

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - Nebraska vs Baylor

Thursday, March 19, 2026

Durham, North Carolina, USA

Cameron Indoor Stadium

Baylor Bears

Coach Nikki Collen

Taliah Scott

Darianna Littlepage-Buggs

Media Conference

THE MODERATOR: We are now joined by the Baylor Bears. We have with us student-athletes Darianna Littlepage-Buggs and Taliah Scott. We will have a moment for questions for them.

Q. Taliah, the last couple games, you kind of struggled to get going early in the game. I guess what have you been doing over the last week to kind of rectify that? How confident are you that you can get going once the game starts Friday?

TALIAH SCOTT: I think whenever we played our last game, I think I got back in the gym. I think I got in the gym a lot. Getting my rhythm in practice too. I'm out at whatever we're going to be running, the drills, all that stuff. To be able to see the ball go in the basket over the past week has been very beneficial for me, and I think it's helped my confidence tremendously after a couple of slow games.

Yeah, just getting back in the gym, and I think that I'll be ready to go when the game starts.

Q. Buggs, I want to ask you, it's weird to have a two-week stretch without games this time of year. What's that been like for y'all, and has it been good?

DARIANNA LITTLEPAGE-BUGGS: It's been good for us. We got to focus on us a lot more. We didn't know our opponent just yet, and we broke both of them down and went over a little bit of what they both do. It was mostly focused on what we can do and what we need to do to focus in March.



It's been pretty good. We've been getting our reps in and locking in and getting focused.

Q. Buggs, kind of building off that, now that you know your opponent, actually have a short window, what is your approach going into knowing it's Nebraska? Also, what was your impression of their game last night? They looked pretty strong.

DARIANNA LITTLEPAGE-BUGGS: No, it was a really good game last night. Like I said, we went over stuff already. It's kind of just build off of that. I guess more so just focus. You have to really be focused, especially with a short amount of time.

I think we've done a good job in prep so I think we'll be all right.

Q. Buggs, how can you as a team help get Taliah going? How important is that to your success?

DARIANNA LITTLEPAGE-BUGGS: We have to keep giving her the ball and instilling confidence in her. She can't turn down a shot. We all believe in her. She needs to score for us so we're going to get her that ball. Just instilling in her that you missed a few shots, you make the next few. We're not going to not pass her the ball because she's missing or whatever. We'll find her and she'll hit the open shots, whether it's a transition lay-up or a 3 or a jump shot. Whatever her spots are, we're going to get it to her.

Q. The team's obviously been in a rough stretch with three losses in the last five games. Does that two-week layoff give you a chance reset? How do you regroup to enter the tournament?

DARIANNA LITTLEPAGE-BUGGS: Definitely gives us a reset. We've been focusing more on ourselves. I know we have our opponent now, but I think just leading up to these games, we focused on things we need to clean up to go into March Madness. We know it's going to be tough. It's not going to be an easy game. We cleaned those things up and put in our focus more so on Nebraska now.

Q. Taliah, this being your first kind of foray into March



and this tournament, what are you expecting? How excited are you now that you're actually here?

TALIAH SCOTT: I think I'm really excited. First of all, being able to get to a postseason season on this, the first time I've played in the postseason in my college career. Made it through the year so just seeing how far we can go and how far that takes us.

We're a ready team. We've prepared over the past two weeks. We've cleaned up some stuff that's hurt us in the games we've lost. I'm really excited. I'm really excited to see what the team is made of. It's a bounce-back game for us. I think this could set us on a trajectory of hopefully a string of wins.

Q. Taliah, I'll start with you. If you could describe what March means to you in one word. What is that, and what does it mean to be playing this time of year?

TALIAH SCOTT: March in one word? Exhilarating. I think it's a time of where anything can happen. It doesn't matter what you did in the nonconference. Doesn't matter what you even did in conference. It's a time of excitement, a time of proving yourself to almost the world of who you are and who you are as a team. So exhilarating, exciting.

DARIANNA LITTLEPAGE-BUGGS: I'd have to say adrenaline. That's just every time you step on the court, you don't know, obviously, who you're playing first. Just the adrenaline inside the game, the back and forth, the up and downs, the big scores. You get down, you come back.

So just all those things to me is what March means. You never know in March. March is just a big time of upsets and surprises and just excitement. So I would say adrenaline.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you both for your time. Good luck.

DARIANNA LITTLEPAGE-BUGGS: Thank you.

TALIAH SCOTT: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: We are now joined by the Baylor Bears head coach, Nicki Colleen. She'll have an opening statement and we'll have questions.

Coach, the floor is yours.

NICKI COLLEN: Thank you. Grateful to be here. Excited for another NCAA Tournament. I think sometimes it's easy to take for granted, but been at Baylor five years. This is the fifth time we've gotten to do this so just excited to be

here in Durham. Spent a lot of time scouting in this area when I was in the pros, but excited to play here.

Happy to answer any questions.

Q. Coach, Taliah has gotten off to slow starts the last couple games. How do you get her going quicker, and have you seen a different level of focus from her specifically this week?

