

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

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American Airlines Center

LSU Tigers

Kim Mulkey

Angel Reese

Alexis Morris

Jasmine Carson

Finals Postgame Media Conference



we see you grab your teammates' heads and talk to them, especially when you're on the bench and they're coming up and they played well. I saw you do it with both Jasmine and Alexis. What are you thinking in those moments? What do you want to get through to them?

ANGEL REESE: Just staying confident. Whatever's going on, especially when I'm on the bench, I'm seeing things they might not see on the court. Just trying to help them and keep them confident within the game, yeah.

Q. Angel and Jaz, could you just talk about the job that Alexis has done throughout the course of this tournament. Each game she's improved her production or defensive play. We know she's taken a lot of things personally, but she's performing at such a high level.

ANGEL REESE: Lex, she's a first rounder. I told her all year. I told her, don't turn on and off. You can kill every single possession that you can if you really want to. I've told her that. She just gets into a mode where she's unstoppable at some point.

She played a great defensive game. It wasn't all her defense. It was her offense. Caitlin was a great player for sure. She had 30, but we contained her the best we could and we knew that other supporting cast, the other players couldn't go off.

Alexis has been a great player throughout her career. She's just been great.

JASMINE CARSON: Backing off what Angel said, Lex, she's just a great player and an even better person. I couldn't even -- I'm just very proud of her. She stepped up in big moments in the NCAA Tournament, and I'm just really proud of her. I know her future is bright.

Q. Jasmine, two questions. Maybe you had 55 points in high school or something like that, but was this the game of your life? When you got up this morning, what did you think you could contribute to this game, to this team?

LSU - 102, Iowa - 85

THE MODERATOR: Welcome to the Division I women's basketball National Championship post-game press conference featuring the LSU Tigers. We're going to hear from our student-athletes. We're going to open it up for questions.

Q. Angel, what does it mean to win the title here for LSU and to, quote, put a ring on it, so to speak?

ANGEL REESE: I'm just -- I'm super happy for the program first, but this is bigger than me. I mean, I had so many goals coming into LSU, but I didn't think I was going to win a National Championship within my first year at LSU.

I'm just happy for this team. Coach Mulkey, I appreciate you. I can't thank you enough for this opportunity to play under you and get better. I'm just happy right now.

Q. I have two questions for you, Angel. One, are you going to get a new crown? Are you going to upgrade it?

ANGEL REESE: This one right here you're talking about?

Q. Yes.

ANGEL REESE: I don't know. They might get me right. We're going to see.

Q. And my other question, if I can open my phone, is

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JASMINE CARSON: I would definitely say this is the game of my life because I won a National Championship on the biggest stage possible in college.

But when I woke up, I just wanted to win. I wanted to do anything that my team needed in this game, whether it was defense, rebounding, just anything, supporting them.

I scored tonight, and that's what pushed us and got us momentum, and I'm just proud of my teammates.

Q. Jaz, congrats on an amazing game. I think a lot of people met you for the first time today. What should the world know about you?

JASMINE CARSON: I mean, I'm Jasmine. I've been working hard my whole life. I came to LSU just to contribute and win a national title and play under a Hall of Fame coach and play with great players.

Hard work pays off, and God is great. Everybody's journey is different, and you should just embrace your journey. I couldn't have wanted a better ending than for it to end like this.

Q. Alexis, Iowa made their big push. You knew it was coming. What was going through your mind? It looked like you took over the game when they got within seven.

ALEXIS MORRIS: No threes. The only thing I kept telling my teammates, whatever we do, we'll take twos over threes.

Iowa is a great team. We knew they were going to make runs. Coach Starkey had been telling us in the huddle they're going to make runs and we have to stay composed. As a leader on the team, I have to keep everybody calm in those moments. It's very important not to panic.

When I do score in those moments, it just settles my team down. It keeps everybody cool-headed and level-headed in those moments.

Q. You mentioned those supporting players on this team. Obviously you had a good game too, but how important was it to have them? Do you feel that's kind of what made the difference today?

ANGEL REESE: This wasn't about me. This is all about the supporting cast. Everybody has played a role all season. Tonight just coming from the bench, Jaz, Poa, Sa'Myah, they came and stepped up and played big. Jaz didn't want to go out as a senior, go out the wrong way and

wanted to win. So she did whatever it takes to win.

Poa did a great job coming in when Alexis was in foul trouble. And Sa'Myah as a freshman, getting big rebounds, being aggressive as well as she can. Everybody played their role. Just everybody piecing it together.

