

# 2022 NCAA Women's Lacrosse Championship

Sunday, May 29, 2022  
Baltimore, Maryland, USA  
Homewood Field



## North Carolina Tar Heels

Jenny Levy

Ally Mastroianni

Jamie Ortega

Sam Geiersbach

Taylor Moreno

Media Conference

North Carolina 12, Boston College 11

JENNY LEVY: Well, first of all, congrats to BC for a great season and a great game today. We knew it was going to be tough and go down to the wire. It doesn't surprise me that that was a one-goal game. We've lost a lot of one-goal games, this crew, over the past couple years in the Final Four game, so it was nice to be on the other side of it, and I always think if you can lose a one-goal game, you can win a one-goal game. That's what was going through my mind.

Want to take a second to not only acknowledge these unbelievable student athletes, I've been gifted for the past five, six, one, year but the players in the locker room that don't get a lot of credit: Taylor, Amanda, Melissa, Reilly Casey, Alyssa Melissa Long, Katie Thompson, Amelia Sheehan, Ella Little, Anna Barton, Brooke Baker -- sorry, I call them all by their last names. Harden, Hoffer, Stella, Elsy, Bailey, they make us better every day in practice and someone asked me yesterday about how we rotate people in, and we do it all the time.

And so this was a total team effort this year from our stars on stage all the way through our roster. So just incredibly proud and grateful at the moment.

**Q. When you decided to transfer here, is this what you pictured?**

SAM GEIERSBACH: Absolutely. I wouldn't have transferred here if I didn't. It was kind of in my mind the

whole time, I want to go somewhere and win whether I'm on the field or not and where I can make an impact if I'm on the field or not. That's why I came to a school like NC to win a National Championship, and I'm just glad we did it.

**Q. When you guys have won, what were the emotions?**

TAYLOR MORENO: I think it was just a lot of emotions. I started crying immediately. I ran to Caitlynn, she was the closest one next to me and we just embraced each other and were like, oh, my God, we did this, like holy s---. But it was just -- I just cried tears of gratitude. It was not sadness this time, just gratitude and looking around, the girls on the field, the girls on the bench, the coaches, being so proud of each and every one of them whether they played or not. Couldn't do it without all of us there. I'm just speechless. It's an indescribable moment.

**Q. Jamie, first of all, I want to say congratulations. Were you concerned that you were going to be facing Charlotte North? Do you feel any pressure and how do you feel now that you came out on top?**

JAMIE ORTEGA: I think, not really. Kudos to her, she's the best player I've ever played against but at the same time it's not about individual players going down to the championship game. It's about all of us. So I knew if our offense was together, our defense was together, the middies and the 30s were together, that we would be unstoppable.

**Q. Taylor, amazing game today. Can you talk to us about, you don't have the best game before, you were candid and honest about that. Talk about how you were able to come out and have an amazing day today.**

TAYLOR MORENO: I think obviously Friday for me stung a little bit because I knew that I'm better than that. But I just had to come forward and acknowledge the fact because I think that's first part in growing as a player is acknowledging when you don't play well and it was awesome that my teammates had my back on Friday and I knew I was the one that had to have they are backs this time. Not to make up for Friday but I didn't play to my

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standard, especially in a game like this.

We just fine tuned everything. I really got a nice text from Phil Barnes, my defensive and goalie coach this morning reminding me just to play my game and focus on what I need to do versus everything else that going on around me.

**Q. Acacia said that she thought this was a showcase for the two-way middies this weekend. Do you feel that way?**

ALLY MASTROIANNI: I think our team and BC showcased what it means to be a two-way middy. We have plenty of them. They have great two-way middies, and it's a hard job. I think defense, offense, everything in between we knew that it would be a battle and luckily we have so much stuff and we were able to run lots of lines, give each other breaks.

And I just think for all the middies out there, all those little girls watching, this was a great game to watch because those are the middy us want to embody on both sides. That's something that we work really hard at and everybody should be proud of their performance.

