

# 2024 NCAA Women's Lacrosse Championship

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Cary, North Carolina, USA  
WakeMed Soccer Park



## Boston College Eagles Acacia Walker-Weinstein Shea Dolce Kayla Martello

Media Conference

Boston College - 14, Northwestern - 13

THE MODERATOR: We now welcome the National Champion 2024 Boston College Eagles. Second National Championship in program history. Boston College becomes the eighth Division I program with multiple National Championships.

We're joined by head coach Acacia Walker-Weinstein, student-athletes Kayla Martello and Shea Dolce.

ACACIA WALKER-WEINSTEIN: I'm so proud of our team and all the people that make something like this happen. This sport has come a long way from when I started, and we have so much support from our administration and from our community and from our school, and we've just come a long way.

I'm so proud of the girls and so proud of the seniors. I asked them to lead the way all season, and they did just that. It's so difficult to do what they just did against a team like Northwestern, but I'm just so proud of them, and I'm so happy to see their dedication pay off and their unselfishness because, to win a championship is the hardest thing to do in team sports, and these guys believed from the beginning, made a lot of changes to our operation, and they were bought in the whole time. I'm just really proud.

**Q. Shea, the last minute, the last 30 seconds specifically, I mean, there was a time early in the game where maybe it didn't feel like you were seeing the ball, clearly seeing it later. Could you just walk us through that last minute and 30 seconds of what you were seeing.**

SHEA DOLCE: I kind of blacked out a little bit, but we've been put in those situations defensively this year multiple times. Close games that came down to the wire with a defensive stop. I think that that moment is something that I've mentally prepared for ever since I got to college.

My defenders had my back the full first half when I wasn't playing my best game, and I knew it was time that I had to have their back. I just knew that Northwestern has amazing threats, amazing shooters, and they were going to take some shots, and I was ready to see it.

I honestly don't know how I got a piece of it, but somehow -- I think it hit my foot maybe. I was locked in. I knew I had to have my team's back because they had mine. Honestly, I don't remember much of it.

**Q. Coach, first congratulations on the title. It seemed like the Northwestern defense was wearing down a little bit in the fourth quarter. Did you sort of sense that and sort of decide to turn the pressure and spread out and get some more cutting, take advantage of that?**

ACACIA WALKER-WEINSTEIN: The nature of their defense was really aggressive. So we just -- I think both Northwestern and us, our tanks were running low, but we just had to spread out and let the ball do a lot of the work.

The girls did a great job executing Sammy's adjustments. That's really difficult to play against such an aggressive defense with so many lethal athletes, but our girls were dialed in, and they believed the whole time. Once we got close, I think they knew they could win.

**Q. Shea, you mentioned -- obviously Northwestern has a great offense. You're familiar with them from last year. What does it mean to you, even though last year didn't end the way you guys wanted to, you were able to come back this year and come out on the winning end?**

SHEA DOLCE: I've been thinking about it every single day since last year. That's a moment I wanted back. Sure enough, we were in the same position this year. We've



been mentally ready for it since that last game, and it means the world that we could have this moment and be on the flip side.

Yeah, I just can't describe it. It's a dream come true.

**Q. Kayla, it seems like maybe sometimes with all the stars that align at BC, maybe your name, it doesn't get all the headlines for things like that, when you have moments like you've had in the second quarter and things like that. How do you handle playing your game and dealing with that? Then for Coach, your thoughts on Kayla.**

KAYLA MARTELLO: I think that at the end of the day, I don't really care what happens to me. I want to win. I think our team buys into that. Honestly we never talk about any of the awards or whatever, names that come across. We've had one goal all season, and we buy into that, and it's winning.

I don't really think about that, just do what I have to do to help my teammates win.

ACACIA WALKER-WEINSTEIN: I started to like hysterically crying when we looked at Sammy and we heard Kayla's name on MVP because she's just a remarkable kid to coach because she is such a hard worker and is perfectly happy to sit in the background and let other people do it.

Meanwhile, you look at the stat sheet, and she had a quiet eight goals. She's very prepared for these big moments. That's why I think she's performing so well in these tight games, in the ACC Championship and again today, because she's prepared and her body's ready.

She's a joy to coach, and I'm just so happy to have her success because she deserves it. She's one of the best. She's one of the greatest ever.

**Q. Coach, 10 assists for you guys today on 14 goals. What do you credit the offensive flow to today, especially in the second half?**

ACACIA WALKER-WEINSTEIN: 10?

