

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: Second Round - Texas Tech vs LSU

Saturday, March 21, 2026

Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA

Pete Maravich Assembly Center

Texas Tech Red Raiders

Coach Krista Gerlich

Bailey Maupin

Snudda Collins

Media Conference

MODERATOR: We are happy to be joined by Bailey Maupin and Snudda Collins from Texas Tech as we get ready for tip-off tomorrow between Texas Tech and LSU for the regional final here Sunday at 2:00.

Q. You've had an historic season in many ways. What have been the keys to success, and then secondly, the attitude of we're not done yet, how do we go into this madhouse tomorrow and win a game?

BAILEY MAUPIN: The keys to success for us are playing together, playing fast in transition, getting as many possessions as possible to get shots at the rim.

But on the other side of the ball, it's keeping everybody in front, forcing teams to be uncomfortable, forcing teams into maybe some unusual turnovers for them that lead to easy buckets for us.

Like you said, the one and only mentality we've had that since the very first game and that's something that we've carried through the season, something that's gotten us to where we are now and it's definitely not something that we're going to stop.

SNUDDA COLLINS: And I second it.

Q. Snudda, you started your career here in the SEC, you played four years, you played on this court and against this team before. Can you take us back to the draw when you saw it when the bracket come out originally, and now that it's finally set that you're going to be playing LSU, kind of what went through your head?



SNUDDA COLLINS: Oh, I was excited. The SEC is a very physical conference. I love the physicality, I love to play against physical teams. Yeah, I was very excited to play against a physical matchup, if you will.

Q. And then for both of y'all, you talked about liking being the underdogs the last time. Sitting up there, this team has been kind of counted out the whole year. You're here, I think everybody's on the team's kind of been counted out in your career individually at some point. How has that driven y'all as a team together as a team of new people and then to this point this season?

BAILEY MAUPIN: I mean, when you're the underdog you have absolutely nothing to lose. You get to go out and play loose, play free, just kind of do what you do without having that pressure from maybe your coaches, the pressure from the outside world, you know, to perform at a certain level. So that gives us -- I would say that gives us an advantage in some areas. But at the end of the day, being the underdog fuels you, it fuels us.

Q. Snudda, this question is for you. Obviously your coach talked about it last night, hey, we want to be where they are, we want a National Championship. What are some of the things that you feel like from your lens that LSU has done to get that National Championship over the years Kim Mulkey's been here?

SNUDDA COLLINS: From the outside looking in, they're a very athletic team, very physical, like I said before. They obviously take a lot of criticism from the outside, and I think they do a good job of blocking it out and staying focused on playing on to the next game.

Q. Bailey, I'm sure you noticed they scored more points in their game yesterday than were scored in your game combined. Is playing them tomorrow about scoring a lot more, holding them, trying to hold them down a lot more? How much can you expect to hold down a team that averages 95 points a game?

BAILEY MAUPIN: The great thing about basketball is you just have to score one more point than the other team. For



us, we're defensive minded, so being able to hold them under their scoring average is going to be huge for us. That comes with stopping the ball from transition, stopping easy fast break opportunities that they may have, pressuring the ball on all areas, full court, half court, quarter court. No matter where the ball is, just being aware, being midline, staying focused on our principles and doing what we do. We've done a great job all year of holding people below their average. Definitely that will be the mindset going into the game, but at the same time we have to score the ball. So make open shots, make the correct reads and get to the paint and finish, get to the free throw line.

Q. I guess for the both of you, if you don't mind, the first five minutes of the game and the first five minutes of the second half, I know a lot of coaches about talk about how important those intervals of time in a game are. How important is it to get off to a fast start tomorrow, whether it be offensively and/or defensively, and how much emphasis does your coaching staff put on that?

BAILEY MAUPIN: It's huge. It's huge for every game not just because LSU likes to start fast and play fast consistently throughout the game. Every game you've got to go out and throw the first punch. That fuels you especially when you're playing on an opponent's home court. You can kind of silence the crowd a little bit. That's helpful.

