thing, just to piggy-back off of what Abby said, defense wins games. So we come in and just have our defense set the tone, that's just going to set out the game because, once we get the defense rolling, everybody start clicking. So once we do that, we're perfectly fine. So I say defense.

**Q. Question for Bri: I noticed throughout the game you just had a smile on your face the entire time. So how did it feel to not just have a great game, but to have a great game in your first college tournament and just be in a tournament setting for the first time?**

BRI McDANIEL: It felt great just knowing that I can contribute to the team and to the win. Just love being out there with them. They push me every day in practice, push me to get better. So just doing what I need to do that I do



in practice to transfer over to the game.

So once I did that, I felt like we were perfectly fine. So once I did that, and Coach B was telling me that good job, I knew I was doing something good. So I was like, okay, let's go.

**Q. Bri, you took a charge in the fourth quarter up 21. What led to your ability to keep playing in the fourth quarter and continue to play defense for your team?**

BRI McDANIEL: I have to play -- I can't just play for like a set time. Like I've got to make sure I play full game. It's not 20 minutes, 10 minutes, 15 minutes. It's got to be a full 40, even the time that I'm on the bench. I've got to try to give energy.

So just being out there and being the energetic person I can be did a good thing for us. So, hey, I think I'm doing something right.

**Q. Abby, you were comfortable making plays off the ball, off one leg, fadeaways, getting into the lane. How often do you work on your game with different finishes and finishes at the rim?**

ABBY MEYERS: All the time, yeah. I think you really have to continue to be versatile, especially as you get later into the season. People know your scout and know what you're capable of. For me I just try to be as unpredictable as possible.

When the three-point shot isn't falling, I can always rely on the pullup jumpers, the post-ups. So I just try to keep my offensive game fresh.

**Q. There was a point in the second half where Illinois called a timeout, and the coaches did their own thing, and the players kind of created their own huddle. What's discussed in that players-only huddle, and what do you guys talk to each other about? Your game plan or motivation really.**

ABBY MEYERS: Sometimes it's a mess honestly. You've got people talking just because the adrenaline's rushing. But it's just really positive things, right? Usually it's about the most recent play that we had or what we need to improve on in the coming minute or so.

We're just trying to be as positive out there and motivational as possible. It's a big stage we're on. We're having a lot of fun, but we've got to lock in and take those timeouts, those little gifts to reset and regain our momentum.

BRI McDANIEL: Sometimes we just don't know what to say. We just sit there. But, hey, we came together, talked about it, and we just moved on.

One thing that I can say we've gotten better at was not thinking about the last play. We just moved on because, if we think about the last play, it's just not going to end well for us. So once we move forward, we're good. That's all that matters.

**Q. This one's for Abby: There were a handful of plays today that really demonstrated the team's IQ. Shy throwing the ball off the player's back, Faith making a big hustle play diving, and somehow the ball stayed in play. How often does this team's IQ impress you as one of the leaders of the team?**

ABBY MEYERS: I think that's just people being play makers, right? Knowing the game, playing the game long enough. We're all very capable basketball players. We know the right play from the wrong. Sometimes we make the wrong play still, but it's a constant learning, just learning process for us.

It's always fun to see fun little things like Shy with the off-the-back layup, and Faith, she's our glue. So she's always doing the dirty plays. We'll just keep using that IQ, right, and keep winning.

**Q. I wanted to ask about that defense, specifically the three-point defense today. That was an Illinois team that kind of got really loose last night. That's been their bread and butter all season long. How were you guys able to, or what was the scout to take away that three-point line and not let them get hot like they have been?**

BRENDA FRESE: It was something we stressed obviously coming out from the tip, not allowing those threes, especially early. But I thought we were locked in. I mean, you saw that on the defensive end, which allowed us out of our press, when we were sprinting out of that, not giving up as many easy threes and just using our length.

I thought we contested a lot of shots and moved where we were able to get there on the pass.

**Q. Same question I gave the players, for you as a team that's always looking to improve, what are some areas you would like to see the team maybe tighten up to elevate you guys to the next stage?**

BRENDA FRESE: There's always going to be areas for us to improve. I thought some of the plays, the and-one plays, I thought we gave up a few too many when they

were able to get downhill. I think being able to wall up, and I think just continuing to play the right way.

I thought defensively and offensively, as long as we continue to play in these areas -- I thought early the first half, we settled for too many outside shots to start the game, but they're very good of kind of understanding the rhythm and the flow through the timeouts, but I think we've got to get there earlier. Kind of understanding the game plan, which we were able to eventually get to.

**Q. Obviously in the past few games we've seen the emergence of Lav and Nae off the bench. It really showed off the bench, they outscored them 28-0. You may not have wanted to go to Lav, Nae and Bri so early in the game. What surprised you about their impact so early and for their bench to be so effective almost the entire game? What does that say how the depth on this team continues to improve as we get later into the season?**

BRENDA FRESE: Just huge. I actually intentionally kind of wanted to get them in early just to get those nerves kind of out of the way, just knowing how aggressive we wanted to be.

Yeah, to be able to, obviously with Lav and Nae's experience, and I thought Bri was just fearless tonight. I think it says a lot about Bri. She found out when we touched down that she had lost a cousin as soon as we had gotten here to Minneapolis. So I think she's playing with even a greater purpose.

