

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship Final Four: LSU vs Iowa

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LSU Tigers

Angel Resse

Finals Pregame Media Conference



I'll ask them, why do you love me? And they said, because you are who you are. You're you. And that's just a trait, the biggest trait I carry. Be who you are, and never, ever back down to anyone. Don't ever get the answer no. I don't take the answer no. I'm going to find a way to get things done.

That's always how I've been. I also grew up, my mom is a single mom. She's independent. She raised two kids. Being able to look at my mom and just go, wow, you're somebody that I want to be like.

Q. Why is Kim a good coach? Can you explain it to us? Because she is 3-0 in title games. I believe she's won the title three of the four times she's gone to the Final Four. I might be wrong on that. And you guys looked like toast last night at one point, and then she made some adjustments. But why do you as a player -- we know she's a great motivator, but what else is it beyond that?

ANGEL REESE: I think she is -- she keeps it real. When I came to LSU, I needed a coach to keep it real with me. Like, Angel, you're not doing enough. You're not helping the team. Like just being able to have tough conversations. She's a coach that you could have those tough conversations with, and I don't feel like everybody can be coached by Kim Mulkey, but you need a Kim Mulkey in your life.

You need somebody to humble you. You need somebody to keep you up. You need somebody to just be there for you, and I think she's also a mom at the end of the day. She also has kids that play sports. She knows what it takes to get to the best and get to the top.

We always listen to her and just try to follow her because this is my first time. This is all my teammates' first time in this situation. So just being able to trust my coach.

Q. Kind of that same vein, you guys go at each other, right? And early in the season, in the preseason, you guys really went at each other. How much does that sharpen you, I guess, and make sure that

THE MODERATOR: At this time, we will open up questions for Angel.

Q. Down the stretch of the game, and it's a pattern you followed throughout your career, finish strong in the fourth quarter. Just wondering, what are some specific things you do to prepare for that moment? Is it mental? Is it physical? What allows you to be the type of player who finishes as you do?

ANGEL REESE: Actually, after the SEC Tournament, we lost, there's pictures going -- well, not going around. I had got into the gym because I felt like I left my team down. I had recently gotten bigger and stronger, and I feel like I've gotten in more shape. So I feel like I needed to develop a little bit more and be able to play in those situations when it does come down to it.

So conditioning and strength has been the most important thing coming to LSU. That was my biggest thing. I needed to make sure I was in 40-minute shape for one, and two, be ready to be banged up in the fourth quarter. So just being able to do that physically.

And mentally just staying tough. I'm in a leadership role where I had to grow up quickly, and I was never in a leadership role before. Being able to lead my teammates and guide them throughout this was just something that was needed last night.

Q. I've seen a lot of little girls here cheering for you, wearing your jersey, and things like that. I'm curious, do you see yourself as a role model? If so, what traits do you have that you feel like are worth emulating?

ANGEL REESE: Actually, I didn't even realize the impact I made on so many little girls. Sometimes I'm like what am I doing that you guys love? What is it?

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accountability is there? I heard you last night on the bench, "we're built for this." Like just that push, that internal push that the players have outside of the coaches.

ANGEL REESE: It started, like you said, in the summertime. We start playing pickup, and we were talking trash to each other, and just getting each other better. I think everybody in the locker room just wants to get better. We don't argue.

Like everybody takes constructive criticism, and that's something I've never been a part of. Like everybody just wants to get better. If I tell you, you need to get this rebound, they're going to tell me, oh, you need to box out. Like just being able to have a teammate that just wants the best for you.

I think we all see bigger things in each other. So I think that's just helped us a lot throughout the season.

Q. Two quick questions for you: I guess, according to Lil Wayne, you checked him, so he finally talked to you last night.

ANGEL REESE: Yeah.

Q. Just what you might could share, just from that conversation with him. Then two, you guys have gotten to the National Championship Game. When you get to this point, I know it's your first time, but what has been the biggest catalyst for this team? And what will you guys continue to draw from in order to potentially hoist a trophy Sunday afternoon?

ANGEL REESE: I'm going to answer that question first, our defense. Our defense is what has gotten us -- defense and rebounding is what has gotten us this far. I was just telling somebody, LSU, we're like a roller coaster. We seem to always get going early on, and then we could never break the door open.

So just being able to break the door open early on tomorrow. I mean, Caitlin Clark is a great player. It's going to be tough to stop her from getting her points, but being able to just contain her and not letting the supporting cast, her other teammates go off. So I think that's just something that's going to be important.

