

# Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Friday, March 7, 2025

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Gainbridge Fieldhouse

**Michigan Wolverines**

**Kim Barnes Arico**

**Olivia Olson**

**Syla Swords**

**Jordan Hobbs**

Postgame Press Conference

Michigan - 98, Maryland - 71

THE MODERATOR: We welcome Michigan to the dais. Coach Kim Barnes Arico, Olivia Olson, Syla Swords, and Jordan Hobbs.

KIM BARNES ARICO: I thought our team played exceptionally well today. The first half was a tale of two quarters. We came out of the gates, really defended, and we were able to get the ball in transition. Then the second quarter, Maryland did a great job of scoring on us, and it kind of flipped.

So at halftime, we just talked about getting back to defending and trying to push the pace. Mila Holloway is such a great point guard for us. She was in foul trouble, so that kind of took us a minute to adjust without having her out there. But Syla picked up that role for her and really started to push the pace again in the third quarter.

We just shared the basketball, and we made shots, and then we were able to get stops on the defensive end.

So it was just a great game for us. We're happy to be moving forward.

**Q. Jordan, last time you played Maryland a couple weeks ago, you don't get to the foul line once. Today you're fouled more than any other player on the court. What changed about your focus playing Maryland today from a couple weeks ago?**

JORDAN HOBBS: I think we just came in a lot more aggressive. I think we attacked the rebounding battle and



the defensive boards and that allowed us to push in transition. Ultimately our mindset was a lot more aggressive -- getting paint touches, getting downhill, and not settling.

**Q. Was there something specifically defensively that you guys took from last game's film and how are you so effective on that end?**

OLIVIA OLSON: I think we got beat a lot in transition last time we played them, so that was our emphasis going into the game is we need to communicate and know who our matchups are on the way down the court, and I think we did a way better job today.

SYLA SWORDS: Then we got outrebounded a lot in the last game, and Coach just pointed out we won the rebounding battle in this one, which is huge because we're undersized on a lot of teams we play. So that just shows people like Yulia coming in and Brooke coming in and getting big rebounds for us is huge.

**Q. What worked so well offensively, because you guys were creating a lot of good looks? And just what was the feel as you guys were going on that 25-point run early in the game?**

JORDAN HOBBS: I think it starts with getting stops. We pride ourselves this year a lot in transition offense, and the first game we weren't really able to do that because they kept getting second-chance points, kept getting rebounds, and kept getting fouled and getting sent to the free-throw line.

I thought we did a better job of not fouling and pushing the ball. I thought also reversing sides. We would get a paint touch and kick it back out and skip it. We got a lot of wide open 3s, and we were really able to convert on those today.

OLIVIA OLSON: We had 28 assists. That kind of just shows how unselfish our team is and how we want to get whoever's open the shot, and we hit a lot of shots today. So that was good too.



**Q. You guys were a lot better against the press in the third quarter. What changes did you make at halftime to help adjust to the press?**

SYLA SWORDS: I think we really just needed to take a breath. Nothing specific that was a change. It was just responding to their run and not letting that get into our motions too much and not let that get into each other too much.

So really just a breather for everyone to know that we can still break that press even though Mila Holloway wasn't in as much as she was. Everyone took that extra slack and was able to handle the ball.

**Q. Some other teams have mentioned that it takes a day or a game to adjust to shooting in this arena. Is that something you guys have noticed, and how much easier was it today?**

JORDAN HOBBS: I think we just got our feet under us yesterday. There's some nerves coming into the Big Ten Tournament, and everyone is so excited to play. Yesterday we went on, I don't even know, like a six-minute scoring drought in the first half.

Today we were able to come out of the gates a lot stronger. I do think it just helps to get a game under your belt and get some confidence and grow that confidence in the gym.

**Q. Just overall you guys riding a lot of momentum right now, won some tough games against some tough teams. With such a tight turnaround, how are you able to turn that win from yesterday into one today?**

SYLA SWORDS: That's what you need going into big games like teams that are the top in our conference. This conference, in my opinion, is the best in the country. So keeping that confidence.

That being said, we're young, so we're going to make mistakes. But it's really great to ride on what we've done so far, ride on the little streak that we've created for ourselves.

Again, looking back at the film and not getting too high or too low, but really just focusing on knowing that, if we do what we do, we can win a lot of games.