But I thought even going into this game from her last game, re-watching the game, she was so good. I was hoping that was going to be the Bri that we would get. I mean, she continues to kind of show as a freshman she's got a big upside.

**Q. For somebody that's done the Illinois scout twice in the last month, what is it they do that could potentially give somebody a problem in the NCAA Tournament?**

BRENDA FRESE: It's disappointing for them to lose their depth, I'll say that, because you need that going into the tournament. They've got guard play that's just super dynamic and can score the basketball. They were on day two of legs today, but when you talk about Bryant and Cook and the combination of those two, they're such difficult matchups to have to guard. They share the basketball extremely well.

They've really improved from the first time we played them with the press, so I think they've got a chance to do some great things in the Tournament.

**Q. I want to go back to the bench just one more time. What are the biggest -- I guess the biggest strides, particularly those three have made from, what, back in November when we kept talking about, hey, we need more -- you need more from the bench, you need more from the bench.**

BRENDA FRESE: I think Bri just alluded to it where she talked about not hanging on to past mistakes. I think that's where we used to be, and I think we've been able to be really resilient coming out of those plays and not spiraling from them.

And know if you're challenged in some moment, they're able to rise up. Just great growth, maturity, and great confidence that they've really evolved and kind of understand how important they are to this team.

**Q. You know Iowa pretty well at this point. What's your expectation for tomorrow?**

BRENDA FRESE: It's going to be a heck of a battle. For us, it's going to feel like a road game when I saw all -- and we know how close it is for their fans and they travel extremely well. Obviously with Caitlin Clark, why wouldn't you come out and see her play?

But two great teams obviously split on each -- everyone took their home court. Again, I know the last time we played, they're going to have great pride to come into this game, and both teams will be ready to play from the tip.

**Q. Just wanted to really get your thought on how you were able to plan for Genesis Bryant today. You're facing her for the first time this season. Obviously she didn't play last time when Maryland played Illinois. So just curious what your plan was for guarding her today.**

BRENDA FRESE: Really wanting to close long and be there on the catch. She's a great shooter, scorer, and like you said, didn't play the first time against us. We knew she could score the basketball.

Those two, that's why I think they'll go far in the Tournament. Those two are just dynamic, athletic, really hard matchups to have to guard. We were trying to get her out of the game, and we couldn't there in the entire fourth quarter. I thought she was really disciplined, once she picked up her fourth, not to get her fifth.

**Q. Same thing I asked Abby: How often does this team's IQ impress you, and how has it grown over the course of the season? I don't think in November this**

**team would be making plays like the one Shy did, throwing it off somebody's back and getting it in for that layup.**

BRENDA FRESE: Yeah, I was excited for Shy. That was a play she did when we recruited her in high school in AAU. So it told me she was in her bag, she was confident when she's playing like that.

They've grown so much. You can see, when they were diving into the post tonight and looking for each other and just kind of really playing well off of one another. So that growth -- I mean, I think you're seeing that trust and that chemistry has really evolved.

**Q. 26 assists tonight. The ball seemed to be moving at a high rate. You've had success with scoring and getting the victory. How dangerous is your offense when the ball is able to move at a rapid rate like that?**

BRENDA FRESE: I think we're really able to guard when the ball is moving side to side, getting in the paint off the bounce. So really difficult to have to figure out. I think, if you looked at this box score, just trying to -- a lot of teams have spent a lot of time sagging and trying to make Diamond pass, and I thought this was one of Diamond's most flawless games - five assists, no turnovers. Her defense, I thought she was all over the game. But just that trust level is huge.

**Q. There's some news here this week with the Gophers deciding to go a different direction. It must have hit you fairly hard given your relationship with Lindsay. You coached her. I was wondering if you could just comment on what your reaction was, and having coached here, you know what the potential of this market is, whether you think that is an attractive job going forward.**

BRENDA FRESE: I was disappointed obviously the timing of it, I thought was tough. Being here in Minneapolis and the tournament, I think it was just the very next day. So that was tough.

I've reached out to Lindsay. I've talked to her by text. Just it's a tough business. But, yes, it's a great job. Her and her staff, they've got a young core of kids in there right now, that freshman class, thought she'd have a little more time to develop it. But they did a great job with that freshman class that got to spend a ton of time.

Whoever walks into that, it's a very attractive job. You can get the best players in the state of Minnesota and surrounding to be able to stay at home. You see where the Big Ten is right now and all the great teams. So this is

where recruits want to play.

**Q. How important was it to get, you got some of the reserves in four minutes, six minutes, especially potential for three games in three days, to get some of the starters those minutes to rest at the end of the game?**

BRENDA FRESE: Yeah, big. We really talked about it. We were hoping we would be able to extend that, and I thought they were really intentional about being able to do it and to be able to get some of that rest for Shy and Faith within this game. Again, when we can extend our bench like that, it's big.

**Q. Eight different players scored for you guys tonight. How does this kind of like, not just being connected on the offense, but also the selflessness of this team, how does that help you guys continue to grow your game?**

BRENDA FRESE: I think tonight they made the game look really easy. Again, a 2:1 assist-to-turnover ratio in a quarterfinal game, that bodes really well. So when we just continue to keep taking what the defense gives us, that's how you're able to kind of get some relief there in those possessions on the offensive end.

I even thought defensively they were very connected and really have been in this month of February/March with the schedule. They've really grown.

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