

# Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Saturday, March 4, 2023  
Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA  
Target Center

Maryland Terrapins

Brenda Frese

Diamond Miller

Abby Meyers

Postgame Press Conference



Iowa - 89, Maryland - 84

BRENDA FRESE: Just obviously super, super proud of our group. This felt like an Elite Eight matchup. Obviously our league, our conference, we're all so battle tested, it's unfortunate that any team had to lose this game tonight.

I got no complaints when you talk about the heart and the hustle that we left out there for 40 minutes. It was just one of those games that it felt like we just couldn't kind of get over that hump. Every time we'd close the gap, and we'd be a possession away. They'd get an O board to a great shot, a foul. So it was just difficult being able to get over it.

We weathered the crowd obviously. It felt like a home court game for them, but I thought we were able just to keep our poise and composure. You won't see that in the NCAA Tournament. We'll be happy to host it at our place and have our crowd behind us.

Just super, super proud of the group and fighting for 40 minutes.

**Q. 22.8 seconds left, you guys have that one chance. You're down by three. Could you take us through what you guys were looking for and how that shot felt as it came off your hands.**

ABBY MEYERS: We were looking to try to reverse the ball. Obviously they played tight man. But tried to push me through and see if we could get Lav another shot or me in the corner, and they guarded that well.

Saw an opportunity, took it, didn't fall this time. Luckily we have another game to look forward to.

**Q. Quick one for you, Diamond: Buzzer blows, and I see you and Lavender are kind of standing there taking a second. You guys both smiled and hugged. I'm just curious, what kind of went through your mind right there? What were you thinking about after the final buzzer?**

DIAMOND MILLER: I was just super proud of my teammates and I for the way we just kept fighting through the weather of the game. They were hitting really good threes. They hit more threes than what we expected for sure, and I think their role players played really well.

So just realizing that we kind of really fought. Obviously we've got to go back to film because some of the stuff could be changed, turnovers and all that other stuff. But just a moment that like in games like this when you feel like you gave your all out there and you still can't get over the hump, it's kind of like a (sighs) moment. That's what I did. And Lavender was right there and said, you're okay, and I was like yeah.

I definitely need that, just to have the support that, even when you're down, you know your teammates still got your back.

**Q. Kind of just the overall response you guys had. You go down ten early. Diamond, both of you and Shy both end up in the locker room. What can you learn and take away from this game how you were able to battle back in such a hostile environment heading into the NCAA Tournament?**

DIAMOND MILLER: I think it just shows how resilient we are. Call a spade a spade, it was basically their home-court advantage. They had all their fans there.

So, yeah, I think to show that we could still battle with them even though their fans were taunting us, saying all this stuff, craziness. But we just still stayed strong. At the end of the day, they won this game, but I still feel like we're the better team. So it is what it is.

**Q. Diamond, in the second quarter you all came out strong with the 24-21 margin in the period. What**



**worked in the quarter that allowed you all to establish a rhythm offensively?**

DIAMOND MILLER: We were just attacking them. I don't think they really could guard us off the dribble like that. So we were just attacking them, and they were fouling us, getting to the free-throw line, and we were running transition. Of course we were hitting shots. So yeah.

**Q. There's been a lot of chatter about No. 1 seed for you guys. I was just curious, as players, whether that's something that you guys have thought about, what you think about the résumé that you've put together, and what it would mean to you maybe to earn a No. 1 seed in the tournament.**

ABBY MEYERS: A lot of my teammates love talking about that 1 seed. For me, I've always been lower than a 10 seed, so I'll take anything with this team.

(Laughter).

So I'm not really paying attention to that, of course.

DIAMOND MILLER: We are. We are.

ABBY MEYERS: It definitely helps with our seeding and who we play, but I personally am not.

DIAMOND MILLER: Yeah, she doesn't care about stuff like that, but I think seeding is important. I'm not going to say it makes your route easier to the Final Four, but it definitely helps, your seeding.

But at the end of the day, no matter our seeding, we're still going to have to play 40 minutes, and anybody could be beaten. So we're still going to have to play and compete like we do every day. But it helps, I guess, yeah.

**Q. Diamond, first want to ask how you're feeling. I know you went to the locker room in considerable pain. Just want to ask, one, how you're feeling. Two, assist-to-turnover ratio is something Coach talks about a lot. Had a good result there today. Just talk about the efficiency of the group.**

DIAMOND MILLER: Like I said before, I think we played a really hard game. Mistakes are going to happen. It's basketball. But I think we're really going to have to look back at the film to see the stuff we actually could clean up like transition defense. I think she got a lot of transition threes and stuff like that.

It's just the little, little, little stuff that you don't realize. Then in those big moments, for example, we got that almost

30-second shot clock, and then Caitlin missed a shot, and then they got that O board to that wide open three, stuff like that. So we definitely need to go back.