Then when you come out in the second half, those first five minutes, you know, you can see the adjustments that the other team makes. You can see what you need to do to continue throughout the game and to finish the game out. So those intervals of time are huge and they will be a point of emphasis for us.

SNUDDA COLLINS: Absolutely.

Q. Bailey, for you, what do you think defines your defense? What is your identity on that end of the floor and how have you all been able to become one of the best defensive teams in your conference?

BAILEY MAUPIN: When it comes to defense, we are hard nosed, we're gritty, we play together. We play heavy gaps, but at the same time we also full court press the entire game. That's something that not a lot of teams are doing anymore. That's something that West Texas basketball's known for, being in your shorts for 40 minutes and forcing you to do things that you're uncomfortable with.

Q. Just curious, it seems like it's a special time to be at Texas Tech. All your sports seem to be doing things they've never done before. What is it like being on that

campus right now and being part of that athletic program?

BAILEY MAUPIN: It's amazing. I mean, it's unreal the amount of support that we get from Texas Tech in general but Lubbock, I mean all of Lubbock. Texas Tech is Lubbock.

So to be a part of teams and programs that are bringing Texas Tech back to where we think it should be and where we think it will be for a long time is an honor and something that I'll hold very close to my heart for a long time.

Q. You guys have a very veteran group. How important is that experience, especially printed as the first tournament win in a few years, but with that experience, how important is that for you guys moving forward?

BAILEY MAUPIN: I mean, we played a lot of basketball in our lives. No matter what stage you're on, no matter where you're playing, who you're playing, basketball will be basketball. So for us to come in with 23, 22 years of basketball under our belt, I mean, I think it gives us an advantage.

But at the end of the day we know what needs to be done. It's more than Xs and Os, it's continuing to play together on the court, and we're going to go out and execute our game plan to the best of our abilities.

MODERATOR: Snudda, do you want to add to that?

SNUDDA COLLINS: I mean, she's been giving some really good answers. I don't know how to top those. The answers have been right on cue. I'm sitting here trying to think. Man, she's kind of checking them all off.

Q. I asked you Thursday about all the fans you had coming in from Brookhaven, family, friends. You said a couple of dozen. Is there a time for you to visit or celebrate with them? I know this is a business trip and all that, but is there any time at all or are you separated from everybody right now?

SNUDDA COLLINS: I'm pretty separated from everybody right now. Of course after the games I unite with them and give my hugs and love yous and everything. But right now I'm kind of focused on trying to go win and win as many games as possible. That will come, but right now I'm focused on winning.

Q. Y'all talk a lot about being old, but is there anything -- is tired a thing at this point in the year, one day off, or is it just ready to go?



SNUDDA COLLINS: Ready to go.

BAILEY MAUPIN: Absolutely not. I've never felt better.

MODERATOR: Anybody else? All right. Bailey, Snudda, thank you very much for your time.

We're joined by Texas Tech head coach Krista Gerlich.

Q. You and I talked a couple of months ago.

KRISTA GERLICH: Yeah, good to see you.

Q. You mentioned last night, like hey, we're not intimidated by LSU and we want to be where they are where they have a National Championship. From your lens, what has LSU done in the last several seasons, maybe keys to success for them to get to that National Championship in multiple NCAA Tournament appearances?

KRISTA GERLICH: Yeah, I would probably say recruiting, I think that's what it's all about really. It's about recruiting really elite players, and they've definitely done that. You know the people that they have on their roster. The Name, Image and Likeness is a real thing because you know them outside of basketball and in that world. So I think the recruiting piece of it's been huge.

Q. You've faced Kim Mulkey before. What do you expect to see out of her team, and then I have a followup question.

KRISTA GERLICH: Toughness. I mean, they're always so tough, they're gritty, they compete, super athletic. You know, it's a typical Coach Mulkey team. They are always very tough, very strong, balanced and they play super hard.

Q. Also, your roster is nothing but veterans, one freshman, one sophomore. How important do you think that will play a role, especially nothing is more valuable than experience?

