

# 2023 NCAA Women's Lacrosse Championship

Friday, May 26, 2023  
Cary, North Carolina, USA  
WakeMed Soccer Park



## Northwestern Wildcats Kelly Amonte Hiller Molly Laliberty Izzy Scane

Media Conference

Northwestern 15, Denver 7

THE MODERATOR: Coach, if you can give your thoughts on the game.

KELLY AMONTE HILLER: Great game. They fought hard against a great Denver team. Denver showed an incredible amount of heart this year and just fought every step of the way. Proved themselves and I was just proud of the way we were able to execute. Still have strong offense even though their defense is still stingy. Really proud of the group and just really feel super grateful to be in the championship game. We're really excited.

**Q. Were there any lessons you learned on the sideline last year that helped your performance this game?**

IZZY SCANE: Yeah, I think this year, especially, I just kind of focused on enjoying myself and kind of making the most of the moments we have together. I think we're very lucky to be here at the Final Four. Every other team in the country is done except the four teams here, and we had an extra week with our best friend.

So just to be able to be on the field has been phenomenal this year. I'm just having the most fun I've had in my life. I think when that gets taken away, you step back and have a lot of gratitude for what you have. This year has been amazing to get back to that, and just enjoy what I'm doing and enjoy the people around me and play and fight hard for the people on the left and right of me. It's been awesome and it's created a lot of joy on our team and enjoyment, and we are having a blast which is all you can ask for.

**Q. A lot of talk will be about the offense, but how do you evaluate your defense's performance today?**

KELLY AMONTE HILLER: Yeah, I was really pleased with the D. We came out and they came out really strong. They stretched us out a little bit and were able to capitalize on some opportunities. Got some key ground balls. And then we made some adjustments and I feel like, you know, the team did a tremendous job from their on out. Just played really clean defensive lacrosse. Was able to cause some turnovers with some charges and whatnot, and you know, that's always what we work for.

So we are very excited about that.

**Q. Something shifted after the second goal. What do you think shifted that momentum to a really explosive offense?**

IZZY SCANE: We kind of got settled in. We knew Denver's defense was going to come out really aggressive, so it took a second to punch back with that. Our plan going in was to be as aggressive going at them as they came at us. Defense started making some big stops, and because of that we wanted to share the momentum and put some in the back of the cage for them.

So when they were coming up, we went down the field, we tried to take our time, run our offense and focus on ourselves, and started hitting the back of the cage and things started rolling. It's awesome you can when get momentum and keep it, it's a great thing.

**Q. Talk about your transition at Northwestern this year; you've got lot of fans on the sidelines. Seemed like you're seamlessly part of the team.**

MOLLY LALIBERTY: Yeah, I feel really grateful that everybody here at Northwestern has welcomed me with open arms, and also really grateful that Kelly and the coaching staff were willing to take a risk on me, because it is a bit of a jump from D3 to D1.

But at the end of the day it's still lacrosse and I'm out there doing what I love with the people that I love. When I just fall back on that, that's when it's as easy as it could be. I mean, if you break it down to be as simple as it can be, it's



just stopping the ball, which is just one little thing.

So you know, as long as I can just go out there and have fun and focus on doing my job, that's when we are successful as a team.

**Q. Eight saves, and you talked about the fans and feeding off them. What does it mean to have such enthusiastic fans and be able to feed off that?**

MOLLY LALIBERTY: Yeah, first and foremost, the defenders in front of me and the midfielders make my job so much easier. They make me look much better, and it's a thankless job. So I'm so grateful for everything that they do.

Having the fans is just a cherry on top. I mean, it could be us in an empty stadium and I would still be having just as much fun but having our fans, our friends, family, you know, all my girls Tufts from were here, too, so I think just feeling that love just really makes it so much more exciting.

**Q. Izzy, going into this game, Denver had not conceded more than nine goals in a single contest. What allowed you guys to pick them apart?**

IZZY SCANE: Yeah, I think going into the game, we really tried to take our attention away from all the talk about Denver's defense, all the discussion about how great they were, and obviously they are phenomenal. They have done an amazing job this year, and don't want to take any credit away from that at all.

