

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

Saturday, March 22, 2025

South Bend, Indiana, USA

Purcell Pavilion

## Michigan Wolverines

## Jordan Hobbs

## Syla Swords

## Olivia Olson

### Media Conference

THE MODERATOR: We can jump right into it and open the floor to questions for the student-athletes.

**Q. Jordan, you did say yesterday after going against Audi that you were going to get in the ice bath and all that. How are you feeling? Are you rejuvenated after that?**

JORDAN HOBBS: Yeah, feeling pretty rejuvenated. Went in the ice bath yesterday. They will two did some more today, but, yeah. Even if my body was feeling bad I feel like once the adrenaline kicks in and you're playing the game, you don't really feel much. We have another 24 hours to recover, so we'll be really ready to go.

**Q. And Syla, since now you guys have been in your first March Madness game, what do you know now about playing in March Madness that you didn't know before?**

SYLA SWORDS: Yeah, it's just really real that like you can go home. They went on their runs and we came out at halftime thinking it's not just a you can have another chance. If you don't win this game, you're going home and that's not something we wanted to do but any means, so really just that reality of win-or-go-home mindset.

OLIVIA OLSON: Yeah, I think I agree with Sy. At half time we were just like we're not going home. I was like this is not going to be my last game. Like, we're going to keep playing and so I think that's what the mentality is that we want to keep going forward with, that we want to keep playing.



**Q. Similar to your big ten tournament matchup against USC you came into this game as "underdogs". Do you see any similarities and if so, what experience can you draw oncoming into the game?**

JORDAN HOBBS: I think the biggest one that stands out to me is the pace that both of those teams play with. They score in the 80s, 90s every game so I think we can take a lot of learning lessons from that and also just the media attention that those teams are getting and playing against Juju gives us a really good idea of playing against Hannah and Olivia and the skill set that those guards bring and also just, like, playing in games like that gives us some confidence for playing in big moments. That game against USC was just like a weak and a half, two weeks ago and it was our biggest game up to that point and now we're headed into another huge game, so I think at the end of the day, we're ready and prepared.

**Q. And then kind of Notre Dame starts a lot of veterans in their lineup. They mentioned leaning on experience. You guys have a very young starting lineup. How do you think composure is going to play a role in today's game and Olivia and Syla, what is your approach to playing against players that have so much experience?**

SYLA SWORDS: Yeah, it's a tale of two different stories really, them being so experienced and having the wins they have under their belt but also being young, not having that fear really coming into so many big matchups we've had throughout the year so really seeing which team is going to come out ahead with different mindsets and different approaches to the game but, again, we played the schedule that we have so we can come through for those moments so that we feel prepared for these moments.

OLIVIA OLSON: Yeah, I think we put ourselves in a good position, played a lot of... a couple number one teams at different points and I think every day we just bring a competitive energy and like Sy said, we're fearless and we don't really know what to not do. We just want to go work as hard as we can so I think that's the type of energy we'll bring into it.

JORDAN HOBBS: Yeah, I don't think composure is an issue for us at this point in the season. Like they mentioned, we played so many good opponents and they showed yesterday, the freshmen, how composed they are in those big moments. Liv hit a really clutch shot. Mila hit some clutch shots and Sylva just played great all game. I don't even think it's an issue at this point for us.

**Q. Sylva, can you talk a little bit about the challenge of playing Notre Dame's back court? What do you guys have to do to make sure they don't get comfortable and get that transition game going.**

SYLVA SWORDS: Obviously they have one of the best back courts in the country. You see the Olivia Miles and Hannah Hidalgo duo everywhere, all that stuff, but that's why we're here at Michigan to test ourselves against the best and us being such a guard-heavy team, I think we can really matchup well with them and see what we can do to be tested and show what Michigan women's basketball can do against the best of the best.

**Q. Olivia, can you talk a little bit about how you feel comfortable in an uncomfortable place? Because Notre Dame is on its home court and they'll have the big crowd.**

OLIVIA OLSON: Yeah, I think we love for these moments and we want to be tested. Playing here is a big test for us but there's no reason we can't go out and prove everyone wrong. I think we talk about how everyone in our locker room, it's just us that believe that we can win this and especially on their home court and so we're just going to go full effort and have no fear and, yeah, play to the best of our ability.

**Q. Jordan, can you comment a little bit about your team's strengths, especially just handling these kind of pressure moments the way you do and rising to the occasion.**

JORDAN HOBBS: Yeah, I think our number one strength is fearlessness but also the ability to rely on a lot of our schedule and how competitive the Big Ten is. I think we put ourselves in a really good position this year with a top 20 strength of schedule and doing those games not on our home court, a lot of them. I just think we're really poised to come out tomorrow and not let the crowd affect us and stick together really well and just really go back to what we value in our culture.

**Q. Did you really like the Big Ten expansion adding the west coast teams? Were you really excited about it when they first announced it or were you like oh, wow, this worked out?**

JORDAN HOBBS: I think at first I was pretty excited. I think I was thinking about traveling out there and getting a cool experience, getting to play at Pauley Pavilion -- oh, not Pauley Pavilion, at UCLA. But when season comes, it's tougher when you're traveling for a week straight. I can't imagine those schools out there that have to travel even more than us. It makes our conference tougher, which I really appreciate. Every single game, you're going against a gauntlet. There's no game that you can take off in the Big Ten. That's why we got 12 teams into the tournament this year which sets a record, but at the end of the day, I think it's really good for women's basketball to have such a competitive conference.

**Q. When you have a quick turnaround like this or you did in the Big Ten tournament, are there any traditions or routines or anything you do to put one game behind you and move on to the next one? Whether that's as a team or individually?**

SYLVA SWORDS: Yeah, we normally try to celebrate the wins for an hour or two at least to give ourselves a little mental break, especially on those longer trips away from home, but what's really important is having a balance in the shoot-arounds like we just had of making sure both locked in and working hard but putting the best version of ourselves forward for the next game too, so finding that balance.

OLIVIA OLSON: Yeah, we have had quick turnarounds, too, in the Big Ten we played the next day. We worked on it all season, I think. When we were in Florida we did that too, just recovering as much as we can at night but being logged in on film and stuff.

**Q. Can I ask what you do in that hour of celebration? What are some of the celebrations that happen?**

SYLVA SWORDS: We always throw water around, some dancing.

JORDAN HOBBS: My freshman year, we were like expected to be in the Sweet 16, I feel like, so we didn't know how to react when we got there. Coach comes into the locker room and was like why is no one celebrating? She was like Beeline told her one time that you got to really appreciate the wins and celebrate the wins because at the end of the day that's why you do this. Ever since that moment I think she has not failed to celebrate the big wins, so definitely do some locker room shenanigans and some chanting, but once we leave the gym, I fellow like we're all pretty focused on the next thing. We went to dinner last night as a team too, which was nice. When we returned, we watched some film. I think the dinner was our

celebration.

THE MODERATOR: Any further questions for our student-athletes? Thank you so much for joining us.

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