

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - FDU vs Iowa

Friday, March 20, 2026

Iowa City, Iowa, USA

Carver-Hawkeye Arena

Iowa Hawkeyes

Coach Jan Jensen

Taylor StremLOW

Kylie Feuerbach

Media Conference



bring. So to have extra games in Carver is really special. We do not take it for granted. It's truly the best environment to be in.

Q. For both players, you've seen how Ava has grown this year as a player. What makes her so difficult for teams to defend inside, and how much has her game really stepped up, I mean, even as this season has gone on?

TAYLOR STREMLow: Yeah, I think her quickness and she's just super deceptive with little different body movements. I think that's really hard to contain. I mean, she has such good touch around the rim. She can just make it work wherever. Whichever way the defense wants to send her, she'll get a bucket. I think that's just hard to stop.

She's worked so hard. I'll say it over and over again, but you know, it's really the time in the gym that people don't see that has really helped her shine this season. Yeah, she's just a hooper, for sure.

Q. With the growth of the team through this year and this being Coach Jensen's second year, what differences have you noticed between her as a head coach in her first year and her as a coach in her second year?

KYLIE FEUERBACH: Yeah, I think her role, the way that she came into the head coaching role could not have been any better. So it's really hard to pinpoint specifics from the transition just because when she came in, she was already just phenomenal.

I think one thing, though, is you learn things as a head coach. Obviously, there was a lot of experiences. I can't necessarily name them, but I think she can definitely bring those into this year that she has.

But confidence, I mean, that continues to go up. She handled it so gracefully, and it was just so easy to have that transition for me personally, being here before her as well.

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Taylor StremLOW and Kylie Feuerbach from Iowa. Questions.

Q. Kylie, this is your last run. What are your emotions right now as you get ready for this final tournament, and what's it like to be at home in front of a sell-out crowd for this to start this last run?

KYLIE FEUERBACH: Yeah, it's extremely special. I'm just trying to take it all in. This is a once-in-a-lifetime type of experience, and every year is different with the girls that we're with. Taking it all in and really just enjoying it.

Q. Taylor, you've obviously gotten a lot more playing time here down the stretch after Taylor McCabe got hurt. What has this been like for you? How much have you grown as a player just here in the last couple of months?

TAYLOR STREMLow: Definitely a lot of growth. I think it's been really fun, like Kylie said, trying to enjoy every moment, every opportunity. I think Taylor was a great example that you never know what the day is going to hold, and so just enjoying the day and the game at hand is definitely what I've been trying to do.

Q. Kylie, you've had these NCAA experiences before, hosting, crowd, everything like that. What does it mean to play in front of this crowd one more time? Two more times potentially.

KYLIE FEUERBACH: Oh, man, we have the best fans. Every time -- every home game we've had this season has been so cool because you can feel the energy that they



Q. For either player, you finally had an opponent to prepare for this week. It's been a while since you played. How important was it to get a little time away, and did you kind of get back into a rhythm, then, this week as you were getting ready for this week?

TAYLOR STREMLow: Yeah, I think scout, like you said, just preparing for a team is something that we take for granted, it gets so repetitive during the season. You prep and then you play and then you prep and you play. It's just that ongoing cycle.

So, like you said, having that little break kind of surprised everybody, and then getting it yesterday I think was our first -- or two days ago, sorry, with the scout and just having that back and having people to focus on, plays to focus on, definitely helped us really dial in and have a great practice.

THE MODERATOR: Ladies, thank you. Good luck tomorrow. A woman who needs no introduction, Iowa Head Coach Jan Jensen. We're ready for questions. Floor is open.

Q. What does it mean to be at home? Obviously a sell-out, which was expected, but what does it mean in your second year as a head coach to be at home to see all the fun stuff that goes with it?

JAN JENSEN: Yeah, you know, I just feel really blessed, and I think it was -- it struck me when you asked the question. You're like, What does it mean to be at home, and as expected, a sell-out? How blessed are we to say "as expected"?

I was an assistant and helping hopefully build it, and now being the head coach, it's just something we've never taken for granted. It is a really, really special element of our program.

So to be able to get a top seed, to be a 2 seed and get to host, I've just felt just a lot of gratitude, but also just a lot of happiness because of our fan base that really helps us all year long that they get to have another game for sure in Carver. That to me is really one of the coolest parts, because our fans, it really is kind of a love affair with them.

They've been here since the beginning, certainly when myself and Lisa Bluder got here, but then for our players. It's just such a great place to play, and it is a perk. No guarantees. We've been here and it hasn't worked out, right, in this situation, but everybody would certainly take that opportunity to be at home.

In a nutshell, it feels awesome, and I'm thrilled we're at

home.

Q. What are the challenges that come with playing? This is a 15 seed coming in after you, but they've won 22 straight. What are the unique challenges that come with that?

JAN JENSEN: Well, number one, I have great respect for their coach. When I was a young coach, Stephanie was very successful. Always has been every stop. You know, she was a friend, served on some board with Lisa Bluder.

But she's a really great coach. I don't care what level anybody wants to say someone is or isn't, to do what she's been doing and every stop, consistency of winning, they're really a good, fun team.

