

# NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: Second Round - Michigan vs Notre Dame

Saturday, March 22, 2025

South Bend, Indiana, USA

Purcell Pavilion

## Notre Dame Fighting Irish

**Sonia Citron**

**Hannah Hidalgo**

Media Conference



When I play confident, that's when I play my best.

**Q. Hannah, Michigan likes a five guard lineup a lot of times, fast-paced. Does that play into your skill set? Do you enjoy that? What are the challenges of facing that kind of a scheme?**

HANNAH HIDALGO: Yeah, we know Michigan's kind of scheme and that they play a five-guard game for 40 minutes, so I'm excited. I'm excited to play other top guards. It's going to be fun. It's going to be fast-paced which not only me but my whole team loves to be able to play fast, so it's going to be an exciting game.

**Q. Can you talk a little bit about the defensive effort yesterday? 18 steals and I think the points off of turnovers were like 38-5.**

HANNAH HIDALGO: Yeah, I think the carryover from practice, it's been all defensive-focused so we have been having to get stopped in order to move on to the next drill so just being able to carry that over from practicing against the men to now playing against the women, having to get stops in order to go out and score, and I think it's just a testament to the work that we've put in.

**Q. Sonia, does the strategy change when you play a five-guard lineup or are you guys looking to take advantage of size inside or are you looking to, hey, let's get out and run with these guys?**

SONIA CITRON: Yeah, absolutely. I think depending on team we play, there is a different strategy based on what they have and how we match up with them. I think we're still going to play our game. We still want to play fast. We want to play in transition, but I think we do have an advantage on the inside with Kate, Maddy, Liza, Liatu, so I think with the team that plays five guards, there's definitely -- we're going to look to go inside but still play our game, so.

**Q. Syla Swords for Michigan has had a great freshman year this year, one of their top scorers and also yesterday was really active on the defensive end and the glass. How are you guys preparing for that**

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Hannah Hidalgo and Sonia Citron. We'll start right here in the front.

**Q. Good morning. No, good afternoon. I'm wondering when you're in a tournament situation, whether it's ACC or this, do you guys have any, whether personal or team traditions, superstitions, anything you do like that to kind of move from one game to the other?**

SONIA CITRON: Obviously we paint our nails green for the tournament and then I don't think we have different traditions for the tournament or like ACC Tournament. I think we have traditions that we do every single game but that's year long. It doesn't change, per se.

**Q. What are some of the things you do?**

SONIA CITRON: After the 32 mark, we hype up Kylee and she dances and then we have to high-five each other, Pass it back as we run into the locker room. In our huddle before we come back out we all say what we want to do personally in this game, like what we're going to do. Things like that. But that's every game.

**Q. Sonia, your shooting, you have hit some really nice numbers probably the last six, seven games. Was there anything you did in particular? Any adjustments you made? Can you talk about how you're shooting? It has really been impressive lately.**

SONIA CITRON: Thank you. I would say I just did what I always do and got shots up in the gym and just kept getting those reps. I think the biggest change was in my mentality, just trying to be confident and know that even if I don't make one, the next one is going in. I think the biggest change for me was just my mentality and being confident.



## **matchup on both sides of the ball?**

HANNAH HIDALGO: We know they have a lot of good guards. They have another freshman guard, Olson, yeah, I think it's just looking into personnel. We're going to go over personnel today but we've watched them. We've scouted them. I think it's just looking into each other, playing the same aggressive up-pace, very physical how we played last game and I think that's just the mentality. She hasn't been in this position before, so as a freshman, okay, how do you make her feel as uncomfortable with it being March Madness. So I kind of thing that's our scheme, just to be as physical as possible with them. But, again, we worked on it and we're trusting in each other to be able to kind of force her into the drive and have the rotation there, so we're just trusting in each other with that.

