

2026 NCAA Women's Lacrosse Championship

Thursday, May 21, 2026

Chicago, Illinois, USA

Martin Stadium at Northwestern

Maryland Terrapins

Cathy Reese

Jordan Lipkin

Maddy Sterlins

Kayla Gilmore

Semifinals Media Conference



to make it back here, and I think it just makes it extra sweet and even bittersweet that we've done it and we've proved to ourselves that the Tarps are here and we are here to fight and we are capable of winning all of it.

I think it's awesome that we have made it back here. It's like bookending our career, but we have not done it yet. I think that's the most exciting part about it.

Q. Jordan, what feels different about this team compared to the one you competed on in 2022?

JORDAN LIPKIN: I mean, at the end of the day, Maryland culture is Maryland culture, so not much changes in that aspect.

I think I'm older now and I have experience. From that aspect, I have a different role than that year, that was my freshman year.

But at the end of the day our culture is the same. We compete every day with one another. We have high expectations for ourselves and we are pushing each other. Like even today, we're never going to stop working hard and pushing the barrier and seeing how far we can get, and I think that kind of stays the same from our 2022 season. The biggest change is, I guess, the experience I've gained and the different role I've taken on this year.

Q. Throughout your prep this UNC draw team, what stands out about that unit, and how do you think can you have a successful day in the circle?

KAYLA GILMORE: Yeah, I think obviously the draw is one of the most important parts of the game. Kind of just focusing on ourselves and things that we can strategize throughout the game.

Obviously we are going to have to make in in-game adjustments. They are a very well-coached draw unit, very good. They have a few different girls who take it. So kind of preparing for each of them and the things that they do, but just really focusing on ourselves and how we can get better each and every day leading up into the game.

CATHY REESE: Really excited to be competing this weekend and looking forward to a great weekend of lacrosse.

Like to initially thank Northwestern for hosting this event, and thank the NCAA committee for all of their hard work that they have put in to making this a wonderful weekend for all of the teams and the student athletes.

So we are excited to be here. We're fired up for the opportunity to compete, and looking forward to our game tomorrow.

Q. You understand that what it takes to reach this stage after 2022. What about this year has allowed the group to return and what does it mean to close out your careers on this stage?

JORDAN LIPKIN: It means everything. You get a taste of here and you fight to get back here. At the end of the day, it just comes down to buying in with the people you have in your locker room. Everything you do, you work hard together, and the love you have for one another, what brings you here.

And I think having the right people in the locker room, and like everyone just giving everything they have got every day, and believing and trusting the process helps us get back here.

MADDY STERLING: Yeah, I think this group this year is really special. We keep on saying that every day at practice. Us being fifth-years now, we've been motivated the whole year. We've been motivated our whole careers



Q. The Big Ten has shown its strength this year. How does it feel to be part of such a great conference?

MADDY STERLING: It's awesome we get to compete against the best of the best teams every single game we play. Our past, like, ten games have all been Big Ten games, and that's just showing we are playing the best competition possible.

And we are setting ourselves up for success in every way possible. We have been put in every position this season, and we have showed what we are capable of. I think it's just set us up for success.

JORDAN LIPKIN: Yeah, I agree. Like the confidence it gives you playing the best teams in the country. Like Maddy said, we have been put in kind of every situation so far this season. So just a confidence booster. We know we have played the best of the best, and we are ready to keep fighting and keep pushing.

KAYLA GILMORE: Yeah, I think at the end of the day, it's why you come here. Obviously to compete for a National Championship game, but also to push yourself each and every day. With our conference. There's no rest games. There's no easy games, and every game going to be a battle.

Going into every game, we kind of have that standard set, and it's just another game as we compete for the Final Four now.

Q. Obviously Jordan and Maddy have their own experience playing in championship weekend, but this will be your first time this coming Friday. What can you recall, just your first memory of watching championship weekend, and how exciting of an opportunity is it to be to be here?