Yeah, just the little stuff, and my ankles, I'm okay. I'll be okay.

**Q. Question for Diamond: You guys have talked a lot this season about how like the Thanksgiving tournament, three games in three days, and then later in the season three games in a week have been preparing you guys for the postseason. So what do you think the two games you've had in two days here has really taught you guys moving forward?**

DIAMOND MILLER: Personally I think we did a great job recovery-wise. I think everybody felt good. I felt good. I just think we're ready. We've just got to continue to get better and learn and move on.

**Q. Abby, yesterday we talked about some of the things the team might need to improve on to make that deep run, and it seemed like the three-point shooting was -- they had some open shots. When you come up against a team like an Iowa or a team of similar ability in the Tournament, what are some things you guys are maybe looking to tighten up a little bit more?**

ABBY MEYERS: I think our defense, we tried to execute a game plan, and I think their role players stepped up and made some big shots down the stretch. We weren't able to adjust and take them out of their rhythm. So I think obviously they had some really big O boards with Czinano getting her rebounds.

I think it's really just paying close attention to detail, getting those rebounds when the moments count. Credit to them, they got some important O boards and kickout threes when it really mattered, and that really hurt us. Especially when we tried to get past that threshold, that bump in the road of we tied it in the fourth quarter, and then they were able to get that three-point after.

So I think what we need to get better at is digging deep in those moments when it really matters and sticking to our principles and really trying to get those important plays that we know can make a difference.

**Q. So going away from more of the technical aspect of tonight's game, I was wondering if you two could talk about a point of the game that made you both really happy and proud of the Maryland team and of yourselves.**

ABBY MEYERS: A specific moment? I was definitely just

proud the entire time, just being in that atmosphere with my team and us maintaining and playing a competitive game.

I think at halftime, when we were kind of running through the tunnel, I was definitely just proud of the team and our fight the first half because, give credit to Iowa, they're a big first half team, and we were able to only be down by five. So we were able to weather that storm, get all the kinks out, get the adrenaline, all the nerves out. I think I was really proud with our fight, and I was excited for us approaching the second half. So I think at the half.

DIAMOND MILLER: I don't really have like a one moment. I just love battling with these girls. It's something that we do every day, and it's something we're going to continue to do in the NCAA Tournament.

But, yeah, just stepping on the court and battling with them, like we want to be in these big-time games. Unfortunately it didn't go our way this time. You've seen us play, and there was times it went our way. So just know we're going to get back and we're going to get better.

We've got two weeks now, so we've got a lot of regrouping to do. But, yeah, we love being in these situations, and I wouldn't want it any other way.

**Q. Abby, this is your first year in the Big Ten. You've played Iowa now three times, and it's been really a fight every single time. How does this matchup with Iowa, I guess, speak to the larger competition of the Big Ten and the state of women's college basketball?**

ABBY MEYERS: I don't know if I ever want to visit the state of Iowa again, that's for sure. They're an amazing team, and they really bring out the best in women's college basketball. You saw it out there with the environment, the fans, and everyone just cheering for them.

I think to just be on that stage, Big Ten basketball tournament, with that many people watching and just excited to watch the game and watch us compete, it's special. I only see it getting better and better as the years go on.

So, yeah, just a really cool moment to be out there personally competing at that kind of a stage or at that kind of a level.

**Q. I think all four of those teams that we saw play today could be a Final Four team, and I don't think you could say that about any other conference in the country. So I'm curious how the depth, not only of the conference as a whole, but specifically this upper tier group has prepared you guys for what you want to do**

**next month.**

BRENDA FRESE: No question. I keep saying it reminds me of the year when we won our National Championship in 2006 in the ACC. We had to battle the entire time, and you had us, Duke, and Carolina in the Final Four that year. We split with Duke. We won two, and we lost two, and ultimately beat them in the National Championship Game.

Yeah, when you look at -- I thought the semifinal matchups was exactly where it needed to be when you talk about where consistently those four teams have been all year. I know we're all excited to stop beating each other up and go compete against somebody else, but it wouldn't surprise me to be able to see it.

**Q. 22.8 seconds left, same thing I was asking the girls. What were you hoping to run at that point? And then afterwards, just what was the message to the team in the locker room?**

BRENDA FRESE: Well, we wanted to, we felt like, both Abby and Lav had the hot hand there within that stretch. So we were running the play for both of them and being able to push it through.

Credit their defense. I thought they did a phenomenal job, like just being able to lock in. Obviously didn't come down just to that play, even though it was that possession.

Super proud. I was just reflecting when they were up here, the feeling this year is so much more different. I'm so proud to coach these guys. You can hear from both of them they're disappointed, but at the same time, they're playing for each other.

