

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: Second Round - Indiana vs South Carolina

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Columbia, South Carolina, USA
Colonial Life Arena

Indiana Hoosiers Coach Teri Moren Karoline Striplin Sydney Parrish

Media Conference

Q. Sydney, I know South Carolina is a different team than last year. What has been the conversation of what you guys have to do tomorrow to obviously win?

SYDNEY PARRISH: I think there is a few key things. Like you said they are different from last year. They still pride themselves on offensive rebounding and having second chance opportunities. I think they lead the country also in transition play and they are really quick down the court reporter.

Just trying to get matched up as fast as possible, making sure we box out, and limit those second chance possessions.

Q. Does it feel like you guys are playing in a mecca of college basketball when you come here?

SYDNEY PARRISH: Yeah, of course. I think it's a really special place. First of all, it's really hard to win here, as a lot of people know. Just at the height of where women's basketball is right now, where South Carolina women's basketball is right now, it is a very special place.

We know it will be sold out and there will be like 15,000 people rooting against us. I think that's what makes March Madness really special. We're in a position where anything can happen. I think we have a 4% chance of winning and I think South Carolina has lost one game here in the last four years or something crazy.

But this is like the moments we grew up wanting, you know? We grow up watching March Madness, watching upsets, and we're put in a position where we have the



potential to beat a team that also ended our season last year.

KAROLINE STRIPLIN: Yeah, it's definitely a huge opportunity for us to play here. We've known that since the moment our name was called. Also had a lot of games that I feel like prepared us for this moment in the Big Ten. We were on the road at a lot of huge crowds. One that comes to mind is Iowa. Even like Michigan State brought like the loudest crowd I felt like of the whole season.

It's going to be a great opportunity to play at their place. Fans are going to bring a lot of energy and we're going to try and quiet them as much as we can.

Q. You've taken different paths to get here. What has your time in an Indiana uniform meant to you and what do you want fans to remember you by?

KAROLINE STRIPLIN: It's really meant a lot. I am just extremely thankful to be able to have finished my career here. Coach Moren allowing me to step into the starting lineup was just really special, and I'm really grateful to just put on the uniform that so many people have paved the way to help get back to this March Madness stage.

I feel like it's really special and it means everything. I'm really thankful that I've been able to play with players like Syd and everyone on my specific team. But really means a lot for all the people that have paved the way.

SYDNEY PARRISH: I don't know if I can like put into words what it's meant to be able to come and play for Indiana after transferring. It's like I came home to play in front of family, friends, so many amazing people.

Like Karo said, the players that paved the way before us, they're the ones that have done the work to make IU women's basketball be one of the power houses that continually comes back to the NCAA tournament. That's really special to be a part of as well.

But it's just so special to be able to represent my home state, play for a coach like Coach Moren, and I think that's a big reason why like you want to play so far into the



tournament, because I don't want it to be my last time putting on the Indiana jersey.

Q. Sydney, I know you said it's a different South Carolina team from last year. Does playing them as close as you did last year, anything you can take from that experience headed into this game?

SYDNEY PARRISH: Of course. I think it gives us a little bit of motivation. When we got the seeding, knowing our second game would be against South Carolina, it gave us a little bit of hope knowing that we did play them so closely last year.

Obviously we were down big going into the second half, but it showed our character and how we prepared and we didn't take our foot of the gas and didn't let up coming into the second half.

Just watching some of the film from last year as well, we obviously did. South Carolina does have a lot of the same players and they -- some of their bench players are big number players this year.

Looking back at the film is definitely going to help us.

Q. Sydney, how does it feel? What type of emotions are you experiencing knowing that you're facing one of your best friends for a second straight year? Knowing at the end of the day one of you guys is going to end the other agency college career?

SYDNEY PARRISH: Well, that's sad to think about. I didn't really think about it that way.

If we do put it in that way, one of our careers is going to end at the end the buzzer tomorrow. Just thinking back to like the moment we stepped foot on campus as freshmen, we were 18 year olds who had no idea what anything about college basketball was.