**Q. Sam, amazing transition to UNC, I assume that you know the majority of your Richmond team was close on the sidelines cheering for you. Do you have a message for them?**

SAM GEIERSBACH: I love them with my whole heart. They are the reason that I'm here. I have no regrets going to Richmond. Loved my time there. But even throughout the transfer process they were pushing me and always supporting me. They are my No. 1 fans and making tee shirts of me and supporting me throughout everything, whether it be on the field, off the field. Those are some of my people and I credit a lot of my success to them because a lot of them have everything to do with it.

**Q. Seeing a face guard for much of the game, trying to find ways to contribute and you have that break away goal will Olivia finds you pretty much halfway down the field. That seemed to be an energy boost for you guy. Is that your intention when you're facing a face guard, do what you can to inject those moments of injury? I believe there was another fast break goal after that. Seemed to be a real swing.**

JAMIE ORTEGA: Absolutely, I had some déjà vu from the last time we played BC. I just wanted to do whatever I can to be a good teammate out that, make sure it's heads up and we have good body language and not letting the score affect us and just play how we play, then that's fine by me.

Doesn't really matter how many points I have, depends what the end result is.

And if that means setting picks or being that spark then I'm fine with that and everybody stepped up, Ally, Sam, Scotty, Dirks, countless names. They all played their best today and I'm really proud of them and did what I could and we came out winning so I'm really happy?

**Q. You come back with a COVID year last year, lots going on. What was the decision-making process like choose to go return to North Carolina?**

TAYLOR MORENO: For me, it was kind of a no-brainer walking off the field last year knowing we had unfinished business and I knew for a fact that our team was headed in the right direction, obviously COVID made that really hard. It made it really hard for us to be together as a team often field and I think that trickled on to our performances on the field last year.

And I think this year, we took a different approach in terms of spending a lot of time with one another and meshing with one another off the field so it showcased on the field. That's one of the things I knew for a fact that this team was capable of and one of the many reasons why I wanted to come back.

JAMIE ORTEGA: It was a very easy decision, once COVID happened, no matter what the result would have been last year, I was going to be here for five years and that's because of the people. I wouldn't be here with any other group. I'm really happy in my decision to stay.

ALLY MASTROIANNI: Me, too, probably best decision of my life. Same thing as them. It's the people and the place is just too good to leave. Wasn't ready to leave just yet and luckily Sam and I got a education, we are getting our master's degrees. Can't complain about anything. This is awesome.

**Q. Ally, at the lowest point of Friday's game, seems like the deck is completely stacked against, do thoughts of last year and all other years, how they ended come back to you and now here you are, championship Sunday, do you think about it?**

ALLY MASTROIANNI: Only, yeah, we were down eight, nine goals. A lot of people asked me that after the game like, oh, did you feel like you were going to lose it? And the answer is no. We have so much confidence in one another and so much belief in one another and we kept reinforcing that with all the little plays, the defensive stops, the checks, the doubles, the goals, one by one and each time we were looking in each other's guys saying, I believe in you, you've

got this and there was never a doubt. Just that belief is what brought us here today and what helped us come out with that win.

TAYLOR MORENO: If I can add to that, every single day in practice, Jeanie will be running different high-pressure situations where our attack is down by a certain amount of goals and we have to work really, really hard against obviously our blue team guys who are essentially if you were to cut the double-team down the middle it's like playing against ourselves. So to sit there and put all the work in for a moment like that really showed on Friday.

**Q. After Friday's game when you found out you were going to playing BC again, were there any thoughts of redemption after last year and the year before and how does it feel to come out on top now?**

JAMIE ORTEGA: I really liked what Jenny said to us after we found out that it was Boston. No matter what, it's just a red team and we're just there to play, doesn't matter if we saw them two times before, five times, didn't matter. We just knew what the outcome would be.

I think we just had to play Carolina lacrosse and have fun and believe in one another and that's exactly what we did.