KRISTA GERLICH: Yeah, I think not only experience, but just age. I mean, being older. We learned that a couple of years ago when we started four sophomores. It's really hard with the transfer portal and kids being able to play a fifth year. You know, when they did that, it was difficult to compete whenever you have -- when you're going against an experienced team.

So I think now that we're the experienced one, I think that certainly plays a huge piece of it.

But also, I just -- I've said this before and I'll say it again, it's the desperation of playing and not knowing if it's your last game or not. That just gives teams an edge when you have a senior laden team.

Q. A couple of your players said when you're the underdog you have nothing to lose. I don't know if that's enabled them to play loose and light, but is that kind of the approach going into a game like this tomorrow when they've got all the fans in the stands for the most part?

KRISTA GERLICH: Yeah. I mean, I think that's certainly something to be said about it, right, is that we're not expected to win. We're not expected to go out and upset them on their home floor. So I think it does relieve a little bit of pressure there, and I think it does allow your kids to play a little bit freer.

But we definitely will be intense. We'll be focused, we'll be driven and we'll have a plan, and we want to compete. We certainly aren't going out there and saying it's a crapshoot. Like, we have a plan and we want to go win, so we're definitely going to give it our very best shot.

Q. You have a couple of players that have played quite a bit in the SEC. Does that help at all or is that kind of an overblown narrative?

KRISTA GERLICH: No, I think it definitely helps. I think it just gives you a little bit of an edge. I think there's a lot of hype before the SEC, and when you're coming from a different conference, I think people try to use that as an intimidation factor.

So for us to have a couple of kids on our team that have played in the SEC and against LSU in particular, I think it just gives us a little bit of hindsight and maybe just somebody in our locker room that can say, hey, we've played against them before, this is what you can expect, this is what it's going to feel like. Especially at LSU, you know, in front of I'm sure a sell-out crowd that will definitely come into play as far as our kids just sharing that knowledge with one another.

Q. And then can you speak a little bit about Jada and her performance in last night's game specifically?

KRISTA GERLICH: Yeah. I thought Jada and Saren both really competed. We knew that our advantage was going to be in the paint and we needed to be able to get paint touches as much as possible. I thought both of those kids really battled for position and battled to try to get the ball in the paint.

I don't think that we did a very good job of getting it to them. Our guards didn't do a great job of finding them, but I really thought that Jada played extended minutes for us. I thought that she gave us an inside presence, and she made a couple of really good passes and finishes inside that helped us secure the win.

Q. Is there one thing more important than another tomorrow in terms of trying to hold down them defensively, or to score more, try to get on their level? Where's the balance lie for you?

KRISTA GERLICH: We've got to play Lady Raider basketball, so we have to rely on our defense. We have to be able to at least make them have to really work for their points. I think that's the key. We can't give them free points, which means we have to take care of the basketball. We can't turn the basketball over because we can't set our defense and that will turn into really easy buckets for them. And they're going to score anyway, but we've got to make it difficult for them to score. We can't let them just have easy looks at the rim.

And then offensively, it's a thing where we've got to take care of the basketball, work the ball and be really confident in what we're doing. Not be afraid to take big shots, not be afraid to go attack the rim, and just compete.

Q. When you're a pressing team with defense as their calling card, do you get a sense of how your players are feeling about the opportunity to play the highest scoring team in the country?

KRISTA GERLICH: Yeah. I mean, I think our kids like the challenge. I think they like the opportunity to play against somebody that we want to limit their possessions. We want to try to obviously again limit their easy basket opportunities. I think our kids love that challenge.

We're one of the top defensive teams in the country, we've taken a lot of pride in that, and this will be our greatest challenge to date, for sure.

Q. I'm curious your thoughts, in this day and age of collegiate athletics, transfer portal exists, NIL is certainly a thing, for a player like Flau'jae Johnson to stay all four years. From the outside looking in, what's your thoughts on a player of her caliber sticking it out at a school for her entire collegiate career?

KRISTA GERLICH: Yeah, could not have more respect for her. Could not have more respect for her.

We've got one on our team as well, Bailey Maupin, who

stayed all four years. Had every opportunity to leave, had lots of people in our DMs offering her lots of money to go elsewhere and she chose to stay, and kudos to Flau'jae for doing that as well.