When you can coach your team and put them in positions to help them win a game and they're pulling for each other, you can see what they've been able to accomplish this year with one more tournament remaining.

**Q. When Shy goes out early there to the locker room and Bri ends up getting a lot of the assignments on Caitlin early and pretty often, how do you assess how she was able to defend one of the premier players in the country and her growth on that side of the ball from the entire season to where she is now, being able to get extended minutes in a Big Ten tournament?**

BRENDA FRESE: I'm excited for Bri. You can see she's young, she's fearless, she's competitive, has a chip on her shoulder. She didn't look like a freshman in this tournament. We're going to need that in the postseason. I love the fact she didn't make it bigger than what it needed to be.

Again, a big X factor for us, but I thought she had a great tournament.

**Q. Four turnovers in the fourth quarter with two on consecutive possessions. How crucial were those turnovers after you all seemed to be building momentum?**

BRENDA FRESE: Oh, those are going to haunt me. They were tough. I thought they were more fatigue based. I didn't think it was a result of their defense. I thought for us it was just lost our focus and fatigue on tired legs.

So costly. Those are the things that you're talking about when games come down to possessions. Crowd's in it. You've got to be able to be more mentally focused.

**Q. After not starting your best in the first quarter, your team responded well in the second. How proud were you of the response of your team after not getting off to the best start they might have wanted to?**

BRENDA FRESE: I was really proud. I thought it wasn't one of our finer quarters. Again, you've got to credit Caitlin. She's super motivated, that loss that they took at our place. When you're a competitor, I thought she made a statement and set the tone, like all great players do, that I thought really hurt us.

But I did, I loved our response. And to be in it that close at halftime, I felt like the second half was going to turn for us. Again, two great teams that were going against each other possession by possession.

**Q. I wanted to ask you about two of your bench players. Just got a question about Bri, but in terms of Lav, Lav hitting some shots that perhaps earlier in the season weren't going down for her. How much does it raise the floor for your team when you have her being able to knock down some of those long twos and even some threes?**

BRENDA FRESE: Yeah, it's huge. It takes some of the heat off of our starters. Lav can play both ends of the floor really hard. Defensively she took some matchups, she rebounds really well for us, and we need her offense. She's a great scorer. It's big for us when she's playing with that kind of confidence.

**Q. In terms of Bri, yesterday it was a season high, I think, for her in minutes, and then like today, like the question you just got, she was taking on a lot of defensive responsibility. I saw you got pretty fired up when she kind of -- at the end of the first quarter when**

**she was one-on-one guarding Caitlin and forced her to pass and then they didn't get a shot up before the first quarter buzzer. You went right over to her and gave her a high five for the way she guarded Caitlin Clark. Just what have you seen from her in recent sort of practices and things like that? You've talked a lot about how for the freshmen their practices are their games. What have you seen from her in some of the practices that have allowed to you give her some more trust and more playing time and a bigger role this weekend?**

BRENDA FRESE: Bri just competes and a higher motor. What I love about Bri, she only played six minutes tonight, but every one of those six minutes was really valuable. If she gets 30 seconds, she's going to go as hard as she can possibly go defensively, offensively, whatever that may be.

So I love the fact that she competes. She competes every single day in practice and in these games. So just a huge future for her, and obviously again in the postseason here with the Tournament is going to be big for us.

**Q. It seemed like there were a few times when the referee made a call that a lot of people in the arena got heated about it. What do you tell your players in those moments to just stay calm and focus on the game when there's a lot of noise going on?**

BRENDA FRESE: Again, obviously it felt like a home court for Iowa and rightly so with the proximity. But, again, it allows us in these heightened moments here in March, emotions are really, really high. So it just prepares us obviously for this last run in the NCAA Tournament.

You're going to see that in the NCAA Tournament, so just being able to regain our poise and our composure. I do think that's an area we've really grown in this year compared to the first time we played Iowa on the road to the second time playing Iowa on the road. I think that we've really grown in that area. So we'll see what it looks like out ahead.

**Q. A couple times today they hit a big three, crowd goes nuts. You guys respond immediately, hit a three. They go back, hit another three. In games like that where you're kind of nipping at their heels. You get a big shot and they hit one after. How hard is that over the course of 40 minutes to kind of mentally keep going? And then how do you think your team responded to kind of trailing the game and trying to catch up?**

BRENDA FRESE: It's a lot, but again, I think you just see between both teams just how elite, elite, elite both teams

are. Again, this could have been the championship game, could have been an Elite Eight game. All these games are just giving us great experience for what lies ahead.

Yeah, you saw their experience, their starters just made a few more plays tonight than us, but we don't need to hang our head. We can go back and know that we left everything out there and then just correct it and be ready for what lies ahead.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

