

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Four - Princeton vs Iowa State

Wednesday, March 19, 2025

South Bend, Indiana, USA

Purcell Pavilion

Princeton Tigers

Coach Carla Berube

Fadima Tall

Parker Hill

Media Conference

Iowa State 68, Princeton 63

THE MODERATOR: Coach, ready for you for an opening statement.

CARLA BERUBE: Yeah, congratulations to Iowa State on a great game, a great win. I thought that they -- that third quarter was tough. They came out of halftime and really, yeah, took it to us and, yeah, and then they kind of sustained that through the rest of the game. Really proud of my team and my student-athletes and my staff for an incredible season.

Making it to the NCAA Tournament is quite a feat in any year and definitely in a year where we're young. We had lost four starters from last year, but I thought Parker and her class were amazing leaders and helped this young team along in playing some really great basketball. We're certainly upset and sad that we're not moving on, but it was a great season nonetheless.

MODERATOR: We'll open up questions first for our student-athletes.

Q. Fadima, especially in the first half you had a really impressive defensive performance making some steals, some blocks that were really key. Can you just talk a little bit about what was going through your mind as you were trying to get after it there?

FADIMA TALL: Yeah, I think it's a lot of just wanting to win for your seniors and for your team. I think just having that encouragement, that energy from everyone around you. Just the stuff we always harp about in practice. Doing that



was second-nature and we wanted to do that the entire game.

Q. Parker, I noticed in the second half you stayed in I think almost the entire time. I don't think you were subbed out at all, and I noticed you were getting kind of frustrated. Can you talk about what was going on on offense? It looked like some of the screens weren't really going your way.

PARKER HILL: Sure, yeah. I don't think the time had anything to do with that. It was more just -- they were very aggressive so I think we needed to do screens a little bit better. Some of our passes were a little tricky to go and get, especially when there's such a strong post presence inside for Iowa State so, yeah, that was a part of it a little bit. But, yeah, I don't think the time had anything to do with that.

Q. Parker, Audi Crooks is the type of player you don't see in the Ivy League. Can you talk about what went into preparation for this game and then how you adjusted seeing her in person?

PARKER HILL: Yeah, sure. Yeah, you're right. We don't see players like Audi Crooks in the Ivy League and that was an adjustment. She obviously played a very great game today. Definitely we were working on being strong and trying not to foul because she does get a lot of and ones so trying to play straight up as much as possible and not stay in foul trouble, so that was definitely something that I think I managed to do pretty well. But, yeah, just limiting her second-chance opportunities, trying to make shots as hard as possible but she's a very good scorer and a very good finisher, so, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: We'll toss it over to Zoom.

Q. Thank you guys, first of all, for your time all year. I got two questions for you. Fadima, starting with you, you know, what's going to stick with you from this loss or what do you want to take from it, whether it's a lesson going forward or just a feeling you want to use to drive you?

FADIMA TALL: I think losing is never something that I want to do ever again, so, that's always a good motive to help with next year. Just like the unfulfillment of not being able to carry your seniors or take them with you to a stage they belong on is going to sting for a while.

Q. And then for both you guys. So really up and down, like back and forth quarters if the game. You had that second quarter, they had the third. How did you guys regroup after that first quarter where you were down but I think it was eight and then again after the third quarter?

PARKER HILL: Sure, I can start with that if you want. Yeah, I think the first quarter we took some shots that just didn't fall and they weren't bad shots for us but I think there was definitely an emphasis on making sure we take the best shot we can get in the second quarter and then they fell a lot better because we were more patient and getting each other open more, but, yeah, I think we dialled it back a little bit in terms of how much we were rushing and just were trying to set each other up better.

Q. Parker, you're a senior. Can you talk about what it's men for you to play for Princeton these past four years?

PARKER HILL: Yeah, it's a little tricky to explain how much it's meant to me. I've loved the time that I've been here. It always sucks to end your season and end on a loss and I think this game was winnable for us which stings a little bit more, but, yeah, this program means a lot to me. I couldn't be happier with where I ended up and I look forward to seeing what the rest of them do next year and the year after that.

THE MODERATOR: Any other questions for our student-athletes? Thank you, Fadima. Thank you, Parker for joining us.

Next we'll open it up to questions for Coach Berube.

Q. Hi, Coach. I wanted to start off with a question about that first quarter. You know, Ashley came out super strong, scored right on that first possession and then you guys were really juiced but all of a sudden Iowa State came roaring back. Can you talk a little bit about the thought process? Was there a consideration of maybe calling a time-out? Maybe not? Just because then the second quarter went so differently. I'm curious what that looked like.

CARLA BERUBE: Yeah, I think just like any big game on this stage, you're going to have some first-quarter jitters and you need to take a deep breath and the time-outs are

-- media time-outs are long and it's a good time to just kind of regroup and I thought we were fine being able to do that. I thought they did a really great job of just coming out in that second quarter and just being a little more patient with our offense and getting to the looks that we want.

This game is so much about making shots, right? We had some good looks in the first quarter, didn't knock them down. In the second quarter we did and the vice versa happened with Iowa State in the third quarter, so it was a tough quarter. I thought there was just a few breakdowns, especially in transition where they got some easy looks from the three but needed to call a time-out in that quarter. But they know how to huddle and regroup and I thought they did a good job with that.

