

# 2022 NCAA Women's Lacrosse Championship

Friday, May 27, 2022

Baltimore, Maryland, USA

Homewood Field

## Maryland Terrapins Coach Cathy Reese Hannah Leubecker Shaylan Ahearn

Media Conference



You can see that in the way we play. You can see it in the way we celebrate and the way we're upset right now. But there's nothing that's going to stop us. This -- again, we're hungry. We're ready to go for next year.

**Q. Neither of you have been on this stage before, could you describe what it felt like and maybe if it was at all a tiny bit different than what you had experienced before?**

HANNAH LEUBECKER: Obviously it's different than anything you've experienced before, but like Shay said our team is so close, we know if we played together that we would be fine. We had each other's backs. Everybody has a little bit of pregame jitters, but once we got out there, started playing our game, everything fell into place for us. As far as, yeah, nerves, it wasn't really a factor.

SHAYLAN AHEARN: I would say having all the girls behind me, and whoever the other player was, you know you have the support of the world. And honestly I didn't even notice the fans once that whistle blew. I zoned in, noticed my teammates. But that's about it. I didn't really hear anything else.

**Q. Hannah, you led the team with five goals today. This isn't the first time you've been the leading scorer. How do you think you've really grown as an offensive leader, not just in scoring and assisting, but really, like, being a leader on and off the field for Maryland's offense?**

HANNAH LEUBECKER: It's all about my teammates. They're awesome. The reason that any of us has success is because we're all working together. So this year I've definitely tried to step up into more of a leadership role, being one of the players on our offense who has had the most experience with our team, which is kind of crazy because I'm a junior.

And my teammates made it easy. And like I said, everybody contributes. Everybody steps into a leadership role this year. So we were all equals out there. And we all listened to each other.

Boston College 17, Maryland 16

COACH REESE: Just, first off, we'll start and say congratulations to Boston College for advancing. And then go to, I'm just super proud of our team. It's hard -- this is hard -- it's hard when your season ends that way. It's hard when the last goal of the game is scored with 18 seconds on the clock. It's a heartbreaker, but super proud of them and what we've accomplished this season, where we came from, our growth as a team, our growth as individuals. And falling short at the end hurts. We fell short to a great team.

But super proud of all of these guys and what they've done this season.

**Q. We've talked a month and a half now about this team's growth over the course of the season. Just from your perspective, did you guys feel that? How much do you think this team has improved from game one to now?**

HANNAH LEUBECKER: I'm so proud of our girls, we worked hard. Obviously we didn't make it this far last year and that really fueled our fire, and this will too. Even just growth throughout the season, games in the beginning. On offense and on defense, I think we made changes all over the field and I'm proud of each individual's growth and our growth as a team.

SHAYLAN AHEARN: I would agree. I've only been on the team for I guess three years, but throughout my whole life, this is the closest I've ever been with a team.

I think that that showed. I think that's the reason for the growth. I think that we all have each other's back no matter what, on and off the field.



It just contributed to our success.

**Q. I believe the team had a 16-13 lead midway through the fourth quarter. At that point, what happened?**

SHAYLAN AHEARN: I mean, they scored more goals than us after that. That's about it. I don't think that our mindset changed. I don't think that anything besides that scoreboard really changed. I think we all played our hardest throughout that time period. And yeah, maybe a few ground balls or a few goals, or a few defensive plays didn't go our way, but we were playing as a team. They got the better hand of us today. I think that's really the only difference.

**Q. You guys had 17 turnovers today with some of those kind of toward the end of the game that came back to haunt you. What in those final minutes did you see different from the Boston College defense that led to the collapse offensively?**

HANNAH LEUBECKER: We talked about their pressure the whole game, and definitely at the end of the game, they stepped it up but we were expecting that. I think we'd like a couple of those back but that's on everyone. It's not on one person.

**Q. Shaylan, we talked the last couple of rounds about really the dominance of Maryland in the middle of the field, not just on draws, but clearing, disrupting clears, things of that nature. But looked like BC especially late was at least able to match that intensity. What were you seeing in the middle of the field especially later that was making it such kind of a back and forth like that?**

SHAYLAN AHEARN: I think that BC does a good job of, like Hannah said, pressuring. It's all over the field, and again another thing that we were prepared for and we practiced. But I think in the heat of the moment a few didn't -- like I said, didn't go our way. I thought they did a good job coming out, pressuring us, getting us on our hands, and making us do something different than we normally would.