**Q. Jordan, as one of the leaders on this team, what's your message to your teammates in that second quarter when things are going downhill and especially when they're causing chaos with the press?**

JORDAN HOBBS: My message probably wasn't the best that it could have been. I was freaking out a little bit myself (laughter).

Going into halftime, though, they were like, all right, Jordan. We're good, chill. They honestly helped me, which was really special.

We came out in the third quarter, and I was just like, you know what, you're right. It's an even ballgame now at this point. We know how good we are. We know how we can beat them. We showed it in the first quarter. And they responded really well to the craziness of that second quarter.

**Q. What did you guys do to kind of keep Sellers and Smikle from ever really finding their groove? I think they combined for 12, and those are their two leading scorers.**

KIM BARNES ARICO: We both were fortunate this year to pick up some fouls on Smikle. I don't think she ever got into her rhythm. She was never really able to get going.

Part of the reason we were able to do that is we really talked about loading. She's super aggressive getting downhill. She's really tough to guard one-on-one getting downhill. So we just wanted to make sure we loaded to her and put multiple bodies protecting the paint when she was driving, and I thought we did a pretty good job of that.

Sellers really hurt us last time too. She's always one that takes over games late in games in the second half. I don't know, we tried to change different bodies on her. We tried to put some length on her. We just rotated different people to try to wear her out a little bit.

**Q. You guys opened the game on a run, and then Maryland retaliated the next quarter with a run of their own. What do you tell your team to kind of help get the momentum back heading into the next quarter?**

KIM BARNES ARICO: At halftime, we just said take a deep breath. We talk about this a lot, and we've talked about it a lot through the course of the season where we've had either big leads or where we've been down a bunch. The game is not over. The game is 40 minutes. The other team is a really good team. Maryland is a really good team. They're going to make a run.

We really talked about that at halftime, and as Jordan alluded to, like everyone was like, okay, take a deep breath. If we would have said at the beginning of the game that we're coming in here at halftime with a four-point lead, we would have thought we're in pretty good shape. So



let's not pay attention to what happened in the first quarter, what happened in the second quarter. We have a four-point lead heading back out. Let's defend and play Michigan basketball.

**Q. This is the second time this season where you've lost to a team once, and then the second time you make adjustments and your team just grows from it. What does that say about your team's ability to grow, and what have you seen from them in terms of taking your feedback and changing?**

KIM BARNES ARICO: I think that was actually, that's a great point, and that's something that we talked about heading into this game.

Michigan State, we lost a really tough one where we kind of crumbled in the second half. We had to play them again a week later.

We just talked about that heading into this game, how we have to bring toughness, we have to bring rebounding, we have to get into the fight, but we grow as a team. We think that we're in a position where we're still getting better every single day, and we're excited about that and our team's excited about that.

We felt we saw it happen at Michigan State. So I think that raised our level of confidence coming into today knowing, hey, we've already done this against State, like we're going to do it again tonight.

**Q. One of those ways, it seemed like you guys improved from the first game against Maryland today was getting more open looks from three. What helped with that?**

KIM BARNES ARICO: Our pace is just really, really, really good. I think, when you get stops, we could play at that pace. Maryland in the second quarter, we didn't get stops, so we didn't really get a chance to push, and they were able to press us because we didn't get stops.

Mila Holloway, I know we talk a lot about Sylva Swords and Olivia Olson, and they are exceptional, they're game-changers for sure, but Mila Holloway is really special. She was out in the second quarter. When she's back in the game, our pace changes, and she can handle pressure really well.

We played, we ran, and we made shots. Obviously that certainly helped, but we have capable shooters, and I just think we had open, good shots. They weren't tough contested shots. That was really great.

**Q. Obviously with you guys having such a young team, when Maryland starts pressing like they do in the second quarter and starts causing chaos, does it make it harder for you guys to adjust in the moment?**

KIM BARNES ARICO: Yeah, and it did. You guys watched it. You were all there. We had our point guard out, and Maryland started pressing. We are really good at breaking the press. We worked on it a lot. We're very efficient on it all year long. You guys have watched us.

We got sped up. We got shaky, and Maryland made a heck of a comeback.

Once we settled, we handled it a lot better in the second half when Mila was in and when Mila was out. I think we can handle it better. We have a lot of good ball handlers. We have a lot of playmakers. So once we settled down, we were better.

Thankfully we had a whole second half. Kind of like Michigan State, we didn't have that much time. It happened in the fourth quarter. So we had time to compose ourselves and regroup, and we're growing as a team.

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