

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: Second Round - Baylor vs Duke

Sunday, March 22, 2026
Durham, North Carolina, USA
Cameron Indoor Stadium

Duke Blue Devils

Coach Kara Lawson

Taina Mair

Arianna Roberson

Media Conference

Duke - 69, Baylor - 46

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by the Duke Blue Devils. We have with us head coach Kara Lawson, along with student-athletes Arianna Roberson and Taina Mair.

KARA LAWSON: One of our better defensive efforts of the season. When you look at it in total, I thought we started the game with the appropriate level of force, physicality, attention to detail, and really just locked in on that end.

Proud of all the players. That type of performance, I mean, the first half, two single digit quarters for them to start the game put us in a commanding position, and then we kind of handled that mini run they had to start the third and were able to keep them at bay.

Excited to be advancing to our third straight Sweet 16. It's an awesome accomplishment for our group.

Q. Taina, what made your defense so effective today?

TAINA MAIR: I think last game I kind of let my team down in my defensive energy, in my defensive presence. So I made it a point today to be there for them and to be able to just be myself for them today.

Q. The last game against Charleston?

TAINA MAIR: Yes, Charleston.

Q. A quick followup, what was Duke able to do so much better against Baylor today than back in November?



TAINA MAIR: I think we were super raw back in November. We were a brand new team coming together, and it was our first game of the season. Throughout the course of the season, we just continued to get better and better on the defensive end, and I think today kind of showed it.

Q. You're the first Blue Devil ever to have eight assists in multiple NCAA games. Can you speak on it?

TAINA MAIR: It's an honor. I give my credit to my teammates. If they're hitting shots, then I get the assist. So shout out to them.

Q. For T, hate to describe it like your last game in Cameron, but can you talk a little bit about how much this place and Durham and the fans have meant to you during your time here?

TAINA MAIR: Since I've been here, all the fans have been super supportive, both in Cameron and even outside. If you go out in Durham, fans recognize me, and they give me a lot of support. So I appreciate them.

Especially today, we had a great crowd out there. It was so energetic, even before the game. So I just give all credit to them for coming out and showing up for us all throughout the season.

Q. Ari, Baylor is a pretty long team. They've got some height and some length. You were able to get a double-double today. What was working for you inside and the team as a whole down in the paint?

ARIANNA ROBERSON: I feel like collectively as a team we knew what we had to come in and do. We stayed together. We played our game, and we trusted our coaching staff.

I feel like my first game playing against Baylor, I just tried to be there for my team, go out there with high energy, and do anything I can to be there for my team and what they need from me.



Q. For either one of you, this was a run it back game. You played Baylor in nonconference. You have another run it back game coming up. You're going to play LSU in the Sweet 16 in Sacramento. How much are you looking forward to that challenge?

TAINA MAIR: I think we're super excited to be able to compete and play another game, yeah.

ARIANNA ROBERSON: Both great teams. Just looking forward to the challenge ahead.

Q. Delaney had a really strong game shooting. She missed hardly any shots at all. Can you talk about her impact for you on the offensive side today?

KARA LAWSON: She continues to elevate her game in the postseason. I thought she was great in the ACC Tournament, and now in the first two games here in the NCAA Tournament, she's playing really well.

She's a junior and has been in a lot of these battles, so not surprised when Delaney plays well in a big moment. She's such a competitor, and she has a great understanding of what her strengths and her weaknesses are, and she plays to her strengths. I think that's what makes her a successful player.

Q. I saw you had some animated conversations with Toby there. I was curious if you could share anything about that. How do you think she played today?

KARA LAWSON: If you watch me coach, I have animated conversations with everybody. That's like just what they are during the game. A lot of that is because the volume in there is really loud. If I don't increase the volume of my voice, they can't hear me.

I don't even -- I mean, I don't remember what each of them are. If there's something I need them to correct, I'm telling them that. If there's something I'm excited that they're doing well, I'm telling them that. Don't assume an animated conversation is always negative. A lot of times it's positive.