We didn't know what we were doing coming into college during COVID-19, what wildfires were in the Pacific Northwest. Just things that we came in to college together and knowing that it might be one of our last games come tomorrow, it's just a special thing to share with her.

She was the first person to text me the moment our names got called on Selection Sunday. It's special to have somebody on the other side of the court that obviously we're going to be competitive, but at the end of the day she's one of my best friends, one of my sisters. She's family.

Q. For both you guys, what does it mean to come to a

program that the expectation is the NCAA tournament? Six straight tournaments, now seven with this year. What's the expectation or what it is like to play for a team that that is the standard that Coach Moren set?

SYDNEY PARRISH: I think that's a big reason why Karoline and I decided to transfer to Indiana. It is an expectation to make the tournament. Even though maybe the season overall didn't go exactly how we wanted. We wanted a couple more wins in the record.

But at the end of the day we made it to the NCAA tournament, and that's one of our main goals. It's not just to make it, but it's to win manage the NCAA tournament. People who play in the tournament know how hard it is to win, and just to get that one win yesterday was a huge success for us.

We have to realize that, that it's a big success, but we are also trained to win in the NCAA tournament.

KAROLINE STRIPLIN: Yeah, like Sydney said, I came here with expectations of making it to the tournament, and I'm really thankful we did. But I think what makes the tournament special is it's basically a new season. It's two teams just facing head to head. Whoever is playing the best that night is going to win.

So I'm excited to go head to head tomorrow.

Q. Karoline, what sort of individual challenge does the South Carolina post defense provide for you as a player?

KAROLINE STRIPLIN: Obviously they're all really long, athletic. They're really experienced players. Like Sydney said, the people that were on the bench last year are in starting roles and people that I played against since I stepped foot in college and back to high school in AAU.

I feel like that might pose a strength, but you have to be prepared. They like to block shots and are really smart and know how to play defense well. Just going to come down to me executing what I know Coach Moren wants me to do.

Q. As seniors who have experience in the NCAA tournament, how have you been able to help the younger teammates?

KAROLINE STRIPLIN: Yeah, I think that we knew coming in that it was kind of preached that it's really hard to get into the tournament. I think everybody had a mindset of gratitude and we were just really locked in, focused in practice. I think that it takes everyone to win a game.

We just really have harped on that. Coaches have harped on that. I think it starts from there.

SYDNEY PARRISH: Yeah, same with what Karo said. You have to have confidence when you come to this tournament or you will lose. So just knowing that we have prepared for this moment. I think especially this game. Like almost our entire team has played against South Carolina and we have the strength of Karoline. She's played them the last four years.

So that's really special to have as well, especially because they're so -- one of their strengths is their interior. Knowing that Karoline has that experience as well definitely helps.

Q. I asked Teri a similar question yesterday about the ups and downs you had during the season. From your perspective, in what ways did you guys evolve as a team to get you to this point playing some of your best basketball in the last couple weeks?

SYDNEY PARRISH: Yeah, I don't think that anyone in the media would've had us playing in the NCAA tournament or winning a game in the NCAA tournament right after we lost to Butler in it I think it was like November.

So I think that just kind of shows our growth. It does take -- took us a little while to get where we are especially we are playing our best basketball right now. Just took us a minute to mesh together and figure out how people play.

We had Shay, transfers coming in. Just figuring that out took us a minute. At the end of the day, it doesn't matter how you play in November. It's how you're playing in March. We won yesterday in March; not a lot of people can say that.

KAROLINE STRIPLIN: Yeah, I think that like we both touched on, it's really hard to win, period. I think this year it was really evident with the Big Ten schedule. We were having to go head-to-head with the best players in the nation every night.

I think that that will pose any team a threat that makes you have an up and down season. I think we all just kind of had to shake off a few games. It's really great we're clicking right now and really excited to see what we do tomorrow.

SYDNEY PARRISH: Yeah.

Q. Sydney, struck me before what you said about how these are moments you grow up watching, moments you grow up wanting. Thinking in that way but maybe

bigger picture for you, like growing up did you ever picture yourself having a career playing at Indiana like the one you had? What would younger Sydney say about the player who put the IU uniform on the last three years?