We just made sure we focused on ourselves and our offense and knowing we can go into games and score lots of goals and making sure that's what we were doing and running our offense and going at them as hard as we could, and again it worked out well. A lots of girls were creating lots of opportunities for each other and playing really gritty and tough and making sure we were getting a knee and getting those calls and finishing the shots when we had them.

It was awesome. Our offense did a great job of kind of moving the ball and creating opportunities for each other and just focusing on our offense and not as much their defense, which is I think why we were able to be successful.

**Q. Erin Coykendall had a couple goals today. What's your dynamic like?**

IZZY SCANE: She's phenomenal. I said this before I would not be half the player I was without her on the field and same thing goes for the other attackers. She's

absolutely phenomenal and she's the smartest player I've ever played with. We have a good relationship on and off the field. Thankfully I've known her for a very long time and because of that we go out and have blast, and she makes me look great and I try to do the same for her.

She's really kind of running the offense out there and she does a great job of making us all look good. It's a blast. I'm so happy I'm back with her to play for another year, and yeah, we are just having fun.

**Q. How does it feel to be back in that game?**

KELLY AMONTE HILLER: It feels unbelievable. I think when you continue to win championships, you kind of just expect it from yourself, and when that doesn't happen, you get really humbled and you realize what you have and how hard it really is. There's so many great programs out there that are fighting hard every single day for the same thing.

So for us to be the last two -- one of the last two teams standing, we're really, really grateful for that and we are trying to soak up this opportunity and just savor every moment and hopefully we can just go out there and play hard again on Sunday.

**Q. How important was the ride today and how important has the ride been throughout the season?**

KELLY AMONTE HILLER: Yeah, absolutely, one of the things that we definitely keyed in on this week, working hard at it, I think that in our previous game as well against Loyola, we caused a lot of turnovers on the ride. Our attack was truly amazing in that aspect, and you know, very disciplined in that, too.

So it has been something that we have been really keying in on and we think is an X-factor for us and we'll continue to fight hard on Sunday as well.

**Q. What does it mean to you guys to help bring this program back to its national title?**

IZZY SCANE: Yeah, right when I started playing lacrosse was when Northwestern was on their streak of winning national championships and I said, okay, I'm going to play for Northwestern not knowing anything about the program and knowing nothing about the school; that was just the team to be on.

It's been a dream come true to be here and find success so far in my time here. Obviously we have not done the full thing, but just to be anywhere near the discussion of teams like she's had in the past is an honor, and I've really looked up to all the girls who have come through Northwestern,

Kelly and the coaching staff. And to kind of be back in that position and have the opportunity to kind of bring that back to Northwestern is phenomenal and just super, super exciting, and I'm very, very thankful for it, and yeah, it's awesome.

MOLLY LALIBERTY: To echo that sentiment, when I came here, obviously I didn't really know the girls here that well, so all I really knew was what Kelly and Scott and the coaching staff had to offer.

As soon as I knew it was going to be a possibility to come here, I jumped at the opportunity because getting to play on this team and with this coaching staff is truly an honor, and then additionally get to go do it with 35 other girls that I love so much, that's truly a gift.

So really, really grateful just to be here at all. But like as you said, to have made it to the championship game, that just adds to this amazing year.

**Q. Was there a moment where you felt -- inaudible.**

MOLLY LALIBERTY: Yeah, I mean, I think one thing about our defense is that we are -- we worked really hard this year to stick together in the difficult moments. It took a lot of work on and off the field to get to the place we are and to have the connections that we have. So I think there was just this trust that we would get to playing our game.

You know, we started off a little bit slow and that's okay. We made some adjustments. No one is going to be perfect. But I'm really proud of the defense and everyone on the field for adjusting to what was thrown at us, and you know, really coming out strong after those first four goals and just really shutting them down.

**Q. Looking into Sunday, is there anything that you would like to say change or any adjustments you would like to make?**

KELLY AMONTE HILLER: I think just building off of today, we know it's going to be a totally new game and a different opponent. So just really building on some of the things that we did well today and just going out there and really having a full effort and having a lot of fun. That's the biggest thing. I think this group has done that and just continue to do that on Sunday.

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