Then for Lil Wayne, he hit me up after the Miami game. I actually hit him up before the game, and I told him, that wasn't cool what he did. Because he from NOLA, so I was like, that's disrespect. He said he knew the twins from something else early on.

We have each other's number. He calls me whenever. I was the one that got the sound byte for the video that came out for the LSU page. So we cool. Yeah, it's cool.

Q. Yeah, you said it, y'all haven't been here before. How has Kim's message evolved to you guys as you keep winning in the tournament? And how has your message as a leader kind of changed?

ANGEL REESE: For her, she's always had us believing we're the underdogs, which we are. We do have a lot of hype around our team and our program and everything we bring to LSU and how we perform and show on and off the court, but I think she has just always kept us humble.

This is an exciting moment for our program, and this is an exciting moment for everybody in Baton Rouge. But just be being able to stay together at this right time and just believing in each other, that's the biggest thing we've been doing.

For me, just trying to keep the team calm. I mean, yesterday we went down, and I'm sure teammates that have never been in a situation like this before were probably like -- they were a little nervous. So just trying to keep the team calm.

Coach Bob Starkey, he's been here before. So before the game, he told me and LaDazhia, as the leaders, just to keep the team calm and keep them confident. Even if we miss a shot, making sure the team stays confident.

Q. You've spoken about that Tennessee game a few times and how you personally improved after it. Do you feel like it was a crucial game for the team, and how has the team carried how that ended through this tournament?

ANGEL REESE: I think that's just something we honestly needed. It sucks to lose for sure, but I think, if you don't take lessons, and if you don't learn from losses, I think that's just -- it's not good for you. I think coming back to practice that week, things have picked up a lot. Just seeing how much the team responded to that loss and being able to know the things we need to get better at, I think that's something that's sparked for us.

Even the Utah game, I remember when I got that last foul, it gave me deja vu from that game because I remember getting that last offensive foul call in that Tennessee game. Then when I got the foul and fouled out for that game. Just being in those moments has just built us for this season, and I'm just happy to be here right now.

Q. You kind of mentioned it a little bit with Caitlin. I



don't know, it's a quick turnaround. What have you seen from Iowa as a whole after last night's game?

ANGEL REESE: They're a great team. Luckily, me and Kateri have played them before in the Big Ten, so I know what Caitlin brings to the table for sure. Just making sure that third and fourth player, making sure they don't go off and get their 20 points, that's going to be the difference.

Just looking at it statistically, we've looked at a lot of their stats, how they win games, how they lose games. We did some film last night and some this morning. Just getting into practice, we're going to have to pay attention to a lot of detail.

Q. Two questions for you: Have you given any thought to what you're going to say to your teammates before the game on Sunday? Then do you also have any insight on what Coach is going to wear?

ANGEL REESE: No, I don't. I never know what she's going to wear. You honestly never, never know what she's going to wear.

To my teammates, this is what we came here for. I mean, we're in this moment. To be in a National Championship Game with nine new pieces and Kim Mulkey's second year, be happy for ourself, but the job isn't finished, and we're hungry.

I think that's the difference between us and a lot of teams. We're not going to stop fighting until the end, and I think we just have that dog mentality within the team. I think it just built on early on in the year.

So just keeping the team confident. They're going to go on runs. We're going to go on runs. And just staying resilient and being able to be calm throughout the storm.

Q. Kim talked a lot about your growth from when you got here till now, and what is the thing you feel like you've grown the most at? And then your eyelashes are always on point. Who do you think has the best eyelashes in the league?

ANGEL REESE: In the WNBA or college?

Q. College.

ANGEL REESE: College, ooh. All the girls be wearing them. I was just with DiDi, Kalani. All the Baylor girls, they come. Te'a. This is not Te'a's hair, but Te'a provides me with some hair. Hollywood Luxury Hair, make sure you guys shop that. The girlies have been doing their thing with the hair stuff and the lashes and stuff. I do my own

lashes. I've learned that.

The first question was?

Q. Growth.

ANGEL REESE: I feel like I've matured. I had to grow up quickly. Just being able to be there for my teammates. I didn't realize they watch everything I do. Practice can go how I go. If I come in not with a positive attitude or just not with a lot of energy, practice could go down and not be as energetic as it should be.

So just knowing how much impact I bring to the team, I go as they go. So just being able to just do that.