SYDNEY PARRISH: She would just be so proud of where I am standing today. It's a big deal you're playing in the tournament, but you see the press conference interviews and pictures with the March Madness behind you sitting with the microphone. It's everything a little girl from Indiana would dream of.

When I was younger, no, I wouldn't have said Indiana was even in March Madness. Of course the men, but not the women at all. No, I didn't think I would be in an IU, you know, form playing in March Madness. You have to dream big when you're young or. This is something I've always dreamed of.

I just never want to take that IU uniform off. It's going to be a big motivation for me tomorrow.

Q. If you don't mind, walked in a little late. I hope you didn't answer this already. Having played South Carolina last year, what do you see -- do you see much difference in them from on tape from what you played if person a year ago?

SYDNEY PARRISH: Yes. They're different. They have their similarities. I think they never go away from their transition offense, offensive rebounding. Without a 6'7" kid in there with Kamilla and Ashlyn Watkins being injured at the beginning of this year, that definitely helps us.

We are not as tall as they are. I think that we have the strength of maybe trying to play a little bit smarter than them and knowing when to pick and choose, when to double, when to help off certain people, when to push the ball, and try to play fast and when to try and tempo it down a little bit.

But they are different, which helps us. But we to know that we only lost to them by two points last year.

KAROLINE STRIPLIN: Well, guess I had say a little bit of the same. I think we lost by one point. If you guys remember that game at all. Yeah, it's definitely I wouldn't say easier to guard their post players at all this year, but the height advantage definitely gives us a little bit more room to run some of our stuff that we normally do. I think like Sydney said we're going to have to go in and understand the game plan and execute. I think that's going to help us against them.

Q. Hey, Teri.

TERI MOREN: Morning. Or good afternoon.

Q. Right. You probably looked at a bunch of South Carolina film last night. What's different about them than the team you played a year ago?

TERI MOREN: Well, they don't have that big kid on the inside, Cordoso, so probably the biggest difference when you're preparing for a team that has such a big piece on the inside and how you're going to guard her and the different coverages that you have to plan for.

And so that's the biggest difference. They're still outstanding in their transition offense. I think one of the biggest differences from a year ago is I'm not sure that we've ever seen a bench that scores more than the starting five. Two leading scorers come off the bench. That's pretty unique.

So that's what pops out, is the difference in terms of what they bring off the bench and how they can score the ball manage so many different ways. Last year we spent an awful long time trying to figure out how we were going to guard their five.

Q. Was the bench just -- when a bench is that potent and the two leading scorers come off of our the bench does that maybe make you second think or consider how you maybe change your rotations?

TERI MOREN: No. I don't know that our rotation changes. Our coverages could possibly change in terms of how we may guard Joyce Edwards might be different than how we would guard Sania Feagin. But I don't think anything changes in terms of rotations.

Like I said, there is no -- nothing to change when you're talking about how potent they are in their transition defense. You got to sprint back. Whatever five are on the floor. That's where their secret sauce is, in transition and how much they can hurt you if you don't sprint back.

We call to build a wall, but show bodies to all those pieces that want to try to get downhill and get to the rim. And so nothing changes in terms of rotation. Strategy may change.

Like I said, maybe how we guard a ball coverage or if they throw the ball inside how we may want to handle that.

Q. Where do you think South Carolina fits in in terms of historical basketball programs like Tennessee, UConn, and Stanford?

TERI MOREN: I mean, you can't talk about the other ones that you mentioned without mentioning South Carolina and what they've been able to accomplish.

And so right now historically in the last, what, ten years, I mean, they've been one of the best programs in our sport.

But I think they've also raised the bar for everybody else. It's no longer UConn, Tennessee. Now you're talking about South Carolina. Now we're talking about some teams in the BigTen with USC and UCLA. We're all trying to build traditions at our respective institutions.

It's just the parity in our game is at an all-time high. We're all trying to build programs and be able to sustain the success that we all enjoy.

But it's been impressive, what Dawn and her staff have been able to accomplish here.

Q. Two players up here who played South Carolina down to the wire and had heartbreaking losses last year. A lot of players on your team experienced that last season.