**Q. Coach Walker-Weinstein said she tried to slow the pace down and keep the tempo slow and you frustrated her offense for a while. How did you attempt to adapt to a slower game?**

JENNY LEVY: People have been doing that to us all year. We weren't riding great in the first half so we challenged our attack to ride better in the second half, third and fourth quarter. Just to put a little bit more pressure on them, knowing that they are playing a little slower.

So we're accustomed to that and if we can take more time off the clock in the ride, it's less time our defense has to sit around and spin the ball a little bit.

But I don't think that affected us today. I thought we were hurried a little about the nearly part of game and I actually liked where we were, I think third quarter, I can't remember, it was either -- I think third quarter.

We got some good looks. We just need to take an extra second. Rachel made some really good saves on us. But I liked the flow of our offense at that point. We made some shifts and some adjustments to try to help people out a little bit, get them a second wind so they can get focused and make a big play. Scottie's game-winning goal at the end, we pulled her off to give her a little breather because she had put in a lot of miles -- we track all this. Took her

out. Gave her a break. Put Nicole in, somebody else said something about transition, we got two in a row, and that's what I thought we kind of came back to life a little bit.

**Q. First of all, congratulations on the win. Both teams have been playing very hard to get to the Finals. You led -- (inaudible) -- were you concerned at that point that he would go again and what just --**

JENNY LEVY: I wasn't concerned. There's a lot of time to be played and I have a lot of trust in my players. But I thought my defensive coordinator, Phil, was not happy with the defense and he started sliding quite a bit. Really he didn't want them sliding that aggressively so he was on them to stop sliding.

I believe one of those goals was an eight-meter and one was like a grub goal that I think got tipped. Again, I didn't feel that their flow was outrageous offensively. I just think an eight-meter goal and tipped goal, we were still in the battle at that point and we weren't concerned. They are a great team. Charlotte North is an incredible player and they were going to go on a run. I had a lot of confidence that our players would respond to that.

**Q. Can you talk to us about your defensive unit as a whole, because I think you guys played amazing defense today and most of the players, with the exception of Taylor, were not --**

JENNY LEVY: Our defense has been great all year and actually, ironically in 2021, I thought it was one of our best defensive units we've ever had and I think this one matches it. Emma Trenchard, her and Charlotte I think are going to be happy to be on the same U.S. team this summer and not having to battle against each other. But I think with Emma and Emily Nalls, Gabi Hall and Brooklyn and Julia have really risen to the occasion this year.

Brooklyn is only a freshman but she played great against Medjid. Let's see, Emily had to take -- matchups are hard and we had to take care of Belle Smith. Our middies had a big job, too. They are very dynamic defensively, it's not just the Charlotte North show. Their staff has done a great job of creating a lot of looks on offense.

But our D is tough one-on-one. It's interesting, sometimes we get into games against other teams and they will say, the foul count is this to that. I'll say, we don't foul a lot. We use our feet. Sometimes you get a cross-check in there but we are not a penalized team because we work really hard to create great one-on-one defenders and that was on display today, and listen, attack is much easier to play in our game because you can't hit and you can't slash and all that kind of stuff.

The talent on our defensive end is really good, and like Ally said, it's hard to play middy in our program but we take a lot of time developing our middies so they can handle both ends of the field.

**Q. The transfer portal has become ever-the-topic in the COVID era, and the balance of how you build a roster, obviously North Carolina has done fine, showing what Sam showed, and seeing Miller on the sidelines, there seems to be a way of integrating these new people to make them seamlessly fit in with the rest of the group. How do you approach that as a coach?**

JENNY LEVY: It's part of the rules right now, so you've got to use it if you have the opportunity to use it. Carolina is not an easy place to bring transfers into because you've got to get into a graduate program. We don't have one-year easy programs that's 500 people deep, a one-year program you can walk out an easy degree. We don't have that. You've got to be academic. You've got to have an interest. It's a process. It's not an easy process at our school.