Q. First of all, how do you not have an NIL eyelash deal?

ANGEL REESE: Oh, it's coming, trust. The lady I work with, it's coming. Trust.

Q. Julian is here.

ANGEL REESE: My brother, yes.

Q. He was on the concourse last night taking pictures with a lot of fans. What was his take of your game? What was his constructive criticism?

ANGEL REESE: My brother is my biggest critic, so obviously last night wasn't enough from him. He told me I need to get more rebounds and play better defense, but he's happy to be here. I'm excited for him to be here in this moment with me. I wish he was a Tiger, but it's all right.

I'm proud of him, how much he's grown as well. We critique each other in our game, so I love my brother.

Q. Two-part question: When you first decided to enter the transfer portal this year, was your thought, the dream of, oh, my God, we're going to win a National Championship when I get to LSU?

ANGEL REESE: It wasn't LSU. I had two other options that I was going to. LSU wasn't even in the question. Kateri was the one that called me. I thank her daily. She called me and said, take a visit to LSU and see how this goes.

When I took the visit, I fell completely in love and cancelled all my other visits. I guess it was just God telling me the direction I needed, and I needed Kateri to tell me, this is where you need to be.

Q. And we talked the other day about how there's a lot of eyeballs on this weekend for women's basketball and the growth of everything. You're one of the faces of this game. Could you imagine what last night was for you guys and obviously the other game and how much this could help the sport for now and the future?

ANGEL REESE: Yeah, I think me and Caitlin, me and her are in the same class. Me and her are the top two eyes everybody's looking at. The both of us. We're both great players. I think we bring a lot to the game. A lot of people respect us -- NBA players, rappers, everybody respects us. And I think that just helps grow our game.

It's bigger than me. It's bigger than LSU. It's just bigger. I feel like it's for women's basketball, and we've helped grow it a lot this year just being able to be who we are.

Q. Thanks for the tip on where to find more hair.

(Laughter).

From figuring out that LSU is where you're going to be through the season, through the tournament, what do you start to feel? Is it confidence? Do you feel a sense of destiny? What are the feelings and emotions? Where are you guys now after being through everything you've been through and all the games and all the practices?

ANGEL REESE: I don't know. I don't know how to feel right now. I actually don't. Am I supposed to be like overly excited? I don't know. I think I'm blessed for sure because a year ago I wasn't here. I was in a different situation.

I think April 5th is when I entered the transfer portal. So just being able to see how my life has come together, I mean, I've been through two surgeries my freshman year. Having high expectations, and then coming in sophomore year and being dominant. Hitting the transfer portal and not knowing what I'm going to do and going away from home, which is the scariest thing in my life.

I'm not really sure how to feel right now. I didn't go to sleep until 5:00, 6:00 because I was just up thinking about how this is actually possible. I don't even believe I'm sitting here right now. I don't know honestly how to feel right now.

Q. Angel, this team seems like it has a lot of confidence in one another and just your game. How does that affect how you play? And then also does that will you to wins?

ANGEL REESE: Yeah, like I was saying a little earlier, I think we have a dog mentality. Everybody just wants to go get it. Like no one backs down to anything. I think this

team is not scared of anything. We played a lot of great players, but I think we just always come together and believe in each other, and I think that's what's gotten us so far.

No matter what the media has said or anybody else, we know what we have and what we built together. Coming to LSU, which is one of the big goals is just to get back to the promised land. Just being able to have that confidence within each other, and I think it helps us on the court.

Q. Just kind of had a personal question: Just wanted to ask you about you, is there anything about you that you would like to share that you think people don't know? I mean obviously we see you on the court. We see things from social media. But is there anything about you that you would like people to know?

ANGEL REESE: I don't know. I feel like my life is an open book and everybody sees everything that goes on in my life. I don't really have a personal life. It seems everything I do is highlighted.

Yeah, I mean, I think something that people -- a misperception about me is that on the court I promise you we're not friends, but like off the court I'm cool. Like we're cool. I think just even going into this year, I think that's what's made me who I am and just being able to embrace who I am.

Because I have that mentality. I don't care about -- if you don't want to be friends after the game, that's cool. But when I get on the court between them lines, I'm in that mode. I think that's what people kind of misperceive about me like cockiness and confident. I'm very confident. I'm not cocky, but I'm very confident.

Q. It's very clear that you're into fashion. With the current climate of WNBA players not getting sneaker deals as often as NBA players, what do you think your trajectory is to get possibly a sneaker shoe? And if you were to get a shoe, what would you want it to look like?