Q. For Alexis and Jasmine, you guys had talked about taking personally the way that South Carolina was guarded by Iowa and having that be something that you wanted to take advantage of today. Obviously we saw that with your shooting. What about that was something that you wanted to exploit, and how do you think you're able to get that going today?

JASMINE CARSON: We watched film on how they were playing South Carolina, and I had an idea that they were probably going to try to sag off us in the beginning. So as a shooter, when somebody sags off you, that's the green light. That's what we capitalized off tonight.

ALEXIS MORRIS: I knew going into this game Iowa wouldn't be able to guard us the same, how they guarded South Carolina. So I just kind of like, we just had to read their defense and make the right plays and not try to force anything and just be LSU. Stay true to our identity and what got us here to this point.

And what I said was I didn't say Iowa played disrespectful defense. I said to me personally, if someone was to sag off of me, then as a competitor and as someone who puts in the time and the hours -- and I dedicate time in perfecting my shot -- then I would take that as disrespectful.

And I had complimented Iowa, I said they have great defensive schemes. That's clever. That's intelligent. You should play that way. You have to play to your strengths and your weaknesses, and that's what Iowa does on defense, and I gave credit to them. They're a great team, great coaching staff. Caitlin's a great player. She's literally changing the game. She's changing the game for us right now, her and Angel. They're doing a great job.

I just want to make that clear that I give respect when it's due and I give credit when it's due.

Q. Angel, Twitter is awash right now with outrage. You talked before about your personality and that you don't care. I just wondered what it's like to know that -- I mean, so many people are talking about women's basketball. Isn't that a good thing?

ANGEL REESE: I'm happy. I mean, all year I was

critiqued about who I was. Nobody -- I don't -- the narrative, I don't fit the narrative. I don't fit in a box that y'all want me to be in. I'm too hood. I'm too ghetto. Y'all told me that all year.

But when other people do it, y'all say nothing. So this was for the girls that look like me, that's going to speak up on what they believe in. It's unapologetically you. That's what I did it for tonight. It was bigger than me tonight. It was bigger than me.

Twitter is going to go on a rage every time, and I'm happy. I feel like I've helped grow women's basketball this year. I'm super happy and excited. So I'm looking forward to celebrating in the next season.

Q. Jasmine, can you take us through your second quarter specifically when you couldn't miss and kind of what the feeling of being that locked in? And for Alexis, kind of when you see a teammate cooking like that, what's going through your mind?

JASMINE CARSON: It was a surreal moment. Every player dreams of being on a big stage like this and having the game of your life, and for it to come to fruition, it meant a lot.

I was just taking in the moment. I was just living in the moment. Usually I don't even celebrate after I make a shot, but tonight I just let it all out. I made a three. I was like -- I just had to let it out.

I didn't have nothing to lose. This was my last game of my college career, and I ended it. I ended it the right way.

ALEXIS MORRIS: I was just super excited for Jaz. As the PG, I always temperature check my teammates just to see where their head's at. In practice, I was like, you want to get some extra shots? Because we usually get extra shots in, just me and her. I feel like I could be a trainer some day. So I love working with Jaz.

But in practice today, I asked her, I was like you want to get extra shots? She's like, no, I'm good. I said, you ready for tonight? She hit her first few shots, and Iowa called a timeout. I said, stay right there. Stay locked in. Whatever head space you're in, do not check out. Just stay ready.

She gave us a huge spark off the bench tonight. She was the game changer tonight. Thank you, Jaz, for being a senior and being who you are too. Appreciate you, bro.

Q. We always hear about what teams learn about themselves at the end of the season. I'm curious what you guys have learned about yourselves as individuals

this season.

ANGEL REESE: It don't matter what you go through. It's about the end goal. As a team, we've been through some things. We've been through a lot of things this year. All season, we've been trying to figure out how we were going to piece it together.

No matter what, the biggest goal was to get a National Championship. So we put everything else to the side and came together as a team and got to that goal. So just learning each other and just knowing that it doesn't matter about anything else.

We've got a lot of big personalities on the team. We go at it all the time. But at the end of the day, we love each other, and we're sisters. We got to where we wanted now.

Q. Ladies, what does it mean for all three of you all to be part of this program, and in just year two win a National Championship with Coach Mulkey, who obviously is from Louisiana. None of you all are from Louisiana, but what does it mean to you all?

JASMINE CARSON: For me, we just made history. Like we're going in the history books. It just means a lot, and I'm excited. Baton Rouge, I know Baton Rouge. I can't wait to get back. We're going to have a parade, whatever. You know, we're in the history books. That's all I've got to say.