No. 1, we talk about this all the time, but leaving their legacy I think is a real thing. You don't see it as much anymore with the transfer portal because kids are hopping from school to school to school.

Bailey is going to go down as the fourth leading scorer in our program. We've had a lot of really good players. There's no way she does that if she isn't at Texas Tech for four years. And I would probably say the same for Flau'jae. I have no idea where she stands in the record books and all that, but she's leaving her legacy.

I just think not only is that huge for record books, that type of thing, but she's going to have a home at Baton Rouge for the rest of her life. That to me is tremendous because that ball's going to stop bouncing at some point. I'm sure the records won't ever stop turning for her, but I do think that it's really huge for her to know that she has a place to call home for the rest of her life.

Q. Coach, it's not just Flau'jae, it's also Mikaylah Williams.

KRISTA GERLICH: Absolutely.

Q. Why's the pairing of those two players so tough to defend?

KRISTA GERLICH: Well, they're pros, number one. You know, I think they're going to obviously go really high in the WNBA draft.

I think Mikaylah is really versatile. I know they play her at the 3 and the 4 some, and she can post up, she can go out to the perimeter and really shoot the 3. Just her versatility I think allows her to create mismatches for opponents.

And then Flau'jae, having a complimentary guard on the perimeter that can get it to the rack and obviously shoot the 3. They pose an issue, that's for sure. They pose an issue for defenses. You kind of have to pick your poison at times.

But they're a really nice combination and they've obviously served LSU really well.

Q. Yesterday you mentioned you were kind of going to the scout blind not knowing much about LSU. What are some things you kind of picked up about the way they've been playing either last night or this morning?

KRISTA GERLICH: Yeah, throughout the night, throughout the night. I mean, when I say going into the scout blind, I just meant I hadn't focused on them. I've seen them play. They play really fast. They play really, really fast. They love transition, they're really good at it, and they've got lots of weapons. So we're definitely going to have to slow them down. To your point of them being the highest offense in the nation is that we're going to have to really limit their opportunities at 3 points.

They do a really good job because they're simple. They're really simple on offense, and I think that is a good thing and a bad thing. It makes for maybe a less complicated scout because you don't have to remember a million plays, but when you're simple, it's because you're really good at what you do and you don't have to do 100 other things. So they're really good at what they do.

We'll have to have different ways to try to stop them or make things difficult for them because I'm sure they've seen everything in the book thrown at them on those wing ball screens for sure. And then obviously rebounding, they're really, really tough on the glass. We're going to have to do a great job at a team effort job of trying to keep them off the glass and limit their second chance opportunities.

Q. Coach, you played at Texas Tech and won a National Championship. I feel like -- I worked in Lubbock for a few years, there's a West Texas pride that comes in Lubbock. Do you feel like your team embodies that?

KRISTA GERLICH: Oh, there's no doubt, there is no doubt. You know, I'm so proud of just what this team has done and how they have bought in to the Lady Raider standard and culture and what we want it to be and what it used to be. It has been really exciting to see Lady Raider Nation revised, just to see the pride that is forming again.

I mean, I was a member of the '93 National Championship team. We literally I think put women's basketball on the map, particularly in that region, and we were the sweethearts of Lubbock and of West Texas.

I think you can see that happening with our team as well. There's a lot of really great kids on our roster. They inspire a lot of people. Not just young girls, but we have people sending us pictures of retirement homes having watch parties for the Lady Raiders. Friends of theirs, friends of ours, little kids. It's just -- I just love how much they -- how much they just cherish really young women who really work hard together and aren't afraid to be super tough as well when they're on the court. It's been a lot of fun to watch the pride of West Texas be so successful.

Q. Coach, LSU's been able to roll out so many lineups this year really deep. I guess to that point, just the turnaround, so short. Just I guess what are the challenges for you and your staff just having to scout so many lineups, I guess, and how do you go about preparing for that?