Sam was on it early. She's in a journalism program getting a masters in there. Andie is in our school of sports administration. Kerrigan is finishing up this year. I think integrating people into our crew is about personalities. You've got to be egoless, and you've got to want to come in and you've got to work. It's not just taking anybody who writes us. We vet it pretty intensely to make sure it's a good fit for our team both personality most important but also positionally as well.

**Q. With a sellout crowd, on ESPN, this is a pre cure sore to one of biggest summers in women's lacrosse. Can you describe this moment in the bigger picture of the sport?**

JENNY LEVY: That's a great question. So I told my assistant before the game, I looked across the field and the stands were packed. Underneath that little pack was home food field, this little sign. I said I grew up watching games here because I grew up probably a mile or two away from here and I used to come and watch the men play in a packed house and here we are in 2022, watching a women's championship game in a packed house. And nothing makes me more excited to see all little girls who want to get autographs from our players, they look up to them.

And a precursor to the summer, like for the first time, they can buy a jersey with their favorite players name on the back. The U.S. team, they have been all over the country

switching hats but we have been all over the country and there's recognition for players and who they are and what position they play and that's so exciting. We are hoping -- hope Wood field is a great place play because of how intimate it is.

I wish it had another 5,000 seats. That would have been really cool. I'm hoping the summer, the venues will be packed as well. We have a lot of traction right now and obviously the World Cup has been picked up by ESPN and so I'm looking forward to just great crowds at the World Cup.

**Q. These last few years have not been what you wanted but you see graduating players all celebrating, what are your thoughts and emotions going on in that moment?**

JENNY LEVY: Right before we played this game, I just wanted it for them so bad because I keep going and I've been here a long time but they only have this one last shot. And they have worked so hard and just because you work hard doesn't mean you're going to get it. And so just for them personally, they are going to spend the rest of their lives as national champions from University of North Carolina and that to me has a special place in my heart because I care about them so much.

**Q. Taylor has been in the program longer than any of her teammates, today 11 saves, what has it been like seeing her after all these years and ending her career on a note like this?**

JENNY LEVY: It was awesome, I thought motivate of the stats are pretty even, I think the margin in the cage was only three saves, I think she had 11 saves today but it was three more than the other goalie, probably the three more that we needed, so she was the margin of victory today in the cage.

We call her "Grandpa" because she's in her sixth year but she's brought so much as a goalie and her talents as an athlete.

But her artistic ability, she just does so much, and now with NIL, she's continuing to grow and so much fun to see her have a game like this today and really be the difference.

**Q. You also had to convince some other players to stay after the COVID?**

JENNY LEVY: It's a process but you heard their response to that question, I didn't have to convince our fifth years to come back. I met with them individually and each of them in the first 30 seconds, yeah, I'm coming back, yeah, I'm

coming back, all right. I think it says a lot about the program, the enjoyment that they have on the team, the quality of their experience and also just the passion they have for the game of lacrosse, it's not beat out of them. They want to continue to play for as long as they can.

**Q. You opened with so many players who are not getting the headlines and the recognition, and I think if you're watching the bench from any vantage point that's not on the field, you can see a lot of the players in with the crowd and their teammates on the sidelines and they might have been as big of a spark as anybody else. During a long delay Friday, did that have any impact in those conversations and keeping people loose and bringing people together?**

JENNY LEVY: Yeah, that was a pretty good delay and helped us a lot quite a bit and gave us a chance to talk about some things there in the locker room but I've got Liv and Mackenzie, those are our Thing One and Thing Two and they are jumping around and dancing. The overall energy of the guys who don't have to walk out on the field and perform on this day, they are really important, prior to games -- inaudible -- she'll pull them in because she comes in off the bench as an attack-mid. She pulls them in and gives them a pep talk on the sidelines. They are very much part of the successes that they have had this season and they have a hard role, they want to play, I get it. And there's different opportunities all year long that we do play a lot of players but down the stretch it gets a little more difficult.

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