ALEXIS MORRIS: It means a lot to be able to do it for the fans, to be able to do it for the history, the ones who came before us. Coach Mulkey, just it being her second year. Myself, my journey. And for the nine new pieces, like how do we piece it together in such a short amount of time? I think we're pretty incredible.

That's kind of like answering your question. That's what I think of this team. I think we're amazing. A lot of different personalities, but we piece it together at the right time. We start clicking at the right time. And that's what matters the most.

Super happy to be here at LSU. I told you all I was going to leave out on top.

Q. Angel, just congratulations, first of all. The moments you were talking about, and you were talking about earlier, that made Twitter blow up, how conscious are you of being able to be your authentic self in that moment? How do you kind of craft it in the moment to be able to make sure that people understand who your authentic self is?

ANGEL REESE: I don't care about anybody else and what they have to say about me. That's the difference between me and a lot of people. I don't. The biggest goal for me is the National Championship. I don't care to be All-American. I don't care to be Defensive Player of the Year, Player of the Year. The biggest goal is to be a national champion, and that's what I did.

That's what I can just brag on. At the end of the day, it's a team effort. Regardless, I'm going to be me, but I can't do it without the girls here, and I can't do it without the rest of my teammates and coaches.

Twitter can say what Twitter can say. I love reading those comments. I have all the screenshots of what everybody has said about me all season. What are you going to say now?

Q. Kim, Lex, I know it's always been a full circle moment for you two, but how does it feel to win with each other?

ALEXIS MORRIS: Well, I kind of got it back. I got dismissed 2018-2019. That's the year they won a National Championship. Coach, we got it back. I appreciate you for giving me the opportunity. You've always been a winner in my eyes, ever since I was 12 years old.

It's hard to explain the feeling. It's kind of like, in a way, Coach Mulkey's an amazing person. She knows how to get the best out of me. She's been knowing me since I was a child literally. I don't know if I'll ever be able to have the type of relationship with another coach that I have with Coach Mulkey because it's special. It's different.

Q. Alexis, on Friday you had mentioned that it didn't hit you quite yet that you were going to play on a stage as big as this one. When did it hit you that you had won? Was it after the buzzer? Was it when you were cutting down the nets?

ALEXIS MORRIS: I'll be honest, when my mid-ranges start falling, I was like oh, yeah. It's nothing against my teammates, but I said, this is my time. I'm not going to let it slip out of my hands. We're too close. I just smelled, I just tasted it at the time.

Even when we were down by seven, I was like it's not happening. That's not me being cocky at all. That's just me being -- just knowing the moment, getting a feel for the game, and just being their senior leader and not letting my teammates down, Coach Mulkey down. LSU, the fans who drove hours, flew out here, I was so determined not to let nobody down tonight.

THE MODERATOR: At this time, we'll open it up for questions for Coach.

Q. I noticed when the players were talking, I think you were looking at the stat sheet, write some stuff down.

KIM MULKEY: I'm just now getting to take some notes before all of you knowledgeable media ask me all the things you know about X's and O's. So I'm getting ready for you.

Q. I was hoping you'd tell us what your notes were. Did something jump out at you in particular?

KIM MULKEY: Every game I take a stat sheet and look at things. This is the first time I've been able to look at a stat sheet.

Q. What does it mean to win a title in your home state now and get LSU its first ever men's or women's basketball championship?

KIM MULKEY: With about 1:30 to go, I couldn't hold it. I got very emotional. That's really not like me until the buzzer goes off, but I knew we were going to hold on and win this game.

I don't know if it's the mere fact that we're doing this in my second year back home. I don't know if it was the fact that I am home. I don't know if it was looking across there at my daughter and my grandchildren. I don't know if it was looking across at LSU. I don't know what it was, but I lost it.

So that should tell you what I think about it. Very, very emotional and tears of joy.

Q. To hold Caitlin Clark to 9-of-12 shooting. Obviously 30 points, but what does it say about the job Alexis Morris did on her?

KIM MULKEY: Probably what you want to write, but you want me to give you a little reinforcement, right? I would say what do you think? Alexis Morris guarded two of the finest women's basketball players that our game has. She did it against Amore with Virginia Tech, and she did it tonight.

She didn't keep them from scoring. They're that good. But what she did is she made every shot they took a little bit maybe more difficult instead of easy. We knew Caitlin was going to shoot the ball. We knew she was going to make her threes. But we couldn't give her the 10 to 12 points she always gets off of layups.

I don't know if I'm right, but I think she may have only gotten one inside the arc tonight. She had free throws and those threes, but I'd have to break this stat sheet down. She didn't get many layups in the arc.