It's one of those teams, when you are just sitting in a bar watching, you cheer for them. You know, they're fun. They play hard. They're well-coached. They shoot 26 threes a game. No. 4, Renninger, she's a fun little floor general. She doesn't back down. She just has a really good pace of play.

I watched them, ironically, when we were playing Rutgers, way back, it was our first conference game, and I was breaking down film. The game I watched was FDU. I remember thinking, man, they're pretty good. Just funny how it all can work out. Rutgers pulled away at the very end.

But you know, how do you approach it? It's just March. All of our players have watched enough games their whole lives. You know, it's funny when you are watching, most everybody cheers for the underdog, right, until you're not the underdog, right? There's a whole different approach than when you are in it.

Just a lot of respect. Trying to know their actions and, just like anything else, you got to stick to the game plan. But it will be a challenge. I think people can just look at that. Look at the men's side yesterday. I haven't seen any of the women's scores. I've been working on practice, but a lot happened with some of those lower seeds.

You got to just stick to your preparation and just be true to who you are and hope you can stifle them just enough to do what you are supposed to do.

Q. Then a little bit of an odd question here. Tomorrow is supposed to be 80 degrees. There's obviously no AC in here, and with the sell-out, do you expect the heat to have any impact on your players and your team? Any preparations you guys are making?

JAN JENSEN: You know, not really, because we're in jubilation that it's warm and it's spring, right? You know, I think that's I would think every coach, but certainly what I try to focus on, sometimes to a fault, is you just control the controllables.

When we've gone out to our West Coast swing, I didn't really even talk about it, but I think in retrospect I should have talked about it a little bit, because in my mind, why are we going to talk about it? Get your sleep. It's two hours difference.

I'm glad you brought it up because maybe I ought to talk about it. I'm older. I'm in my 50s. I'm like, we can't control that, suck it up. When you are younger and it is really hot, and it's been cold in Carver most of the year because it's winter in the Midwest, I think might need to chat about it.

But I do think the focus will be great. Hydrate up. I think both sides will have to have a lot of water if the crowd does heat it up in there, but I think that we'll be pretty smart about just we got to do what we got to do, whether it's 80 or 20.

Q. You have talked about how this team in your words recalibrated after Taylor McCabe got hurt. What made that work and what has made it successful in the adjustments you've had to make?

JAN JENSEN: Yeah, you know, that was -- the hazard of any job in coaching is injury. When it happens, it's just emotional, and then strategically it's tough. When we won that first game, because she just -- we didn't have any time to think about it. We were playing Ohio State. It was at home, the momentum. Then after that, you just took a little time, because you have to get used to not being able to go to Taylor.

For me personally, most of the sets I'd call, I was just so confident in how that kid could shoot. So then I learned that a lot of the sets revolved around her. So we had to quickly figure out, you know, how we have to showcase some other players to get a shot. There were sets for Chat and sets for Ava and all that.

Then I think there's tremendous belief in every player on our team, and we talked so much, and I think probably every coach does, but you just have to be ready for next person in. This year I talked a lot about passing a baton, and like in a relay race, you run your 100, and you hand it off. Sometimes you try out for the relay, but you're, like, the alternate. So you work every day in practice, you know, to save legs, and you hand it off, but you don't really get to have the baton in the game.

Just really working with the team and said, hey, you know, one game it might be Ava shining. One game it might be Chit-Chat. One game it might be Callie Levin coming in with some big minutes in defense or needing to have Addie coming through with a nice layup.

So I just think, you know, it's not a new script, but I think this team did a pretty job with just understanding the baton analogy. I do think they're just a really good group. They're pretty doggone selfless in a world that isn't too wired for selflessness anymore, right, with NILs and the branding and, you know, the ease of which to transfer.

I just feel like for the here and now, this team has been pretty much where their feet are. Depending -- injuries, we've mourned that and grieved that, but then we get back to work. That's why I'm so happy they had the year that they did, and I think it's been a testament that what can happen if you just keep believing and keep trusting a process and keep being willing to push the other person forward.

When that happens, you know, usually good things are going to happen to the group.

Q. Did you expect this team to be where they are right now? At the beginning of the season, if you were told this team is going to be a 2 seed in the NCAA Tournament, would you be surprised at all?

JAN JENSEN: I would have taken that bet (laughing). I think it was a reporter, Jeff Linder, a local reporter from the Cedar Rapids Gazette. He asked me that a month or so ago. I really wasn't prepared because I hadn't really thought about it from that angle. You don't want to be like, that surprised the heck out of us. What does that sound like, right?

I thought that this group, as we got a little deeper into the fall before games, I thought we had a shot, but I don't think that any of us would predict, yeah, they're so good, we're going to get a 2 seed and we're going to host and all of that.

So, yeah, I think they've really worked. I think that as we got going in our locker room, I started to tell them, hey, look, we can be pretty good, right? As we got through the midpoint of that Big Ten season, I think they really started to understand that maybe this could be special.

But way back at the beginning, no, I would be lying if I said, yeah, I think this team has that in them, but I love their fight, I love how they practiced, and I thought, you know, that I would say they had a shot for good things to happen. But I think being a 2 seed in June, no. Wouldn't even have

ventured out there, because I didn't know them well enough yet.

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