TERI MOREN: Right.

Q. Do you sense any bit of extra motivation from them, understanding that this is an opportunity to be able to finish, quote-unquote?

TERI MOREN: Again, we're motivated because we're in this tournament. I will say that I think our group, you know, has confidence in the fact that we did play them. We dug ourselves a hole in the first half but then fought our way back out of it.

You know, got with this two points, you know, and then Dawn calls a timeout and throws the ball inside and we go down four. But it was down to the wire. Again, disappointing that we couldn't pull it off, but yet gave us some confidence knowing that although both teams are different, that we have been able to play with a team like South Carolina.

So I'm hopeful what these guys have the confidence, but the belief that, as I said yesterday, when our assists are high and turnovers are low, we are rock solid defensively. I think we can play with anybody.

Q. Coach, your seniors have all come through different paths to get to Indiana. What have they meant to you and this program?

TERI MOREN: Well, again, I've said this about Sydney Parrish. It's great that she found her way back to Indiana after she left and went out to the west coast and then found her way back. Indiana kid coming back home was really important.

You know, I think about Strip who has just joined us for a year but how quickly she came in and just was seamless, the transition. What a blessing she's been, having her in our program.

And then Chloe has been a fifth year kid for us that has endured the process of going from not playing a whole lot as a freshmen and maybe a sophomore because she was behind some really great guards in our program, but believed in us, believed in our process for her.

Those kids don't exist anymore. When they don't get the immediate satisfaction of playing time, a lot of those kids get into the portal and want to leave. Chloe was never about that. She knew that Indiana was the best place for her and we can develop her, she's become one of the all-time greats inside our program. She's also one of the all-time greats defensively that we've seen in our conference.

So all of them have meant different things to our team, but they've been a pleasure to coach. Whether they were here five years, whether they've been here three years or whether they've been here one year, they've made an impact in our program.

Q. With Sydney going up against her former teammate Te-Hina Paopao, what do you see when you see former teammates play each other, especially in high stakes games?

TERI MOREN: I don't know that I see anything different. Both competitors. I think they're friends off the floor, which typically happens, right, when you've played together at respective institutions or other universities.

I think there is a friendship there. But I think both Syd and Paopao would tell you when the ball goes up, right, the stakes are a little higher and it's different. You set aside that friendship and it's just the competitiveness that they both I think have.

I think they are both looking at this as how can I just help our team, my team be successful.

Q. You talked about the post play a little bit. What do you need to see from Karoline and Lilly to sort of potentially give you that edge down low in the paint tomorrow?

TERI MOREN: Yeah, they have to be rock solid. Like I said this is going to be as much of a mental game as it's going to be a physical game.

For us it's understanding tendencies and also rotations, where we can be, where we can help off of. If there is an opportunity there because of spacing purposes, can we help each other.

And so we know they like -- they're incredible with their high-low game. Where they really get you is the offensive rebounds. We have to do our job, especially those two, of keeping Feagin and Kitts and Joyce Edwards off the offensive glass.

The most important job they'll have starts there with keeping them from getting those second, third shot opportunities.

Q. You got to coach Joyce Edwards over the season. How have you seen her game evolve?

TERI MOREN: Oh, you know what I respect about Joyce is her -- how she goes about her work. Although we were in Columbia, the competition was just okay, but she approached every game like we were playing for a championship.

Or a gold medal. Every game for her was a gold medal game. That's the one thing that stood out to me. Whether or not you're dealing with some of the -- not dealing with -- but you have the opportunity to coach some of those elite top kids in the country, just their mindset, how they go about the film, how they go about their work. She was always first on the floor, always last one to leave.

But I know she's very, very intelligent and a smart kid. But the seriousness that she went into every game with was impressive. So not surprised by how well she's come in here and been special.

Q. Coach, with so many players coming through this program being lifers, how do you maintain the promise and the connections you build throughout recruiting and throughout the rest of their lives?

TERI MOREN: Don't forget I have Keyanna Warthen who was also a player for me, and McKenzie Holmes, also a player. A lot of those kids that -- I don't know about Mac. I think Mac thinks she wants to coach. I think sometimes when she's around she is thinking about that life choice because of how many hours we're in the office.