NICKI COLLEN: I think the ball just hasn't gone in the basket. I think the last couple games, we've gotten her good shots early. I think, as the game has gone along, I think they've loaded up, but she just needs to see one of those early shots go in. We've seen what we've seen from her. There's been games that the shot didn't go in in the first half, and then she hits a game winner against Iowa State.

So it's just staying confident. I think the time off was good for her body. I've said it many times locally, but there's a grind to the college basketball season that even though she doesn't play like a freshman, look like a freshman, or show up that way, this is the first time her body has had to sustain a whole season so I think this stretch was certainly good for her.

We're just not going to worry. She's had too many games that she's had rough stretches, and she always bounces back. She doesn't lack confidence. She can make a lot of different type plays. This will be her first time play in the NCAA Tournament so excited to see how she rises to the occasion.

Q. Coach, obviously, y'all have had this extended time off. Now you have 24 hours or so to prep for Nebraska. What did you like from them? Maybe not like --

NICKI COLLEN: What do I like?

Q. What did you see from them last night? What are you prepping for?

NICKI COLLEN: Honestly, we knew that's a team that has a lot of good pieces but starts with Britt Prince. She's someone we recruited really, really hard. Spent time on the phone with her mom, who was her high school coach and in her gym at Elkhorn North.

I think her transition from freshman to sophomore year, where she really is -- last year, she was a piece of the team. This year, she's the centerpiece. When you talk about someone who is a 50-40-90 player and has done it through their wins and their losses, there's been one

consistent. She's an elite, efficient player.

Obviously what makes them dangerous is their ability to shoot the 3-ball. They play with great pace. They're a high execution team. You can tell they have fun out there, and they certainly don't look like a team that maybe struggled a little bit through a stretch of the Big Ten. I thought they looked uber confident last night, played really hard and played really well together.

So a really, really good offensive team.

Q. When you talk about the grind of the season, I know the regular season didn't end the way you wanted to with three losses in the last five games. How do you regroup for the tournament? Do you look at it as a new season? How do you get the players to reset?

NICKI COLLEN: It's a combination for us. We certainly have seniors that have been through the highs and lows and want to go out the right way, I guess. Everyone's trying to win their last game of their career, and very few get to do that.

But certainly, when I think about Buggs and Bella in particular and their four years at Baylor, Jana's opportunity to play, I think they're just motivated for another chance to wear Baylor across their chest.

For other players, they came to Baylor for opportunities to play in the NCAA Tournament and play on stages like they'll have here at Cameron. I don't think it was hard to motivate them.

I think everyone was disappointed. I think Colorado did a good job against us. I think TCU did a good job against us. So sometimes it's about understanding that there's a lot of really good teams across college basketball. If you don't bring your A-game, you're probably going to take a loss.

Just a great, great chance to play another basketball game against a really good opponent.

Q. You mentioned the time off. The players talked about focusing on Baylor over the last couple of weeks. How valuable has that been? Has anything stood out about the way you've been able to use that with that time with the team?

NICKI COLLEN: I think it kind of gets you back to fundamentals. You're not leaning into a scout or what you have to do scout-specific. It's more about offensive flow, secondary flow.

This team has had to find different ways to score against different opponents. So, you know, we're still going to be that team. What we do against Nebraska doesn't look exactly like Colorado which doesn't look exactly like TCU.

But I think when it comes to our identity, leaning into defense, are we where we're supposed to be? Are we taking one pass away? Are we in good help side? Do we have a high level of communication?

So really leaning into the communication side that when we're at our best, we're flying around on the defensive side of the ball and creating extra possessions on the offensive side. So a lot of it was just basics and getting back. Our practices weren't long, but we tried to make them intense.

Q. Coach, do you expect any sort of bounce-back from Jana after the way that tournament game went? And has Ella -- how has she pushed her over the last week?

NICKI COLLEN: I think Jana has been pretty consistent for us all year. I certainly -- things happen in games. Like I look at sometimes, you know, you go back to we're down 17 to Oklahoma State, and I played Ella and Ting. And Buggs got her fourth foul, and people were like why didn't you put Buggs back in the game? Buggs didn't do anything wrong. She didn't. But we were riding a group that was playing well together.

From that perspective, I mean, you look at the time Jana went out in the Colorado game. She'd just hit our first 3. We were abysmal from the arc. She hits our first 3. She makes a hustle play and gets called for a foul. Now she's in foul trouble.

So it wasn't necessarily about what Jana didn't do. It was about what Ella did, what Kayla did, what that group did when they came in, as opposed to what the group didn't do.

So certainly we want Jana to be confident. She's been our starting point guard all year, and I think she can be really good tomorrow. But I'm proud of the way Ella has stepped up any time we've needed her to step up. But it doesn't mean that all of a sudden we're going to change our rotations coming into the NCAA Tournament.

Q. Coach, it seems like Marcayla had a pretty good end to the regular season. What do you see for her for the tournament?

NICKI COLLEN: Right now, honestly, we don't know if she's going to go. She sustained an injury in practice. So from that perspective, like, I think she was playing well

down the stretch. At this point, it's about healthy bodies.
So, yeah, it's about making sure she's healthy.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you for your time.
Good luck.

NICKI COLLEN: Thank you.

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