MADDY STERLING: For any young lacrosse player, it's a dream to compete in a Final Four and be on the biggest stage. Maryland actually played at Stony Brook -- I'm from Long Island, so they played at Stony Brook, and I remember that was my first Final Four that I had gone to.

It just an unbelievable experience and there truly isn't another group of girls that I would rather compete for and with every day. We just push each other, and obviously I'm a little bit younger than Maddy and Jordan. But you know, in the beginning of the season, we kind of just made like this puzzle piece. Just everyone has a super important role and special piece to our puzzle this year, and we all kind of bought into that.

It's just been really special to see this group of girls

compete and get better each and every day and fight for something bigger than ourselves, and now we are finally on this stage. It's just really exciting.

Q. With this being the first championship weekend appearance for this group since 2022, what have you learned in these years since about yourself as a coach, and how have you seen the program really grow through the adversity and challenges in getting back to this stage?

CATHY REESE: Feels like a while since '22 to be back here, and it's hard to get here. I think I've learned to appreciate that over the past however years is the fight that it takes and the talent that is out there competing every single day for so many great teams.

It's just tough to get to this point. So the work that these guys have put in after our loss last year that ended our season; the work that they put in in the off-season to prepare themselves to come back and be ready to rock and roll was phenomenal. It gave us a really about foundation going into the start of our fall.

And I knew this group was something special. The way that people were playing together, how much fun they were having together, the chemistry that they continued to build, we knew that we had something special going into this year. And for them to prove that and to get to this point has just been -- it's been a really about feeling.

It's just hard to play on this stage. There's so many great teams out there and there's so many great athletes, not just this stage, but in Division I lacrosse. And every game is a battle, and to get to this point is something we're really proud of.

Q. I guess adding on to that, over the course of this year, what have you and this team learned through the wins and the losses that have got to you this point?

CATHY REESE: Your question to the girls about the Big Ten, it's just been a battle. Like every game is physical, is a battle this season. We have had games where we won by one; we won by one in overtime; we lost by one; we lost by one in overtime. We've got smoked. We've won by a lot.

We've had the experience, or so many different experiences across the board, and I think that's really just prepared our team for anything. I love the grit that this team has. I love their no-quit mentality and attitude, and that they never give up, and that's something that we've seen as we've gone through this season.



So I think all of these games leading up to this have really just prepared us for the opportunity that we have ahead of us.

Q. Obviously Jordan was on your 2022 Final Four run. How have you seen her grow since her freshman year up till now?

CATHY REESE: I think the experience is a huge part of our success this season, right. Like we brought in two transfers on offense that both have a lot of experience playing at the highest level.

And then Jordan having had that experience as a freshman of getting on the field and kind of seeing -- seeing the talent level out there and the teams that you're competing at, but she has stepped in now as a two-year captain for us in her fifth year, and her and Maddy as fifth years are leading the way on this team.

Her experience has just really been a huge part of our offensive success, and I think that's gained from playing at the highest level, playing against the best teams day-in and day-out.

Again, her, Maddy and Kennedy were my three that were on that team, and Maddy and Kennedy weren't playing that year. So having seen what it looks like to compete in a Final Four, see the kind of position that they were in, they can bring that and kind of inspire other people around them and get them prepared for this moment.

Q. You mentioned the two transfers, Kristen and Keely. Your program has been relatively selective in evaluating transfer talent. What stood out in terms of what those two would bring to your program, and what have you seen from when they stepped in to this point now in terms of making impact and the leadership that they have brought to this group and allowing this offense to be clicking at this time?

CATHY REESE: I think offensively, I think we are a really balanced offense. We have anybody on the field at any given time can score, can be dangerous. They can feed. They can finish inside. They can dodge.

So when we were looking to bring them in, both of them brought those things, those things, those traits; that they were all-around great players with good field sense having played at two very strong programs.

And we were looking for more balance on offense. Kori has done a lot for us as a two-way midfielder and graduating a lot of the people we did and having a lot of young attackers coming up in the mix. We were looking for

people that could help fill those roles, and those two stepped right in. They have great game sense and great composure on the offensive end. They can handle pressure. They can read defenses.

