

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - Lehigh vs Duke

Thursday, March 20, 2025

Durham, North Carolina, USA

Cameron Indoor Stadium

Duke Blue Devils

Delaney Thomas

Taina Mair

Media Conference

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Taina Mair and Delaney Thomas. We'll open the room to questions and go to Zoom later.

Q. I've been following you guys all season long. My question to you is how are you all preparing coming off such a great closing season for the regular season?

TAINA MAIR: I think our preparation has been to stay focused on this tournament. Although we did win the ACC tournament, we're on to a new bill. So we're just looking forward.

DELANEY THOMAS: I think just to add on to that, keeping the competitive spirit high. We still have something to go for and win for so we're just going to keep it together.

Q. For both of you guys, just kind of curious, what have you seen on film from Lehigh? What are you kind of expecting from them in your matchup?

TAINA MAIR: Lehigh is a very competitive team. They have a lot of players on their team who are older, grads, seniors. They shoot the basketball at a really high level. That's something we're going to pay a lot of attention to.

Q. For both of you, what is your first March Madness memory as a kid watching the game maybe or such? Do you remember when you first watched a women's game in the tournament?

DELANEY THOMAS: My March Madness memory is watching Arike shoot that shot over UConn, which was pretty exciting. Just the energy, the atmosphere. I just really wanted to be in that and aspired to be in that.



TAINA MAIR: The same thing as Laney. It was the most iconic March Madness moment in my life growing up.

Q. This tournament site has two really good freshman, Mikayla Blakes on Vanderbilt and Toby with you guys. Just kind of wondering from both your perspectives, what have you seen from Toby this year in terms of her growth and what does she mean to your team? How important is she to your success?

DELANEY THOMAS: She's a very vital important part to our team, just having that youth, but she's so experienced in that way. She knows how to score the basketball. It's one of her strongest attributes, and we're just so happy and excited that she's with us.

TAINA MAIR: Yeah, I think that Toby is a very explosive player. She plays a huge role in our team as people have seen throughout the entire year. So we're just excited for her to compete in her first March Madness tournament.

Q. Can you talk about having home court advantage first and second round being here? What is the importance to you all as the host and as the players?

TAINA MAIR: Yeah, this is my second March Madness tournament and my first time hosting. So I'm just super excited to look forward to seeing all the crazies here and all of our fans who have been supporting us the whole season. So I think it's exciting for not just us but also our fans in the city of Durham.

Q. You got, really, on the national profile winning the ACC tournament, not that you hadn't been before, but people are paying attention now. How do you like being kind of the frontrunners? How do you feel like that position is going to fit this team?

DELANEY THOMAS: I think no matter what, you gotta go in this with an underdog mentality. We're all on stage one now. It's a new tournament. You all have to have that same feistiness, that same hunger.

Q. Are you aware of the kind of trauma of Duke versus



Lehigh (laughter) and what that means to the local community?

A. This morning, we had watched film with Coach Kara. She brought that up about how important this game is to Duke fans in general. So, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: More questions from the room?

Q. I don't know if either of you thought about it, but seems like this area is the hotbed of women's basketball and college basketball right now, with the men's tournament at Raleigh and then the three women's tournaments being played in the area. How special is that to have so much great basketball in the area in the next couple of days?

DELANEY THOMAS: I think it's really exciting. It's just so much young fresh talent that we're able to support our boys, support our own and even compete against schools right in this triangle.

TAINA MAIR: Yeah, I think it's super exciting for the state of North Carolina. Particularly for our Duke community, it's going to be super exciting for the girls playing here and the guys playing in Raleigh. It's super exciting.

THE MODERATOR: Nothing from Zoom. Thank you for your time. We appreciate it. Good luck tomorrow.

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