Alexis, she guarded two of the best our game has to offer.

Q. Coach Mulkey, all year long you've said we've only won ball games. We haven't won National Championships. Now, you hang a banner. Kind of what are the emotions for you? Also the embrace with Flau'jae there on the court.

KIM MULKEY: I think that was with about 50 seconds to go. Coaches are hollering, get off the court. And I said, don't tell me what to do. I'm fixing to win another championship.

I think back to my press conference when Scott Woodward introduced me as LSU's coach. And the number of people that were in that PMAC, the Governor, the politicians, the people who watched me grow up. And I made a statement and asked everybody to turn around and look at those Final Four banners. Nowhere on there did it say "national champions," and that's what I came home to do.

So I'm relieved because I don't have to think about that anymore. To see after the ballgame, the former LSU players, Seimone Augustus crying, and seeing all those people that really were a part of those Final Fours but just couldn't get over the hump.

To walk down the hall and see my former Baylor players that won championships with me, waiting for me. To look in the stands and see my former Louisiana Tech players, it's emotional. It's emotional.

I am so happy. I really don't know how to explain it. Just a deep gratitude and happiness. Yes, it does matter being back home. I won championships at Louisiana Tech. I looked out there at those banners hanging at practice the other day here, and Baylor is the first banner that's hanging. Underneath there, there are three National Championships.

Then there's a school in between, my Louisiana Tech two National Championships. And I thought, Kim, you're getting old. You're getting old.

Q. Somebody was asking Angel about this, the conversations that there are on Twitter --

KIM MULKEY: I have no clue, so you might as well go away from social media. I don't know what you all are talking about blowing up Twitter.

Q. People are debating the refereeing, just talking about -- this is the stuff we normally hear of with the men's game. Is it good that the women's game has reached this point that these conversations are happening?

KIM MULKEY: Look, are you basically asking me what I think of social media? I like y'all better than I do social media. So if you're on social media and hiding behind a computer, I don't like you. If you want to face me eyeball to eyeball and disagree with me on things, I respect you more.

I know nothing about Twitter, Facebook. I have accounts. You'll see I have accounts. I don't touch those. My coaches do it for me. So I can't help you in any area of what was said.

I looked at Alexis and go, what did she say? What is the blowup about? And quite frankly, I don't care. I waste no time on all that stuff. It's the world we live in, but guys, I'm too old. I'm too old to worry about all that stuff.

Now, if she does something or we're doing something that embarrasses the program, my coaches and my administrators usually help me address that. But to answer your question about the game, I love the fact that they told me our tickets were more expensive than the men's tickets. There you go. Talk to me along those lines. I like that.

You know what else, Taylor Swift's in town, and we still sold this place out. Give kudos to the four teams that were here. Those four teams' fan bases are unbelievable. You think about it, they showed up. And that's what you want to see.

Q. Can you speak to what Jasmine was able to do off the bench, hits those shots, and just what her journey has been like, especially within this tournament from being a starter, coming off the bench, and coming up in the clutch like she was today?

KIM MULKEY: Jasmine wasn't benched for any reason other than I needed bigger bodies with some of the teams we played in the playoffs, and then I just kept that lineup because it was just flowing better defensively.

Jasmine may be the second best pure shooter that I've ever coached in my career. She can just light it up. When she made those first couple, I thought -- well, first of all, when we got in foul trouble and we had three starters sitting over there early in the first half, or the first and second quarter, I thought just keep it close until I can get them back on the floor. That's what's going through your

mind.

Then Poa hits a three. Jasmine hits another three. Sa'Myah's in there battling. They won the game for us. The game was won, in my opinion, in the second quarter when those three young ladies -- Sa'Myah Smith, a freshman, Last-Tear Poa, a first-time transfer from junior college, and Jasmine Carson, her last and only year playing for me.

When those guys got in there and they extended the lead and scored with Iowa, I thought this is going to be a fun night. They didn't just keep it close. They went in, and they attacked. Guys, we scored 102 points. That has to be some kind of record.

So much for my hollering defense and rebounding, right? That's a lot of points.

Q. What does this do for the future? You talked about when you got there, kind of selling the dream, getting people to buy in. Not a pressure question, but how big can you grow this?

KIM MULKEY: Well, it doesn't get any bigger than this. We grew it -- and I say this, you know this, y'all have been to the games. We grew this last year.

And it was kind of scary because I kept trying to tame that monster. I said, we may be feeding this monster too early. But the crowds just kept getting bigger and bigger, and the student section, guys, is off the charts at LSU.