KAYLA MARTELLO: That's a lot.

ACACIA WALKER-WEINSTEIN: I love it, it's unselfish. You have to kind of string together ball movement to score on the defense, but it can be really frustrating to play against this aggressive defense, but I think our girls just dug in and knew to move the ball.

It's a reflection of who they are as people. They're unselfish, and they'll do whatever it takes to win.

**Q. Another question for Coach. This is seven tries, seven years and second championship. Tell me a little bit about it. I saw you kind of had a moment with some of your coaches down there. What are the emotions around this?**

ACACIA WALKER-WEINSTEIN: I think the losses along the way were part of this process. I'm not glorifying losing by any means, but I do think maybe I, our staff, our players needed to be maybe hardened a bit to be ready for this moment, and I think some of the losses did just that.

It's not easy. It's not easy to get to the National Championship. It's not easy to win it. It's almost impossible. Everything has to be aligned. So I think along the way, some of those heartbreaking losses just taught us something else about what we needed to fix, or where we needed to be better or smarter.

So I think it's a part of the process, and here today we're on the other side of it.

**Q. Going into a game like this, planning defensively, you've got multiple players that you have to set a game plan for. Does it tend to be that you figure one or two of them are basically going to get what they're going to get and try to take the third part away, or do you try to chip away from each of the three?**

ACACIA WALKER-WEINSTEIN: With these guys, it's really difficult to figure out the game plan. I think that would be a great strategy to give Izzy five goals and try to stop everybody else, whatever it may be. But it's not really the nature of today just because those guys have so many threats.

So I think we just -- Jen, my defensive coordinator, made incredible adjustments throughout the game, and Madison Taylor started to get hot. We switched what we were doing with her. When Izzy got hot, we switched what we were doing with her. So I think we were prepared to have a lot of those adjustments.

I think my defensive coordinator is the smartest in the country, and her adjustments always work. But against this offense, you've got to be prepared with five or six plans, and Jen's plans always work.

**Q. Coach, you have a history of bringing in transfers and then winning a Championship. Obviously the COVID season, then the first full season in Charlotte, you win a championship, and you had three very**

**impactful transfers this year. How did they fit into your plan, and what do you look for when you going into the process of the transfer portal?**

ACACIA WALKER-WEINSTEIN: Those girls, you know Julia Greene, Becky, Rachel, and Emma, they're unselfish, which I think is the common denominator with all BC lacrosse players, but they just came in, and they were on board for whatever. Those girls were thirsty to learn and thirsty to win.

They did a nice job figuring out what BC lacrosse is all about, which isn't easy when you come in from the transfer portal, but they were so bought in and unselfish, they fit in right away, but not only that, and evolved into leaders.

Becky is one of the best leaders we've had, and she and Syd back there are phenomenal.

I give a lot of credit to the girls who are not transferring, my girls that we recruited -- sorry, our girls that we recruited. They welcomed the transfers, and they're okay with it because they're not threatened by it. They know, hey, if these girls are going to help us win, so be it. Get on board, open arms. I do, I think it's the culture of these guys. They're not threatened. They'll do anything to win.

**Q. I'm a student at Boston College, so I've been covering the beat the whole year. I've really seen the preparation of this team. One of my questions that I had to ask is how does it feel to bring this National Championship win back home to Chestnut Hill, especially with -- Coach has been mentioning this whole time -- really the senior class and what makes it special is that they won the National Championship as freshmen and now they again won it as seniors. How does that really feel, especially as a program?**

KAYLA MARTELLO: I think it is amazing, and I think the senior class -- obviously I'm a part of it, but the people I'm with are the most amazing girls in the country. Acacia did an amazing job of finding us and bringing us together. Since our freshman year, we have been hungry for this. And obviously we had two big losses the last two years. Our time is book ended, and we have been searching for that all year.

It's amazing to bring that back, and it's also amazing to have the younger girls get the feeling of winning a National Championship. When we were here, we had it when we were young, and we know how helpful that can be moving forward. It feels amazing, and a dream come true.

SHEA DOLCE: Also, this senior class, if you see them on the field, they are the best role models that you could ever

ask for. As younger teammates, underclassmen coming in, they were the most amazing, special group of girls to welcome us. They taught us what true leadership was, and they showed it day in and day out. They show it at practice. They show it off the field. And they show it in big games like this.

