

# NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - Villanova vs Texas Tech

Friday, March 20, 2026

Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA

Pete Maravich Assembly Center

**Villanova Wildcats**

**Coach Denise Dillon**

**Jasmine Bascoe**

**Kelsey Joens**

Media Conference

Tech Texas 57, Villanova 52

DENISE DILLON: Well, hard-fought battle for sure. I feel awful for our group. Just think they laid it all out there. Left it on the floor. They knew they couldn't take it with us. Credit to Texas Tech for battling and finding a way to pull it out, so congratulations to them.

**Q. Kelsey first, in your first season in Philly and Philly area, what did you learn about like Villanova basketball and just Philly basketball in general that you can take going forward?**

KELSEY JOENS: Yeah, you know, coming here I knew that they like to move and I felt like that would best suit me just constant movement.

They are really good at sharing the ball so I knew that that would fit me, and just being a part of this team has meant so much already in this one year.

I love this group and it's meant a lot to me.

**Q. Despite the loss you guys fought to the end. What was going through your heads when you got the ball back with 13 seconds left? What were you thinking?**

JASMINE BASCOE: Just staying positive. You never know what can happen in a game. We were fortunate to get that back and focused on the play at hand. We weren't trying to think too far in advance; just see what we could get out of time out or a stoppage there.

And just telling each other we're good, we got this,



huddling up together, feeling that connection so we were all on the same page.

**Q. I notice at different points you were a lot of times the ones picking everybody up and being vocal leaders. You guys were the ones paving the way scoring-wise. Was that like emblematic of what Coach preaches about sharing the ball and the load a little bit?**

JASMINE BASCOE: Yeah, you can get something from anyone any night. That's the beauty of this team that we had this year. Everyone on the court can play and give you some energy.

So Kelsey had a great start to the game and that kind of opened it up for us. Then just my role is being a leader. Even if I don't feel like I'm playing well, that doesn't mean I can't be positive for my teammates and the girls.

We're all going to pick each other up and talk to each other. I think that's why we were able to stay in the game. We were leading most of the time and right there, but we were positive and we left everything we had on the court.

**Q. Jasmine, what kind of game was this? What was the character of this game? Appeared from the outside to be quite physical.**

JASMINE BASCOE: Yeah.

**Q. What did you think about Tech's approach to defense in general and defending you and what was that challenge like?**

JASMINE BASCOE: Yeah, it was definitely physical game. Very gritty. We like that though. We wanted to play with that, and so it was fun. It was lots of fun.

And, I mean, yeah, they did a good job guarding me I guess. The double, we planned for that. We were ready for that. So I respect them for how they guarded me and us. We're just going to take it and move on.

I think we did a good job adjusting to that and opened up



the court a lot for everyone else, so if that's what's going to have to happen, I'm perfectly fine with that.

Yeah, they were a great defensive team. Very aggressive. So are we. I think that's why it was such a close, competitive game. We were both giving it back to each other.

**Q. It did seem like it was a lot of strength-on-strength for you guys. Like you said, it was very defensive. What can you take from that going forward to make sure that you're back on this stage next year?**

KELSEY JOENS: In the offseason just preparing. You know, going back to the gym, getting shots up, weight room; just basketball is a physical sport, so just going out there, being strong, and continue to grow as a team.

JASMINE BASCOE: Yeah, for lots of us, including me, this is my first time in the tournament and so it was a good first feel. Obviously we have goals to be here for the next two years when I'm here, and so I know what to expect now. We all know what to expect.

I think that's a great piece we can take moving forward.

**Q. Thinking back to August, September, what are the biggest areas of growth you've seen throughout the season?**

KELSEY JOENS: Yeah, I think personally, you know, the team has instilled a lot of confidence in me to knock down big shots, so just being there for them to help create things on the offensive end, draw a lot of defense, and that kind of stuff.

And then defensively just becoming a better on-ball defender. Then working together as a team to get better each day.

JASMINE BASCOE: Yeah, I've had a lot of support. Feel like I've grown a lot as an individual this year maturity-wise. You know, being a leader, point guard, I think just that's helped me balance all of it and stay positive throughout the whole year.

**Q. You are both are from elsewhere in the country. You come here and you put yourselves on the line in a way that's very sacrificial I guess. What about this area, what about Villanova basketball, Philly basketball, makes you want to do that and want to stay and do that?**

JASMINE BASCOE: I can say coming from Canada, coming on my visit to Villanova just felt like a family.

Everyone was super genuine, very real. They said things to you straight and that's what you want as a player.

Coming here, I had no doubt about it coming in and being here it's really, it's true. Like everyone truly loves everyone. We're all doing this for the community and the people around us. It shows on the court the way we move the ball and encourage each other.

I don't know what athlete wouldn't want to be a part of that.

KELSEY JOENS: Yeah, we love each other so much that we want to do it for one another. You can see the bench on every play. They're so invested and always going to cheer you up and build on that.

So, you know, just being a part of that, like Jas said sure it was -- it's a family being so far from home you have people in your corner at all times. People will back you up. They're going to be there for you.

Doesn't matter how far you are when you have that kind of relationship with people.

**Q. Jasmine, top scorer in the whole game. I wanted to know about that 20 seconds left when you lost the dribble you had there. Was that something they did that surprised you or just kind of lose the handle in a bad moment?**

JASMINE BASCOE: Yeah, it was just a lost handle honestly. It was I would say a tragic moment for me.