KRISTA GERLICH: Yeah. I mean, we're really big on personnel, of knowing personnel. It's not necessarily I guess who they have on the floor, but we have to know each of their tendencies.

Like I said, I feel like they're really simple in what they do, but they're really good at it. So we just have to apply our defensive principles. We have to understand how we play offensively. We may try to tweak some things here or there, but at this point in the season, no matter who it is, you have to play your brand of basketball. You have to bring the qualities to the game that are the intangibles, if you will, to try to overcome some of those things that you see on the court strategic-wise.

So I just think that our kids are going to be focused in on what we do and how we do it. We're going to give it our very best opportunity, very best effort.

Q. Bailey was here talking about how much you guys like to press. LSU is susceptible to turning the ball over being affected by the press sometimes, but they seem to take that in stride, they just factor it into what they do. How much can you hope to disrupt them with the press because they just seem to like, OK, they have double digit turnovers and they just keep going?

KRISTA GERLICH: Yeah. I mean, that is part of our game and that's part of our philosophy is how we defend in the full court. We will try to disrupt them some.

But I don't think that it's a thing where they're concerned about it that much. I mean, especially if -- I think they play fast, I think they're used to getting extra possessions, I think they take what they get. And if it works out, great for them, then that's fantastic. But I don't think you're going to see them make multiple mistakes in a row. I don't think that's going to happen.

So, I mean, we're going to continue to do what we do and try to disrupt as much as possible, but obviously they're a really good basketball team for a reason. It will be difficult for us to disrupt them that much.

Q. I was talking to the players about a special time to be at Texas Tech overall.

KRISTA GERLICH: Yeah.

Q. Athletics, I know like Glasco, he coached right down the road and the job he's doing. All your sports seem to be kind of doing historic things there.

KRISTA GERLICH: Yeah, it is. It's a great time to be a Red Raider. Super excited. I actually just got off the phone with Joey McGuire. As I was walking in here, he FaceTimed me just to say good luck and congrats.

I think that's what makes Texas Tech special are all the head coaches are really united and really support one another. We're really grounded in what we do and how we do it, and I think Kirby Hocutt's done a fantastic job of assembling really great coaches that embody the West Texas characteristics and qualities.

But yeah, everybody's doing great. I think for me, it's been an uphill battle for us to build our program where it is. It's been hard the past couple of years walking into staff meetings. I've said this before, walking into staff meetings and seeing football doing so great, men's basketball doing so great and softball doing so great, and I was like, I want women's basketball to do great.

So there's a lot of pressure there that you put on yourself because you want to be in the talks of that. I'm just really proud of all of the coaches at Tech and how they run their programs and how we support one another and the expectations that are there. That all starts with Kirby.

Q. I saw a couple pictures of some of the players carrying around PVC pipes. Is that some sort of theme you guys had or is that some drill?

KRISTA GERLICH: It was a theme for last night's game against Villanova, yeah. We try to do little things like that, just try to get them to focus in on scouts and what the theme is of the scout. That's what that was for last night.

Q. Sorry, can't let you go without following up on that. So what are we getting the ladies for the LSU game tomorrow? At what point do you hand over the object? Is it the day of? Walk us through that, please.

KRISTA GERLICH: Yeah. Well, I'm not going to give you all our secrets, but yeah, we don't always have an object, but we did have an object this time. We definitely have themes. Our coaches do a fantastic job of just, of motivating, of symbolism, of just painting a picture for them of what we want to accomplish. It's exciting. It makes I think our kids buy into everything a little bit more. It makes them really, and a lot of it really applies to life lessons and I love that, too. Like they're learning a lot more than just how

to beat a team on a court. They're learning how to live life and beat battles that they're going to face long after the ball stops bouncing.

MODERATOR: Do you get to close the theme from last night and tell us what the theme was?

KRISTA GERLICH: No.

MODERATOR: Well, it's over, you won.

KRISTA GERLICH: No, because we might be using it again.

MODERATOR: OK. Didn't know if you wanted to go full circle, but that's fair enough. Coach, thank you very much for your time. Congrats last night, good luck tomorrow.

KRISTA GERLICH: Thank you very much.