

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - Oregon vs Vanderbilt

Thursday, March 20, 2025

Durham, North Carolina, USA

Cameron Indoor Stadium

Vanderbilt Commodores

Mikayla Blakes

Jordyn Oliver

Media Conference

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Vanderbilt student-athletes Mikayla Blakes and Jordyn Oliver.

Q. Jordyn, Sunday you said you were still in a little bit of shock coming back to Duke. But now you have had time to process it and be here. What are the emotions for you being back here?

JORDYN OLIVER: It feels good being back, honestly. I made a lot of good memories here, made a lot of good friends.

I'm just really focused on Vanderbilt right now playing against Oregon on Friday and hopefully advancing from there.

Q. Mikayla, what's your impressions of how your season has gone so far? You've scored 50 points twice this season. One of the top freshmen in the nation. Did you expect to make this big of an impact on this team early?

MIKAYLA BLAKES: If you asked me when I committed, my impact, I wouldn't think it would be as big as it is today. I'm just thankful and blessed that God blessed me with those abilities. I have a great support system around me that just pushes me and allows me to be the best player I can. But we have a lot more to do.

Q. How well did the SEC prepare you for the game tomorrow and just for the NCAA Tournament? Because obviously the conference is a bear to deal with as players.

JORDYN OLIVER: I think it really prepared us, honestly. Every team is different every night. You might play



Tennessee, who is going to press full court 24/7, or you might play a Missouri team that's lights out shooting. I feel every day we got to compete and play against different types of people, so now we can do that here.

MIKAYLA BLAKES: For sure, I'd say the SEC is the best conference. It's going to prepare you for everything that you're going to see and the physicality, for sure.

Q. Jordyn, I was kind of wondering your impressions of Mikayla. When she got on campus, did you think, oh, this is a kid I'm going to see score 50 points not once but twice this season?

JORDYN OLIVER: I don't know if she knows this story, but her first day of summer workouts I called my dad after and I said, "Dad, this freshman is different." He said, "Yeah, she's a freshman." I said, "No, this freshman is different. She's a dawg."

Nothing she does surprises me. She came in day one cooking, and she cooks day, what day is it, 200 -- day 200. She's a hooper, a dawg.

But I think one thing that goes missing about Mikayla is she's a great kid. Her family is a great family. She's humble. She's funny. She's not just a hooper, she's actually a great person, a great kid. That's Mikayla Blakes for you.

Q. Mikayla, obviously this is your first March Madness. What's the week been like for you just getting prepared for this moment?

MIKAYLA BLAKES: Worked out every day, had practice. Just taking it day by day and staying in the moment because keeping the main thing the main thing; we're here to play basketball, so just play basketball.

Q. What is your first March Madness memories? You were watching as a kid? There was a team you watched, hey, I was a fan of this team or a shot you remember watching at all?

JORDYN OLIVER: I would say my first one was probably



back when I was committed to Baylor is when they won the national championship, just seeing how excited they were and how proud they were and that pride they had of winning for their university is what I want to bring to Vanderbilt for sure.

MIKAYLA BLAKES: I think mine was just going with my brother in his freshman year on Coach K's fairwell tour and being able to go to every single game and be on spring break.

Q. Mikayla, I was reminded your brother played here. How much time have you spent in this building? Have you shot on the rims out there before?

MIKAYLA BLAKES: Yeah, it's been a lot of time. I think I was almost at every single one of his home games when he was here. He always wanted to work out also, so he would use here and the practice facility as well. I got a lot of shots up, too.

Q. If you can, talk a little bit about the difference between Oregon's style of play and the style of play Vanderbilt, the way you want to play the game going into this game, what that's going to be like, for both of you?

JORDYN OLIVER: I think Oregon's a really good team. They made some really good noise in the Big Ten this year. We're just kind of more focused on ourselves. They have Da'Ja. They have the 6'8" kid, and they do their style of play, but we do our style of play. So it will be fun to see how it goes on Friday.

MIKAYLA BLAKES: For us, we're versatile. We don't really have a set big, but we're just all able to play 1 through 5 and being able to have that versatility against a team that takes a lot of screens, stuff like that, we're going to be able to switch a lot.

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