We're national champions in year two, and we're not all seniors. We lose four outstanding seniors, but the core of your group are young and underclass, and you hope they stay. Lord knows, every time you turn around, you've got to deal with people in the transfer portal, but you signed the No. 1 recruiting class in the country. And that was before we won a National Championship.

We haven't even won an SEC Championship. We're working. We're working. And when they come to visit LSU, I can't describe it to you. People love winners at LSU, fans, off the charts.

I can tell you, I don't want one negative thing written if we don't win a National Championship next year, okay? I'm telling you all in advance, they're hard to do.

Q. Your players have talked a lot this week about how their love for one another led them to this point, but a year ago they weren't even together. So how did you see that love develop this season?

KIM MULKEY: I think we've got a locker room full of kids who like tough love. I don't have a locker room of a bunch of passive ones, as you know. They will tell you how they feel. They'll talk trash on the floor. You have to be a very strong coach to coach this many personalities.

And I say that, not to pat myself on the back, but I don't have a problem getting in their face. I called that first timeout because Flau'jae turned it over a number of times. Kateri turned it over. And we didn't come over there singing Kumbaya. They came over there and challenged them.

They just blessed me. They're ballers. They get on each other. I don't know how we did it. Defense and rebounding carried us a lot this year. I can't tell you defense carried us today, but you're playing against a generational talent in Clark. So you knew you'd better score the ball with them, and we scored the ball from all positions today.

Q. It you've done things in this game that very few people ever have. You came to LSU to win a national title, and now you've done that as well. You're doing it in a new way, though. You're doing it with nine new people. You're doing it using the transfer portal. I guess I just wonder for you, as you think about your career, does winning a national title, like you did here ahead of schedule, the way you said, make you feel like that speeds up you wanting to wind down? Or does it make you want to coach for even longer than maybe you thought prior to this year?

KIM MULKEY: Well, I don't ever put a timetable on coaching. I was never going to be a coach. I got talked into it by the president of Louisiana Tech University, Dr. F.J. Taylor. He started the program over there, and he wouldn't take no for an answer. Thank God he didn't. He knew more what I was supposed to be doing than I did.

I played for legendary coach Leon Barmore, Pat Summitt in the '84 Olympics. You follow leaders that fit your personality. If a leader doesn't fit your personality, you go find a leader that does.

I want you to look up there on those stairs right there. There's my AD. There's my president. There's my administration. That's who I get to work for every day. That's who I get to work for. They don't try to control you. They make you follow the rules, and they get out of your way, and they don't miss a thing when it comes to helping me build a program.

There are things they do I don't want to do. I don't want to have to learn all the things that they have to do. But I knew when I came back to Louisiana and I had my first meeting



with Scott Woodward really, and he said something to me, and I said this is where I'm going to end it. He's my kind of leader. We talk the same language.

I don't know if that's a Louisiana thing. He's from Baton Rouge. I'm from Hammond. But he just -- he gets it. He gets it. He gets out of the way.

You see, he doesn't have to be and doesn't want to be the most important person in the athletic department, but he's the most powerful person in the athletic department. He can fire any of us, and he's our boss. He wouldn't even go out there tonight and cut the net down. I begged Dr. Tate to cut the net down with his LSU jacket on. Those are the kind of leaders I want to be around.

Q. Now that you've won a championship with Alexis Morris, can you talk about her growth, not only as a player, but also as a person?

KIM MULKEY: Alexis Morris, I've known that child since she was in the seventh grade. Went to a private school there in Beaumont, Texas. Came to my camps many years. That smile, that spunk, never, ever has that child ever disrespected me in any way, ever.

And when I had to dismiss her, it was for the sake of the locker room and the sake of making a tough decision to not lose your team. Those decisions, a lot of coaches don't want to make.

I had sleepless nights over it because I loved Alexis. There are many people you dismiss from a team and you say good riddance. You're a cancer in the locker room. She was not. She wandered to a couple schools here and there, never spoke to her the entire time that she was at Rutgers or A&M. Couldn't, rules don't allow it.

But when I got the LSU job, she basically said, Coach, I need you in my life. I'm coming back to play for you. You're thinking, this is a kid who owned her mistake. This is a kid who never blamed a coach. How many of those articles do you write? Everybody likes to go, oh, the coach is a bad person. Oh, the coach did this. Alexis would never let them write that story.

She did it to herself. And you wonder why some coaches will take a kid like that back? That is a valuable lesson for all of us as parents. Parents want to blame coaches. And look where she's sitting today. Look where she is sitting today. What a remarkable story.

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