Again, I think it goes back to -- culture is such a, word but it

really is about the atmosphere and the culture we've tried to create in Indiana. It's so much bigger than just coaching. It's trying to prepare them for life after Indiana. But we have been fortunate enough that we have players that have -- former players -- that have wanted to get into this great game.

And what's special about having those guys as part of our staff now is they understand that they are part of the foundation, right? Part of the build and how hard it is to win. You know, how hard it is to win.

And I think they're great reminders to our players now. The young guys at that come in, about what that looks like. The work piece and how -- we call it a lifestyle being in Indiana. You're going to be in the gym outside of those practice hours, but you're also going to be about each other.

This is a program that has been built on players that have to kind of set a side -- we all do this -- our ego and understand the only way success is by being about one another.

And kind of falling in love with the success we all have as individuals.

You know, it's great to have them back, but what I found is there is a lot of -- one of the things about being able to have this job and sit had this seat is you hope when your players leave they walk away with a ton of stories and great experiences, which they've all had.

I'm just finding out about some of those stories though now up in this office space, the things that really did happen on some of those road trips, right?

And so it's all great stories of -- Key was reminding me the other day when I kicked her out of practice. I don't remember that but she remembers that. Got a good laugh out of it. She'll tell you I got kicked out probably because I wasn't living up to the standard of what it's about to be at Indiana. That's the work, is the focus day in and day out.

The stories -- when I sit in there and we laugh about things that have happened and they can still go back and talk about them, right, and now feel comfortable to share them with me, that's what I love. That's probably been my favorite part about having them back.

There is a seriousness and a responsibility. When you build something you want to see it be sustained. I think there is a responsibility that they feel like -- ask there is accountability. Like hey, we're not going to let this thing go away. We built it. Now the responsibility is on those young

kids. This is how we built it. Now we expect you guys to come in here and do the same stuff we did day in and day out it help us sustain such a great program.

Q. Are you a fan of the black jerseys? And do you like them more than the regular crimson road ones you guys wear?

TERI MOREN: There is some things that you just -- it's just like their music selection, right? I'm old. I don't care about what they like to listen to. I want to listen to hard '80s and some different types of genres of music. They want to listen to rap. That's cool.

They love the black jerseys. If they want play in the black jerseys we'll play in the black jerseys. I think they look sharp. I laugh at sometimes our fan base. They get so, this is the tradition of Indiana. They like their red and white. But I think times have changed. We have to change with the times.

And so our kids love playing in the black jerseys and if they feel good in them, we're going to play in them. Those are things that I kind of leave not even decision up to them but I will leave some decisions up to them. If they want play in black jerseys we'll play in black jerseys. I think they look sharp though.

Q. It's funny that you were talking so much about your staff and the coaches on the bench with you. I was going to ask about that. It's been a challenging season with all the ups and downs you've had this year. We have asked a lot about how players battled all that. How do you feel like your staff handled all these challenges this year with some of the young pieces in their first or second year of coaching?

TERI MOREN: I think they've done a terrific job. You know, here is what we know: Success is thought a straight line. As much as we would like it to be it's not. That's not real life. So there have been some really hard moments of trying to figure out. It's also made us better. We've had to go back and to figure out how to be better coaches.

Had to be better at maybe or preparation and take a step back to how or kids learn. The best way they learn. And so I think I that with any adversity -- look there is always lessons to be learned in all of that, hard lessons that you learn from, losses. I don't look at it as a loss. I look at it as an opportunity to grow and get better.

I think our staff does that, too. There is no pointing fingers and no blame in all this. How can we get better and be better for our players. I will say this: Our players have grown throughout the season and I think our staff, young

staff has grown throughout the season. I've grown throughout the season as well.

And that's what you want, right? If they want a long career in this coaching business, then they got to learn that you don't win them all. You got to figure out how to balance the two. There will be some tough stretches but you got to go back and figure out and look at yourself first and self-evaluate and make sure you're doing what you need to do in order to give your team the best opportunity to be successful.

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