DENISE DILLON: What did you try and do?

JASMINE BASCOE: Tried to put it behind my back and we talked about how that's not always the best thing to do in those situations.

Definitely won't be happening again. (Laughter.) But, no, yeah, I dribbled it right off my foot. Tried to dive for it and unfortunately they got the time out, whatever. Yeah, it's all right.

**Q. So they're new to this; you are not. What is your message going forward and how do you make -- like I asked them -- how do you make sure you're back here next year and many, many years to come?**

DENISE DILLON: Yeah, it's the conversations early, the recognition of what needs to happen in order to get here. We talked about it even last season with this group as we said, the reasons why we didn't get there.

You recognize some of those games at that cost you this

opportunity. So it was every day, every game we prepared for them knowing what quad level we were playing, the urgency of the game, and they listened, they learned. I think that was our greatest growth this year, seeing how important each and every contest was.

It wasn't just about getting here. We wanted to advance. Unfortunately did not happen in our favor. That'll definitely be the motto, the message with our returning group starting in the offseason.

**Q. Kelsey Joens, she obviously started great.**

DENISE DILLON: Uh-huh.

**Q. Seemed like she was a little more differential in the second half. Attempted I think just two threes. Didn't make them.**

DENISE DILLON: Right.

**Q. Would you have liked to have seen more?**

DENISE DILLON: Yeah, absolutely. I think even across the board, you look at this stat sheet we do shoot a lot of threes. We're 6 for 25. Some a little more rushed than others. Just the recognition of who has the hot hand. It can't be off a set call. That continued movement, getting some looks.

She got some cuts in the second half. They took her off the three. Thought she did a good job moving without the basketball and getting a couple looks there.

Our greatest offense is when we're in motion, and you get worn down a little bit and teams take you out of that rhythm. They have the advantage and then we were just forcing some individual plays came into play.

**Q. Aside from making it to the tournament this year, what else did you see in this season that gives you hope for coming years with the program?**

DENISE DILLON: Yeah, I think you just witnessed it with Jas and Kelsey, hearing them and knowing what this program is about and really the buy-in to the culture, the growth, and them passing thank onto the younger players.

Jas is young I understand, but experience-wise she is a veteran for sure and upperclassman next year. Whoever is coming in, recruiting class is, and that whole group.

So this is the standard. I think what I'm most pleased with and just an opportunity to state it: I will say this group certainly just recharged and reignited that love of

development and coaching and the reason why we get into it.

Just them as people really offered that for us. They were just extremely special group and we wanted so much more for them. They certainly put themselves in this position. You want it more for them because I hate the idea of this team breaking up. It's breaking up because of five tremendous young women who are finishing.

But I know the younger ones played for them to have a great finish to their careers. Yeah, that's a tough thing but super proud of them and I'm so grateful for what they've done for us as a staff and our program and the university.

**Q. You guys were really able to disrupt Bailey Maupin in the first half. Did you change anything in the second half that allowed her to score all those points?**

DENISE DILLON: Unfortunately fouls came into play. Kennedy Henry, she's a freshmen. Talk about somebody who is just a special player. She gets the assignment of the top player on the other team, game in and game out. When you're putting a freshman in that position you're asking a lot.

I will say that first half did a really good job, but then she's on the bench; picked up fouls; tried to tag team. Dani said she did a really nice job. She's a veteran. She knew her team needed her to settle in and make some plays and she did a good job of taking advantage.

It wasn't so much on the perimeter. She was able to get to the rim. I don't think our communication was great. She made some big plays there. Then, again, somebody takes a step off her. She is going to knock down a three.

I thought she did a really great job in the second half of leading her team.

**Q. So you guys like you said you're representing your university but also representing your city. What does it mean to be back here and playing the way you play and what does that do for your brand?**

DENISE DILLON: Yeah, it's tremendous. It's the ultimate goal. You have every team meeting with you are at that coaches pre-season saying that he want to play March Madness. We all know it doesn't happen that way.

Extremely proud of this group. Philly basketball. I think is the greatest. I'm biased being from the area growing up and playing in Philly.

But it's a great brand and was fantastic for us and the men

to be here representing. Men's as well coming from Philly. Fortunately we're out so we all got a lot more work to do in the future to represent the city and keep us going in March Madness.

**Q. Just one follow up on Tech tech style of play. If I remember right, you called it yesterday. You predicted how they were going to play you guys. Pretty much looked exactly like that.**

DENISE DILLON: Uh-huh.

**Q. What makes them tough to handle even when you kind of know exactly what they're going to try to do to you?**

DENISE DILLON: They run a lot at you with their -- they're deep. With that experience and understanding they know what needs to happen. The full court pressure for them to be able to sustain that the entire contest is impressive.

That's just prepared for it. They've been consistent throughout the year with that pressure. They showed it for 40 minutes tonight. Just keeping us out of rhythm a little. I thought we did a good job break the pressure. Different people handling the ball. Then we had some careless turnovers.

Jas's turnover there was really hard because that was one of the few turnovers off the dribble when she was going. A lot of the others were us trying to make passes and people not keeping their eye on the ball and trying to make the play before they had it.

Yeah, Texas Tech, they get up on you. They are constantly running different people into the game and stayed with that pressure throughout.

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