It was probably something scheme-wise. If it's a corrective conversation, something scheme-wise that maybe we're making mistakes on, or sometimes it's positive, they're playing really well and I'm excited.

I'm animated over there. I don't know if I am animated, I guess, I don't know. I don't watch other coaches, so I can't say relative to other people, but I do get going in the game for sure. That's probably why I don't have a voice, Kermit the Frog.

Q. Baylor had five assists and was 0 for 14 on 3-pointers. Those are both pretty exceptional stats on the stat line. Can you talk about that a little bit?

KARA LAWSON: It's really hard to -- I can't sit here and take credit for them going 0 for 14. Some of those shots, they just missed. We got lucky on some of those.

But I did think our attention to detail and we tried to force them into challenge shots as much as possible, tried to just be there. Every time we took a shot, there was a hand in their face. That's what our goal was. We didn't achieve that, but that's the goal.

So I thought we were very attentive to that, trying to contest everything. I think, if you contest everything, the goal is to lower a team's field goal percentage and 3-point percentage below their average. You're not going to shut them out, but can you get them to shoot a little worse than they normally do in all the areas?

That's what we try to do. That's our goal defensively. Sometimes they still make them, and that's the game. I thought they missed some that they normally make.

Q. Riley didn't score until the fourth quarter today, took her a while to get going. What's going to be the course of action to get her kind of maybe reset heading into the second weekend of the tournament?

KARA LAWSON: I think you've just got to keep playing through. Riley, I thought, had much more energy today. I'm most concerned -- I don't ever know who's scoring or who's not scoring in terms of like -- I didn't know she didn't score until the fourth is my point.

I'm looking for is she lively? Is she making plays? Is she hustling? Is she defending? Is she rebounding? Is she playmaking? Is she doing all the things that we're wanting her to do? I thought that was much better in round 2 than it was in round 1.

There's another level that she can get to or that she's played at, and I think she's fully capable of doing that. Yeah, just keep being positive with her, keep her confident, and know that she can make some big time plays for us.

Q. I don't have a box score, but you guys had a pretty strong rebounding --

KARA LAWSON: I have two. Do you want this one? Here you go.

Q. Looks like you guys had a pretty strong

rebounding night generally, 18 offensive boards today. What do you think was working well down there? Or do you think things were working well down there?

KARA LAWSON: I thought in the first half specifically we were really good on the glass, got those extra opportunities that got us out to that lead. What was working is we had multiple people going. I thought we had a relentless approach to the offensive glass most of the game. When you have that, you generally get into those double figures in terms of rebounding.

It was a team effort when you look at the box score I just gave you. We had multiple players with offensive rebounds, right? It wasn't one person. So it was a team effort for sure.

Q. Kara, you talked a lot about how much Taina and Ashlon have meant to this program in terms of building it and stuff. I was just wondering, I saw you there dancing with the players at the end. How meaningful or gratifying is it to not only send them to the Sweet 16 again, those two players, your seniors, but to do it on your home floor?

KARA LAWSON: I think the whole year has been meaningful with them. When you start the year and you have two seniors who have impacted your program in every way, your wish and your hope as a coach is that they can have a year that kind of is indicative of the impact they've had, and that's your hope. You can't guarantee that. If you could, you'd win every game.

To start the way we started and to have it look pretty bleak in the beginning to now those two have checked every box when you think about it so far, right? Won the ACC regular season outright, won the ACC Tournament, and now they're advancing to their third straight Sweet 16.

I'm just fulfilled because they have really had a memorable senior year, and that's all you want for your players is to have something to remember, and certainly a memorable last game at Cameron for both of them.

Q. Just looking ahead, obviously LSU, you've seen them before. What jumps out to you about that, seeing them again?

KARA LAWSON: I haven't watched them obviously since we played them. So I can't give you anything new on it or what's different, but obviously one of the top teams in the country. Really good on both ends of the floor.

We'll watch film, and we'll get prepared. We'll make the long flight out to California. We're excited to be in the

Sweet 16 again and excited about the matchup.

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