**Q. I know you touched on that experience piece a little bit. You guys, a ton of upperclassmen, a lot of experience in this tournament. Michigan starting the three freshman and two transfers in the rotation who don't have experience on this stage. What advantage do you think that experience gives you and how do you plan to take advantage of that tomorrow?**

HANNAH HIDALGO: Yeah, I think experience is really important, not even just Soni and Liv and Maddy, but also Liza and Liatu. They all have a lot of experience playing in March Madness. I know for me as a freshman playing last year was hard not having that but they're great guards so it's not going to take away from their game but I think experience is still important when you know the physicality of the game and you know how fast-paced it is.

**Q. Less than 48 hours between games for you guys... what is the recovery process for yesterday look like and to quickly get into the preparation for Michigan tomorrow?**

HANNAH HIDALGO: I think just for yesterday, soaking in and embracing yesterday's moment, just thanking God for the win but also now it's a new day, that win is over so just focusing on the task ahead. A lot of rest, a lot of sleep, massages, just making sure we're stretching and that's a big piece in our lift session, it was a lot of recovery and activation stuff, a lot of band stretches. It's important to take care of our body because these are quick turnarounds. We play tomorrow, so.

**Q. You mentioned being prepared for their five-guard lineup. Does that strategy change if they put their center Yulia Grabovskaia in?**

HANNAH HIDALGO: Yeah, of course. It's just knowing personnel, knowing if they put a taller player in there that

just being able to kind of read and adjust. Coach Ivey, we trust in her substitution lineup. She's going to put in the people she thinks should be out there and so we kind of go based off personnel. Coach Ivey does a great job at substitution.

**Q. And yesterday you guys had a great game, 100 points. That kind of momentum, bringing that into Michigan, do you think that helps?**

SONIA CITRON: Yeah, absolutely. I think yesterday was a great game for us just to build our confidence. I know things got a little rocky at the end of the regular season, but I think that was a great game just to kind of get back into our rhythm and our flow and just to play together again. Yeah, definitely builds our confidence, so.

**Q. For Hannah, the lessons that you got out of the way the season ended, whether you wanted to have that lesson or not, what was a positive that you could take out of the way that the season sort of ended with the ACC Tournament loss?**

HANNAH HIDALGO: Yeah, it was unfortunate. The talent that we have, we kind of underachieved there towards the end, but I think kind of the lesson is that we need to get back to the basics. We went on a 19-game win streak and so it's like how do we get back to that... as a team, how do we get back to that swag that we were playing with, that joy, that excitement and playing for each other, not just for ourselves? We were super blessed to have another opportunity to play in March Madness because not a lot of teams get that opportunity so, you know, we kind of learn from the losses and then we were back in the lab, back to working on ball screen defense, back to working on rotation, so those losses, it helped us realize where our weaknesses are and now we were able to get back into the gym and work on those weaknesses so we can wreck them.

**Q. Both you guys, interested in how Coach Ivey handled that moment, because there's coaches, some they get real hard on you but also some will try to build you up. Some try to do both. Did she manage that moment to sort of rewire you in a good way?**

SONIA CITRON: Yeah, I think her biggest thing was it's time to get bitter. We had a week and a half of practices and like Hannah said, we saw what our weaknesses were. There wasn't a lot of talking, there was just a lot of doing. We're going to do this drill because we need to need to work on this. I think Coach Ivey definitely put us to work and challenged us and I think we responded to that challenge. That's what's made us better and that's why we're ready for March, so.

**Q. Hannah, I don't know Olivia's status for tomorrow, but when she's not on the court at any point during the season or any future, how do your responsibilities change?**

HANNAH HIDALGO: Yeah, I think it's me taking that point guard role and so it's a little bit different. When I'm playing to two, it's score-first mentality and now when I'm the one, how do I get my teammates involved now? When I'm coming off the ball screen, how do I draw the defender and kick out? How do I get Soni or Maddy going? And so it's a little different than when I'm playing the two and it's a score first. Now it's me, I'm handling the ball. I have to get everyone involved. I have that make sure I'm handling the ball right, calling the right plays, looking for the hot hand and so it's tough when Liv is not on the floor because she takes a lot of the pressure off being the main ball handler but we've played without her before. She's doing well. If she doesn't play, we have been in this situation before and it's just a matter of trusting in each other and playing for her if she's out.

THE MODERATOR: Any other questions for our student-athletes. Thank you.

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