ANGEL REESE: I would love -- actually, I'm looking into that right now. Definitely the off-season I'm going to be doing a lot of modeling and stuff. Hopefully I can sign into a shoe deal before I leave college. That's my big goal right now. Especially with NIL, I can make as much money in college, probably more than the WNBA.

That's going to be important going into the league emphasizing on my fashion. I love to dress up and love to put on clothes. So just being able to try to find what's for me.



I mean, if I had a shoe, it would probably be some low tops. My first shoe would probably be pink, glitter, something. Something cute, I don't know.

Q. Angel, you can't tease us and tell us that you were considering two other schools and then not share those schools. Will you tell us?

ANGEL REESE: I can tell you all Tennessee and South Carolina, yeah.

Q. What was it about LSU that sold you right away?

ANGEL REESE: One, Kim Mulkey. I mean, hands down, seeing what she can do. And then I had goals written down, and she checked every box. One of the big goals was for me to get confidence in my game and being able to be the player I was coming out of high school. I was never a five player. So going to Maryland, it was a tough transition to have Shakira Austin leaving and me playing the five, that was tough for me. So going into a situation like that.

Being able to play under a coach where she's gotten players in my position to the next level. She's really great at developing post players or big guards or just people in my position.

So that, and then the way they support women's basketball at LSU is crazy. You get your status at LSU. I can't go out to eat without people all over me, just the way that they love LSU, it's crazy. Like I love the fan base there.

LSU, if I was a regular student, I'm going to LSU. It's turnt. Like it's turnt.

Q. We talked to Coach earlier, and she said you guys kind of get after each other in a good way, especially you and Alexis. What has it been like to go on this run with her, and then to have her as your point guard?

ANGEL REESE: You see everything that she's been through, I mean, it's so inspiring. I think that's why I go so hard for Alexis because I'm not going to ever let her give up. I know she has hit rock bottom before, but when she's with me, she's not hitting rock bottom again.

Just knowing to have a point guard where she's going to go get it every single night, and I want the best for Alexis, and it's going to be tough seeing her go after this year to make her dreams come true. I'm going to be really sad about that, but I love Alexis. She's one of the best guards in the country, if not the best. That's the best point guard I probably played with.

Just to see how confident she is. She's always just -- you never know what you're going to get from Alexis. When she comes into practice, she's hyped sometimes, and then she'll be just a quiet assassin. Just seeing how Alexis has grown throughout my whole year with her, it's been amazing.

Q. Last night Flau'jae gets the steal, fast break, power step, layup, boom, you're in the lead. What does it do for the team in that moment, just the confidence? And then what has Flau'jae brought to the team this year as a freshman?

ANGEL REESE: Just like to go into both, her growth. I mean, that layup right there, usually you'll see her get a charge or she might turn the ball over. So being able to see her do that, going -- Coach always said that she never goes lateral, and just to be able to see her take the ball and make that clean move as a freshman.

I think her growth coming into the season, as a freshman when you're an McDonald's All-American, when you come in with all these accolades, you have high expectations. You want to score 20 points a game, but it's not realistic a lot of times when you're on a No. 3 team in the country and you come in starting like that.

So I think her maturity. She doesn't pout. She doesn't get upset. She works hard, and she grinds. You also have to realize that Flau'jae is a full-time student-athlete, a rapper, and a basketball player. She does it all.

I can't do what she does. She wakes up at 5:00 in the morning and works out and goes to school and practice and then she rap and she's in the studio. So just to see how much she has grown, matured, I'm just excited for her. We can't do what we do without Flau'jae.

Q. Kim keeps trying to temper expectations all season. She's like, we're ahead of schedule. We're not supposed to be here. But you guys are playing for the National Championship tomorrow. Did you guys look around the locker room at any point and say, Kim, we're not ahead of schedule. Look at who's here. This is the plan?

ANGEL REESE: We say it within each other. We can't really say it out. We keep what we do in our locker room private, but I just feel like that's who we are. We're going to keep that chip on our shoulder. I think that's why we go so hard because it's like we have nothing to lose.

We're not supposed to be here. We're not supposed to be here, and I don't care what anybody says, we're not.



Just being humble, she keeps us humble. I think that's what's important and keeps us going honestly.

Q. Flau'jae and Kateri have each done a great job defensively, kind of holding star players in this rundown. Obviously you're facing an exceptional player in the national title game. Do you feel like it's going to be a team effort? Does it need to be a team effort?