Q. Can you talk through your decision when you called time-out midway through the third quarter to switch up personnel, bringing in Katie and Taylor and had you considered any other personnel switches throughout the second half?

CARLA BERUBE: Yeah, I think we were a little gassed so we needed some help from our bench. Yeah, maybe needed to do that a little bit more today. You know, a lot of up and down so we were running really hard but, yeah, just personnel decisions kind of go on how you're feeling and how they're feeling and because those time-outs are much longer in the NCAA Tournament, you have a chance to just kind of get your wind back.

Q. And then zooming out, this season was a season of youth for the team. Can you talk about how much it means to see this group of sophomore starters and the team as a whole evolve from where they were to start the season until now?

CARLA BERUBE: Yeah, I've talked about it a lot, just how much growth that we've seen in those sophomores, especially Ashley and Olivia. I thought Olivia had a really great game. Defensively, she was awesome. And Fadima as well. So, yeah, like Fadima said, this is going to sting, but I think it can really fuel them in the offseason and in the post-season into the summer and into next fall.

You can't simulate this kind of experience other than just going through what it's like to play on this stage, and, yeah, excited for the future. It's hard to think about that right now as I care so deeply about our seniors. They left an incredible legacy and I think the young group is going to, yeah, just carry that on.

THE MODERATOR: We'll go over to Zoom again for a question.

Q. Hey Carla, just picking up on that last question, I want to ask you about Fadima specifically, going from not playing at all in that West Virginia game last season to now leading the team in scoring tonight, how did you see or meet that moment tonight and step up?

CARLA BERUBE: Yeah, Fadima is tough. I think the beginning of the season, like the Portland game, you saw a young Fadima, a young, inexperienced Fadima to the end of the season here playing some of her best basketball of her career thus far and, yeah, just really proud of the work that she puts in and I think she's going to be a tremendous player for us and leader and I'll be looking forward to her future.

Q. And then you got almost all your points off turnovers and your offensive rebounds in the game in that second-quarter run. What kind of got you away from those things you were doing well there late in the first half?

CARLA BERUBE: Yeah, I think they really pounded it inside to Crooks and she was tough in there. We were trying to have some backside help. Sometimes it was there and it's hard because they spread you out because they've got great shooters everywhere. Hindsight, probably should have doubled her more, but the way that she, yeah, just her footwork and her ability to score if people are hanging on her is quite impressive.

To us, like I said, I think just some breakdowns in transition. Their defense was tough in that third quarter. They got some steals, big steals and turned into easy-scoring opportunities. I think some of it balanced, had to do with us and had to do with them just playing really well.

Q. Just one more for you. I know Audi had a great game but Parker also a double-double while defending her. How proud are you of how Parker played in her last college game?

CARLA BERUBE: Yeah, really, really proud of Parker and just the season she's had, the year she's had. It's been a battle with injuries but to see her playing her best basketball during her senior year, yeah, just really proud of her. It's been fun to watch her journey and the journey of all of our seniors and I'm really, really proud of all of them and Parker definitely.

Q. Thanks, Carla, appreciate your time all year.

THE MODERATOR: We'll stay on Zoom for a question from Rob Brown.

Q. Thanks for taking the time, Coach. Defensively, what were they doing to Ashley in the third quarter that was so different and kind of neutralized her?

CARLA BERUBE: Yeah, I think they were just kind of all over her, chasing her, sometimes icing some ball screens with her and just making it more difficult. I thought she had some good looks. I thought she had a good look at the rim one time and, yeah, they just didn't go down. I think it was just they turned it up defensively. I thought that number two Jackson was a tough defender and made it really difficult for Ash.

Q. What were the conversations at halftime and again at the end of the Thursday quarter?

CARLA BERUBE: Conversations at halftime, we put on the board every time no matter if we're up or down the score is 0-0 and we need to come out of the locker room with a lot of energy ready to go. We got to stick with our defensive game plan and what we thought.

We talked about what we thought was working offensively and what looks we want to get and at the end of the third quarter and into the fourth quarter, same thing. We were down by a few, same thing. Need to get stops, here's where we're looking for our opportunities to score and, yeah. That's the NCAA Tournament you have to be able to make shots. Every game you're playing against a really good opponent and credit to my players. I thought that they got some good shots that we just didn't knock down, but I thought they fought hard for the whole 40 minutes.

Q. And last one from me. I know for a coach every team is special. What makes this group so unique?

CARLA BERUBE: Yeah, I mean, just the people, the different personalities. What they give every single day and what they mean to the program, how they... yeah. How they represent our university and our program and our team and our staff and, yeah, it was a great mix of youth and senior leadership and just a lot of fun watching them grow and mature. I thought we had a lot of fun this year. That's why I do what I do, getting to just be with them on a day-to-day basis and you're right. Every year is different. This one was challenging but also really, really rewarding and I've got to remember that because this one definitely stings, but when you think back, you're really grateful for the people that you get to surround yourself with.

Q. Thanks so much for a great year, Coach.

THE MODERATOR: Coach Berube, thank you so much for taking the time as well.