**Q. Shay, after the first six, you were beast mode 16 of 20 draw controls you won. Could you talk about the adjustments you made, and then Hannah if you could talk about the seniors and what they meant to the team?**

SHAYLAN AHEARN: To start off, I guess kind of just I like to get a feel for the draw a little bit. Sometimes it takes me a few to kind of get comfortable, see what the other person

is doing and adapt.

But after that, I have two amazing -- well, four, honestly -- amazing draw girls on the circle that rotate. I have full faith in them. And they have full faith in me.

Because of that, I have more than one draw I'm capable of doing. It can go to myself but it can also go to Shannon and Libby and Hannah and Abby, and I think that makes us super threatening to the other team. And we did a really good job of taking advantage of the different options we had on the circle.

HANNAH LEUBECKER: As far as our seniors, they're everything to us. They're the reasons that our team is so close, that the culture is the way it is. Their leadership on the field is amazing. We look to them. They support us. We support them. But off the field it's even better.

They're all so down to earth. Just great role models for everyone and especially us.

**Q. I know we asked them but from your perspective, kind of those last seven minutes, what did you see? Is there any sense that maybe just the weight of the moment maybe caught up to them?**

COACH REESE: Maybe a little bit. I think for -- it's some crazy things with it. I think there's some moments where inexperience showed a little bit and I've said that from the start. We have a really young team.

These two sitting up here are sophomores as far as eligibility piece goes. And so we look at all our scoring, 14 of our 16 goals were sophomores or younger.

So when it got a little tight, I thought we were a little hesitant. We struggled clearing the ball towards the end of the game there. Sort of got caught back on our heels instead of forward on our toes.

That was tough. I was just looking at these stats, and we didn't win a single draw, I don't think, in the first quarter. And then Shay and our draw people were able to make some adjustments and crushed it in the next three.

So I think that's awesome to see from my perspective, too, just that ability to make those adjustments in games as we go, and it just shows the competitors that those guys are in the moment to keep going. I wanted to credit Shay on that, too, because she doesn't give herself enough credit sometimes.

**Q. You've talked about how this team wasn't necessarily expected to be here when it came to the**

**beginning of the year. How does it feel to obviously reach this stage and get that experience knowing that the team is so young that you can bring so many of these back?**

COACH REESE: It was a great season for us. You guys that I talked to all season know the journey we've been on for the last two years. In '20 the season is shut down; '21 we're conference only, and we didn't make it past the second round. And here the growth of this team and how we have gone on to not only win the Big Ten regular season but the Big Ten Conference tournament, and watch these guys continue to develop and build confidence has been something really remarkable. And I'm really -- I'm happy about that part of it.

Just day in, day out it was like we have something really special here. This was a team that had great chemistry. They genuinely love each other and had so much fun this season. So that was really cool to be a part of.

This isn't enough for them, losing in this game wasn't enough. And that's what's hard. You get to this point -- and I get it only one team can win -- but I think we had something really special. And credit again, Boston College had a great second half, and they had a great last seven minutes of it. Charlotte North stepped up and she had some great goals. She's a special player. So that was tough for us as we went down the stretch.

**Q. You mentioned Charlotte North obviously making those big plays at the end. Do you think there was maybe some sense that last shot might fall to her and then maybe that's why a cutter was missed from the back? What was the defense maybe trying to prepare for on that last possession there?**

COACH REESE: I think -- I don't know, their offense -- they had a bunch of different scorers, too. So it's tough in there. We went into this game, we knew their offense has a lot of powerful weapons on it and anyone can score. They're like our offense. We had a lot of different goals scorers as well, too. She's a great shooter, had some great looks down the wire. I think two of the last three goals were hers, and just that last possession was huge. And some of them were a little unlucky. I know I was upset about a few things out there. But some of the plays were a little unlucky and they capitalize on them. So credit to them.

But their offense together found ways to make it count when they needed to.

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