

# Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Wednesday, March 5, 2025

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Gainbridge Fieldhouse

## Rutgers Scarlet Knights Coquese Washington Zachara Perkins

### Postgame Press Conference

Nebraska - 84, Rutgers - 60

THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome Coach Washington and student-athlete Zachara Perkins. Coach, if you'd like to make an opening statement.

COQUESE WASHINGTON: Just want to say congratulations to Nebraska and that they played a really good game, shot the ball really well. It was an honor to be on the court with them and to be in the Big Ten Tournament and participate.

**Q. Zachara, the end of your freshman year probably not the way you want it to end, but overall how would you assess your first year On the Banks?**

COQUESE WASHINGTON: I would pretty much just assess it as I'm very grateful for the opportunity. I'm grateful for my seniors. I'm grateful for the opportunity that we had to play in the Big Ten Tournament.

I think just overall I'm just glad -- I couldn't ask for it to go any other way. Obviously it didn't end how we wanted it to, but I am very grateful for the team, and I'm grateful for everything that we went through and all the trials and everything else that we went through.

**Q. Zachara, you mentioned your seniors. What was the biggest takeaway and things you learned from a couple of those seniors on this team?**

ZACHARA PERKINS: I think I could say anything about every single one of them, but I think overall just leadership. I think they really helped me learn how to be a leader and continue that next year when I come back.

I think also just passionate. They were all so passionate about the game, work ethic and everything else. I think



that's one of the biggest takeaways, just staying in the gym and just staying passionate about the game no matter how it goes. Just making sure I stay passionate about it.

**Q. Could you talk a little bit about playing in this venue, and regardless of the outcome, getting an opportunity to come to the Big Ten Tournament when not every team can make it. What are your takeaways from that, and what will you use next year to make sure that you can come back here and have success?**

ZACHARA PERKINS: I think, as far as playing in the Big Ten Tournament, it was such an amazing opportunity. I loved everything about it -- the atmosphere, the city, everything. I loved it all. And playing with my team, I was very grateful for it.

Coming back next year, I'm very excited for what's to come. I know we have bigger things in store. I'm very proud of my team, and I know that we're going to come back next year stronger and better.

**Q. Coach, obviously losing a lot of seniors after today that meant a lot to this program. If you could, just in a few words how would you sum up what those four seniors have done in their time here?**

COQUESE WASHINGTON: The four seniors on our team -- Destiny Adams, Awa Sidibe, Chyna Cornwell, and JoJo Lacey -- mean a ton to their teammates. Like Zachara mentioned earlier, the passion they play with all season long is something that's an imprint they've left on this program. And it will be something that we'll build off of for teams in the future following their lead to play with a tremendous amount of passion, dedication, and love for Rutgers.

**Q. Again, not the way you want the season to end, but if you could just go back and look at how the season went, made the Big Ten Tournament. Out of 15 teams, you're the last ones in. What would you say was maybe a highlight of the season and maybe a low light of the season, if you will?**

COQUESE WASHINGTON: My perspective is always,



having been in the game of women's basketball for a long time, going back to being in middle school and high school, every season is its own journey. You get to these press conferences, and you get questions about what does this mean, what does that mean, but every season is its own journey.

Zachara talked about being grateful to be able to be on this journey is just an important thing to go through. It's too early right now for me to assess the highs and the lows, but the journey and the journey that I've gone through with Zachara and her teammates and these seniors and all of that is a special moment, it's a special season.

Sometimes you go through these seasons and you end with -- I mean, I've been a part of championship teams and you're the last one standing and you win the game, and sometimes you go through these seasons and you don't win the last game. So what does all of that mean? It's all a part of your overall basketball journey.

I'm grateful and appreciative that I'm able to be at this place at Rutgers with these people this year, and it's been a magnificent season because of that, because of the journey that it is and what we learn about ourselves, what we learn about each other, what we learn about the university, how you put yourself in a position moving forward to be impactful in people's lives.

So in some ways it doesn't matter how it ends. It's what was the journey? And what was it that was meaningful in so many ways? That's the space that I'm in right now.

**Q. With the new format where only 15 teams of the 18 get in, does that change the regular season and the emphasis on every game? Because really every game can matter and it can come down to the last week whether you get a chance to come to the postseason.**

COQUESE WASHINGTON: I absolutely think the stakes have definitely risen, and you see that. I think the last Saturday and Sunday, all those games had impact on seeding, they had an impact on whether you made it to the tournaments. It's definitely shown that the regular season in every game is important, especially all those tiebreakers, and you never know. You finish 10-8, and you play on the first day because of the tiebreakers.

I think that's, again, what makes this conference so amazing to play in is because you're playing against such great talent, you're coaching against such tremendous coaches, and playing in a conference where the competition is so, so, so strong.

It's a fun conference to play in. It's a fun conference to

coach in, and I'm appreciative to be a part of it.

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