ANGEL REESE: For sure. Like I said earlier, containing Caitlin Clark is what we're going to have to do. She's going to get her shots. It's going to be tough on an off-night.

I think we looked at statistics today, when she loses, she still gets 30. When she wins, she's averaging 27. So just seeing the other people, it's going to be important to guard those other three to four players. Czinano is another great post player, Gabbie Marshall, those other shooters. And I've also seen them playing in the Big Ten before.

Just being able to, like you said, it's going to be a team effort. We have to play defense together as a team. And defense and rebounding is going to be what's important for us tomorrow night.

Q. Earlier you said that everything you do is just kind of highlights, and everybody sees everything you do. How does that affect you? Because obviously your journey hasn't been smooth. You had surgeries. You transferred. And then second part of the question, what are some things you do when you're not playing basketball? What are some hobbies that people might not know about?

ANGEL REESE: For the first question, it's hard. I mean, I have to deal with a lot of stuff on social media, negative and positive, but I guess that's just what comes with it. Mentally you've got to kind of stay tough.

But I have a really good support staff behind me. My coaches are amazing. My teammates are amazing. They have my back throughout everything. So I take a break from social media sometimes and just delete it or just put my phone down, just trying to just stay focused.

I mean, this is the most important time right now, but you have to realize NIL stuff is going on. So I have to post certain things at certain times. So you kind of have to balance both, but it also is really hard.

In my off time, it's not much off time. I'm always doing something that has to do with business. I'm always doing -- trying to see how I can grow myself off the court

modeling and trying to get into that stuff. Plans, I have a lot of plans for the summer to do a lot of things. Just ways to just grow my brand and grow who I am honestly.

Q. Angel, you talked about wanting to come to an SEC school, visiting Tennessee, South Carolina, LSU. What about the SEC made you want to come here? Also, could you speak to the SEC's run over this tournament and this season.

ANGEL REESE: I wanted to come to an SEC school because of the post play. I mean, the post play is really, really good in the SEC, and I think that would get me prepared for the next level. I think SEC is one of the best conferences, if not the best conference in the country. So being able to play with the best, that kind of would dictate where I am and where I need to get better at.

Of course the Big Ten was definitely great, but just being able to see what more I wanted for myself, and then just being able to see, like you said, the SEC, we were slept on this year. A lot of people didn't think the SEC was good. That's why a lot of people may not have ranked as high to where we were.

The SEC, we ran as deep as we could. We had two teams in the Final Four. You have to pat yourself on the back for that because it's not easy in the SEC. Every night, anybody can win any given night, as you can see. I'm super proud of the SEC, and I think right now, as LSU, the only SEC team standing, we're going to do it for the SEC.

Q. As a student-athlete myself, I really do appreciate how you're always being yourself, you're always having fun, lifting up your teammates. That's something very admirable. Going into this Final Four as a sophomore, sophomore leader nonetheless, what are you telling your teammates? What are you telling yourself? How are you getting into the mindset of getting ready for tomorrow's game?

ANGEL REESE: Just trying to stay focused. It's a lot of outside noise doing media and social media and family here. It's a lot going on for sure. At 20 years old, this is a lot to take on. I don't think a lot of people understand that.

All of the critics who say stuff online, I promise you all, I don't think any of you could sit in my shoes right now or any of my teammates' shoes that have to deal with what we deal with.

So just being able to be smart right now and being able to stay focused within the team. Just focusing on the big picture, which is tomorrow.

Q. Congratulations on a phenomenal season. Just curious from having to defend Monika Czinano. I think she's taken one dribble the entire tournament. How hard is that to practice? Does that make an adjustment for you defensively in how you try to contain her?

ANGEL REESE: I remember playing her last year at Iowa with Maryland. She's very efficient around the basket. I mean, she doesn't miss pretty often. Caitlin gets her the ball when she needs to get the ball. She's really great. Her hands are great. She has great footwork.

But you've got to realize we have LaDazhia Williams. She takes on that post player usually every game, because me and Czinano, I may be the biggest player on the court, but I'm quick. I'm quick. I'm really a four player. Me and LaDazhia are going to both have to guard her.

I think LaDazhia did a great job playing Kitley last night and also playing Utah -- Pili, Alissa Pili. LaDazhia does a great job. Without LaDazhia we can't do the things we do. So it's going to take a team effort of course to guard Caitlin, but also Czinano is a great player to guard.

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