Knowing we have those people to look to on the field when times get rough, it's the most special thing. This group of seniors, we wanted it do it for them, and we did. It's just amazing.

**Q. Coach, you switched Abbey into the draws in the second quarter, and she kind of stabilized things for the rest of the game. How important was she?**

ACACIA WALKER-WEINSTEIN: She's amazing. She plays a really big role. Between she and Ryan, they're such a great combination because they offer two totally different things. They work all week long leading up to the games. In the middle of the game, they're constantly coaching each other.

Today she was huge. Friday she was huge. Ryan always starts us off so strong. And I'm just proud of her because she's got such a unique style, and for such a young player, kind of like Shea, it's pretty remarkable to go in at such a big stage and be able to turn the game around. She was the stabilizer today.

But I give a lot of credit to Ryan who has taught her, and I love the way the two of those kind of go back and forth and do whatever it takes for the win.

**Q. The fouls were 31-19, 18-8 at halftime. How do you kind of look at that and kind of keep the girls under control?**

ACACIA WALKER-WEINSTEIN: The fouls?

**Q. Yes.**

ACACIA WALKER-WEINSTEIN: That was really frustrating in the first quarter, in the second quarter. We were getting a lot of fouls called on us that we haven't been called for all year. So it was a little alarming.

But we just decided that we were going to have to face Northwestern, and unfortunately some of the officiating as well. Their job is really difficult, especially in the National Championship with these two very aggressive teams. I know their job is difficult. It was a little scary there in the beginning because I thought we couldn't buy a call.

They did a great job. They work hard. I'm grateful for the

officials. And I'm just proud our girls could sort of get around it and win together despite some of the adversity.

**Q. A couple of hours ago you were down 6-0 in the first quarter, and it seemed bleak. Obviously you've been there before, and you have a great pedigree. At the same time, you were down six goals. Was there a conversation that was had or any pep talks or adjustments strategically that led to the comeback? What do you think contributed to it?**

SHEA DOLCE: I give a lot of credit to our senior group. We talk about them a lot. That's the group that really stepped up and talked to the team. Even without the coaches there, talked to us, made sure we were all level headed, and we knew that there was so much game left to be played, that we couldn't dwell on those six goals that just happened.

They were incredible -- Sydney Scales, Kayla, Belle, Becky, I could go on. They were the ones who stood up, and they had those conversations and got us back in the game. Yeah, all credit to them.

KAYLA MARTELLO: I think offensively it was all things in our control. So we kind of brought it in as a group for attackers first, just making sure we were supporting the midis. They were busting their butts up-and-down the field.

So as the attackers, we had to pull ourselves together and kind of flipped that switch for them. The defense had our backs that whole time, so we needed to have theirs. So we slowly one-by-one called ourselves out on that.

**Q. Just comment on that buzzer-beating goal at the end of the quarter and the impact that had on your team. The goal with one second left.**

ACACIA WALKER-WEINSTEIN: Yeah, that was outrageous. I almost missed it.

McKenna practices that shot a lot, every day.

SHEA DOLCE: Every single day.

ACACIA WALKER-WEINSTEIN: But she knew the time on the clock, which has been a huge thing for her. She didn't have a great angle shooting overhand. And the deception and the decision to make that was so clutch. Andrea Reynolds fed that in. One of Andrea's strongest things is provision, and her scoring those passes in. For McKenna having the wherewithal, knowing if she turned the girl was on her, if she just shot that sort of behind the back-up, it was going to go in probably out of deception, I would say.

I'm just really proud of her. I think it was what we needed to spark ourselves and our belief and really just like the energy.

**Q. Just for each of you to take me through what was the messaging after that initial 6-0 deficit.**

ACACIA WALKER-WEINSTEIN: I don't remember.

SHEA DOLCE: For myself, I know that I didn't feel like I was playing at my best. I have the best goalie coach, Callahan Kent, and she pulled me aside and made sure I was level headed. I had to put the six goals behind me personally. It wasn't going to happen all at once.

On my side, I decided to forget that. Callahan talked to me. As a defense, Jen talked to us. It was kind of a calming presence because we knew we could do it.

KAYLA MARTELLO: I think offensively we had a lot of adjustments to make, and we did a good job of taking that and running with it. I also think that in that first quarter we were just plain scared of them, and there was nothing to be scared of. Just getting our mindset, the fact that we're great, and there's nothing to be afraid of. We just have to play our game.

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