And so we have really benefitted from the two of their calmness and game sense as we've gone into this season.

Q. I wanting to back to the Michigan game and ask if that was in any way a turning for your team.

CATHY REESE: Was I there? I would like to forget about that one -- no, thanks.

It was one of these moments where Michigan played, they were outstanding. It felt like they couldn't do anything wrong and we could do everything wrong. And so it was that recognition and the realization that you need to bring your best every single play and every single opportunity that you have. And we did. We learned from that.

We talked about it, and you know, it's only a failure if you let it be a failure. For us it, was -- yes, maybe was a turning point for us to kind of talk through things and recognize that everybody's role is important. Every play is important. Every ground ball is important. Every caught ball is important.

We responded from that well as we went into the Big Ten Tournament, and I think that's been something that has shown us that you really need to bring your best every opportunity that you get.

Q. UNC has the highest-scoring offense in the country. Does playing in the Big Ten give you confidence heading into Friday?

CATHY REESE: UNC is a great team, and obviously they had a great season this season and great season last year. We know what their offense is capable of, and they are very deep and very talented across the board. For us, we haven't played them. No one on this team has played them, and so it's a new opponent for us.

We have, yes, the experience of competing in the Big Ten, and with three Big Ten teams here in the championship weekend, it shows the strength of the conference and the strength of the battles that we've had game-in and game-out.

I'll see when we play. I'd like to think we are prepared and battle-tested and we're ready to rise to the challenge. Everybody is ready to put their best foot forward and play their best game of Maryland lacrosse this season on Friday.



Q. Does Chloe compare to any player you've coached against in your career and how do you prepare for a player like her?

CATHY REESE: I don't know. Listen, Chloe, she's a fantastic player, and she's so fun to watch, right. She never stops moving. She's dangerous off-ball. She's dangerous with the ball. She can score. She can do it all.

The reason why she was the Tewaaraton winner as a freshman, that was well-earned and well-deserved. And I don't know that we've -- she's her own, unique style, and I don't know that she's a player anyone's found a way to stop.

So, you know, our focus is we respect her. I've enjoyed watching her. I'm a big fan. And we'll just work to play our best team defense and try to put our goalie in a place to make saves against a really talented offense.

Q. Coach Levy talked about how some factors may threaten lacrosse if the sport doesn't grow. In the era of revenue sharing and House settlement, how difficult is it to grow the sport at the college level?

CATHY REESE: I think there are so many challenges right now in the world we live in, and it can go from anywhere stuff like that, to NIL to teams that have different budgets, scholarship numbers and facilities roster limits, and rules, right. Rules are different at all different levels and different states.

There's so many areas of growth and challenges for lacrosse and for Olympic sports as a whole that I don't even know where to start.

But for us and where we are, it's to focus on making the most of what we have, what our university has given us what we work for, how we can continue to learn from the other teams, how we can continue to learn from the different things that are out there and how we can continue to grow our program in the best way possible.

Q. How important is your team's acceptance of your 1-0 message been when it comes to these win-or-go-home games?

CATHY REESE: Well, you know, we talk about 1-0, and I think it's extended more, it's not just about out comes of games. It's about competing each play, and then you have to let it go, right. You're fighting for a draw control and we lose it, with you we lost that one. Let it go. Move on to the next. What's the next play. Let's make a defensive stop. We make a defensive stop, good job. We won that

moment. Go into the next.

Our team has really bought into that, and that's something we keep reiterating as coaches because there's a tendency to get caught up in things that could kind of haunt you where it was the gold fish memory -- was that Ted Lasso or something? That we could just let things go and focus on the next play. It's really in a next play mentality that's driven our team this season.

For me to sit on the outside as a coach and watch them, I'm proud of their grit and toughness and their willingness to keep fighting no matter what situation they are in.

So we'll keep pushing that and focusing on that one play at a time.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports