

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

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Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA

Pete Maravich Assembly Center

Texas Tech Red Raiders

Coach Krista Gerlich

Bailey Maupin

Snudda Collins

Media Conference

LSU 101, Texas Tech 47

THE MODERATOR: We are happy to be joined now by Texas Tech head coach Krista Gerlich, Bailey Maupin and also Snudda Collins. We'll open up the floor for Coach first, allow her to make a statement about the game.

KRISTA GERLICH: We knew coming into this we had a very tall task in trying to take down LSU, especially on their home floor. What an incredible environment. That's what NCAA basketball should look like across the board. It was a really difficult, obviously, task. I thought our kids came out and played pretty well the first quarter. I don't think they got too rattled and found a way to battle a little bit. And then slowly in the second quarter or maybe quickly, the wheels started to fall off a little bit.

To LSU's credit, they've got several pros on their team. We're not even talking about playing overseas pros. We're talking about in a couple of months, tipping it off with a WNBA team and they certainly played like that today. Their physicality was difficult for us. Their athleticism was difficult for us. Their pace of play was difficult for us.

But I thought our kids played incredibly hard. Tried to do what we asked them to do. What I can't let happen is that these 11 ladies in our locker room think about this loss instead of the body of work they did for the season and the program. It's been a hell of a season for us and because of that, we got to be in the tournament and because of that, we also got to play LSU, who's going to advance very far in this tournament. Kudos to them and best of luck to LSU.

Q. Bailey, what made LSU's defense so difficult to try



to break down today?

BAILEY MAUPIN: Kind of like what Coach Gerlich said. They're all super athletic. They play very good gaps. They slide underneath ball screens and their main objective so to keep everybody in front, so that makes it difficult for any offense.

Q. Bailey, coach mentioned that LSU has some pro-type players but during this game, you were making some pro-type shots, just showing up in huge moments. Just talk about where that confidence came from in this game from the first quarter all the way until the final buzzer.

BAILEY MAUPIN: I think when my teammates put me in a position to score the ball, I have to shoot it. Today was just a good day. The ball was falling. At the end of the day, we have to score more points than 47, so.

Q. Your coach just kind of talked about not letting y'all forget about what y'all did to get here. How much pride do both of y'all take in being a team that got to this stage, to play a team like LSU given where y'all were picked to start the season?

BAILEY MAUPIN: I sure take a lot of pride in it. This is something that we've been working on for a lot of years, especially myself for four years. We have been working to get to this position. We got to this position, we advanced and like she said, LSU's a really, really good basketball team. At the end of the day, we gave it what we could, but moving forward, knowing that we got the program back to where I think it deserves to be and will continue to be for a long time is an honor.

SNUDDA COLLINS: Yeah, I second that. It means a lot to me. This is not the way we wanted to come out, but I still take a lot of pride in what we did and I'll always have my chin up and chest out and be happy about what we did.

Q. Snudda, you just talked about being proud of being a part of this. You're a player that bet on yourself to come back after a year. What has this whole year many total meant that it paid off the way that it did for



you?

SNUDDA COLLINS: Honestly, when I first came, I had no idea this year was going to go the way it went. When I came in, obviously I wanted to have a better year than I had previously, so I kind of bought into that. I trusted Coach Gerlich and all the coaching stuff and what they presented to me and it just worked out.

Q. Bailey, you talked about bringing this program back. How do you feel like a run to the second round will be the foundation for bigger things in the future for this program?

BAILEY MAUPIN: Right now I think Lubbock is a hot spot. You have women's basketball, men's basketball, football, all the sports. Track and field. If you're a high school recruit or a transfer, there's no better place to be than Lubbock. All sports, all divisions across the entire campus are doing really well. I think that's something a lot of people are going to notice after this year.

Q. Bailey, Kim talked about Flau'jae being with LSU for four years but also talked a little bit about just her respect for players that stay for four years and Krista even said you had people in your DMs trying to get you to other programs. Just talk about -- put a bow on your entire four years with Texas Tech getting to this point.

BAILEY MAUPIN: I wouldn't want to be in any other position. This is what I dreamed of since I was a little kid. This is what I've known I wanted to do for a really long time. To be part of a team with -- play alongside people like Snudda and Denae and everybody that was on the team this year is just an honor, something that I will hold very close to my heart for a long time.

To know that my mission is accomplished and we got it back to where it should be is an honor. It's something that I'm super, super proud of. When it's all said and done and five years from now, I'm going to turn on the TV and I'm going to see Texas Tech in the third, the fourth, national championship game and that's what I'm going to remember.

Q. What would y'all's message be to that freshman class coming in next year, any transfers that come in next year, to make sure this continues and there's not a step back?

BAILEY MAUPIN: I would just say the culture is set. If you don't believe in what we're doing and you don't have the same mindset of us, maybe you should choose a different program.

SNUDDA COLLINS: Right on. Just believe.

THE MODERATOR: All right, thank you. Congratulations on your season and your year and your entire career.

Let's open up the floor now for questions for Coach.

Q. Coach, with those freshmen coming in, what's your message to them. They've seen this historic season and yes, maybe not the way y'all wanted to go out but it's just amazing to see what y'all have done.

KRISTA GERLICH: Yeah, it's definitely a standard. I think that's why they chose to come to Tech anyway, the expectations and the vision and where we can go and all those kids that signed early with us have talked about it. They've been super excited about it. They've come and seen us play in person multiple times.

I think we recruited the right kind of kids. They're high character. They work really hard. They're winners where they're at right now and I think that's super important that we continue to recruit winners that it's an expectation to play in the post-season. It's an expectation to win championships.

Q. Y'all hung around there at the end of the first quarter, made that run. What was the difference from there on? Was it just the WNBA talent that talked about or legs or something specific?

KRISTA GERLICH: It was live ball turnovers. What contributed to that, probably their athleticism, their pressure, their physicality. I don't think we were as physical as we needed to be at times. We weren't as tough as we needed to be. Even setting screens.

We talked about it a lot the last 24-48 hours about how physically tough we were going to have to be to help each other score. We know that we've struggled all year trying to score the basketball at a high rate and when we don't have freedom of movement, when we can't get past somebody off of a dribble penetration, we're going to struggle a little bit. I don't think we were quite tough enough in some areas.

But the live ball turnovers, at halftime, we were down 18 and they had 19 points off live ball turnovers.

Q. Coach, obviously the freshmen that are coming in, but as far as the transfer portal, what are the areas of need that you're going to be targeting?

KRISTA GERLICH: We'll have to get some experience for



sure. Clearly I think we'll have to get a couple of wings and guards that can really score it and be some play-makers for us. We need some experience in the paint. Obviously we'll have Stephanie coming back and we have a great kid in Jayda Kearney for some height. We still need a little bit more experience in that area as well.

With a couple of injuries to our freshmen, we'll have to get a point guard as well, just to help out a little bit. GG is going to be delayed in her return.

Q. Bailey, I think she has aspirations to play after this, stepped on the stage today and really went bucket for bucket for a bit there with some of that talent. What do you think of her play today?

KRISTA GERLICH: I'm so incredibly proud of her. The thing about Bailey that I think if you know her, it shines through, but she's just so incredibly tough and she's a warrior. She literally comes from the west Texas dirt, if you will. She's just so tough in everything she does and she doesn't back down from anymore. I knew that she was going to give us her very, very best and I'm glad to know that she was able to put the ball in the basket and to be productive for us. I wish we could have given her a little bit more help, obviously a lot more help, because I think that's what she's been doing for us for four years.

But it was really great to see just how talented she is and the stage she can play on and how she can compete. I would not be one bit surprised if we didn't hear her name called in the WNBA draft.

Q. I know she didn't come out here, but can you speak a little bit about Bailey and Dena's leadership this year and being able -- how key they both were to turning this around. She also seemed like she wasn't afraid of the moment tonight, either.

KRISTA GERLICH: Absolutely. I thought Dena's, the exact same thing. I thought she stepped up. We told her she was going to get lots of looks at the three and we wanted her to shoot them and be confident in that. Obviously she had a huge assignment on defense to try to defend Mikayla Williams.

I just think those two kids, I love everything they're made of. They're my type of kids. They're so incredibly tough and driven and loyal. That's what I love about them. I have such a great relationship with both of them and it hasn't always been great. I guess that's what makes relationships great, right? You can go at each other and be stubborn and get after one another but then you turnaround and, man, it's all out of love.

I would go to war with them any day. I just think that's the type of leadership they portrayed this year, too. They set the standard. They upheld the standard. They held each other accountable. When times got tough, they didn't shy away from the moment and they didn't shy away from failures, either. When they failed, they owned it and they stepped up and they tried to get better.

I just -- those two kids in particular. There's a whole locker room of them. That's what we just talked to the team about. I'm not sad right now. I'm sad that it's over but that group of girls brought so much joy every day. We didn't have drama. We didn't have any type of tension. We had kids that were so excited to be there and played hard. That doesn't mean we didn't have rough days, but they just brought a lot of joy to our daily work life. They brought a lot of joy to this community.

Those two kids in particular I thought just led the way the entire time and they never let anybody fall below the standard. I think that's huge for what we're trying to do moving forward.

Q. Going off that with Bailey and Dena's but also we talked a lot about this incoming freshman class but you mentioned how much that freshman class looks up to this senior class. Just speak on what this senior class has done to get Lady Raider basketball back in this moment and the legacy you think they've left.

KRISTA GERLICH: Yeah, I think it speaks a lot to the seniors' leadership and their investment in our program when our incoming players that they are not going to play with respect them so much and look up to them so much and they have relationships with them.

In this day and age and the transfer portal and hopping school to school to school, most kids on their way out could really care less what happens to whoever comes in the door. But when your team is truly committed to the name on the front of the jersey, that's when your program is in a good place. That's what this group is.

Those nine seniors love being Lady Raiders and they love Texas Tech. They chose Texas Tech to be their forever home. They will all be Lady Raiders for life and I love that about them. Because of that, they sent that message. They were very involved. It was very hard to recruit kids to say oh, yeah, I don't know who you're going to play with. We have nine kids leaving, but they saw what it could look like. They understood what it's about.

Those seniors, what I love about it, too, and Bailey just said it, she's said she was going to watch it on TV. That girl's going to be to be front row and center, I'm telling you

right now. She will be present. They're all going to come back, if they even leave, right? They're going to be a huge part of what we're doing moving forward. I love that type of legacy.

They put us back on the map. They set a lot of records. This is the first time in 21 years that this program has gotten a win and advanced to the round of 32. They have a lot to be proud of. I said this a couple days ago, but I'm excited about the first reunion that we have with them and they all come back and get a standing ovation just for all the blood, sweat, and tears that they poured into our program over the last ten months.

Q. Kudos on an important first step for your program. Just from your life in the game, if you can separate yourself a little from today, LSU has 100 16 times this season. Never been done. The record stood since '87. How do you put something like that in perspective as someone who has worked in the game as long as you have and played.

KRISTA GERLICH: Say that last part again. LSU has done what?

Q. They scored 100 16 times this season.

KRISTA GERLICH: Got it.

Q. Long Beach State -- sorry. Wasn't meant at you.

KRISTA GERLICH: No, I know. I just didn't understand. I understand what the question is. First of all, offensive power, right? It's incredible the type of players they have and how quickly they can move the ball up the floor. There was a time in the third quarter that we called a time-out and said if you don't want them to hang a hundred on you, you've got to quit shooting it so quickly. We knew that was -- we have to limit their possessions to keep them from scoring the ball because they can score it so well.

When you try to put it in perspective of what they're doing, it's incredible to watch and it's very difficult to defend and you have to try to find ways to pick your poison, if you will, and I thought in the first quarter -- I think it always takes time to figure out just how physical it's going to be. It was extremely physical and we knew it would be but you tap that on with the speed and the pace of the game and then you not being able to set your press, which not that our press was going to be super effective against them today, but that is how we get in it is you have to be able to score it even be able to change defenses. That was really difficult for us.

Just being around the game as long as I have, we say it all

the time, right? That offense sells tickets and clearly everybody wants to watch them score the ball and defense wins championships and it looks to me like they've got a little bit of both.

Q. You talked about your bigs having to eventually get this program back to where it is competing for national championships. How close do you feel like the program is to that?

KRISTA GERLICH: That's a good question and I think we definitely made the right steps as far as winning more basketball games, obviously, getting back in the tournament, those types of things. I'm just going to say it like it is. In this day and age, we've got to have more resources to be able to fund a team.

I have no idea what LSU's cap is or what their total amount is for their team but ours is probably an eighth of it, if that. We don't have any -- I don't have a million dollar player on my team. That doesn't mean everything except that there's a huge difference. There's a huge difference in the level of talent. We have to have that investment to be able to compete at that level. There's a big gap between, 1 through 8, maybe, maybe 8, and 8 through 64. There's a big gap. You saw it today, right? We're a 7 seed, which had we won a few more games in our conference, we might have been up to a 4 seed but if I remember correctly, a 4 seed in this conference lost by 40 to LSU just about a week ago.

There's more parity coming but there's still the upper echelon of the NCAA Division I women's basketball and there's the rest of us. We have to be able to fund our program in the NIL space and the rev share space to be able to compete at the level to win championships.

Q. We got to see Mariam and Adlee come in a little bit at the end. Can you talk about the decision to put them in and the impact they've had on the program this season?

KRISTA GERLICH: Yeah, you know, when you're down by whatever it is, you're just looking for a little spark. You're wanting to reward some kids for giving us their all. I think Adlee can give us a spark off the bench a lot and I actually kind of hate that I didn't give her more opportunity throughout the year because I think she can do some really nice things. She has such a great attitude about it. We were in pretty significant foul trouble in the post area and I knew Mimi would be physical with their post and we had to be physical with them to at least keep them out of the paint a little bit. That's where we made that decision.

Q. I asked the players this, but a similar question for



... when all is said, we're done.®

you: If you can get that investment that you're talking about, what would the message be to players that want to come be a part of this program and continue this and has anything been learned from a similar situation a few years ago where it was a senior class and the young ones came in, as far as what players to go after?

KRISTA GERLICH: Yeah, it makes a difference. When you win, it makes a difference. Your phone's going to ring, you're going to get the attention of better players and players that want to come in and help. This is the thing, too.

I can't speak for LSU but I know that there are some teams out there that have All-Americans sitting on the bench. To me, that doesn't make any sense. Why wouldn't you go to another school and try to be an impact player? I do think NIL has changed that a little bit because some will go sit for money instead of going and playing.

I do think that we will attract higher level players because of the success we had this year. We already are. Even our recruiting class with our freshmen is better than we've had in the past couple of years which I don't think we've even signed a freshman in the last two years. And then just with the addition of Stephanie. That's going to be something that people will going to want to play with. That's a unicorn, if you will, and that's going to be really exciting to see that. But, yeah, I think the success that we've had, it helps when you win.

I said this the other day. It means something again for the TT and Lady Raiders to walk into a living room or to make a phone call. It's very different now than it was six years ago when I was making phone calls and talking about coming and playing for the Lady Raiders. I think that what we have done with players, even with Snudda coming in and having the year she had and Bailey being an all-conference player and obviously hoping to hear her name and maybe Snudda's name too in a couple of weeks, that will help us. All of those things attract high-level players and those are some of the things that we'll be talking about in the recruiting process.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, it was aural pleasure to host you. Thanks for your perspective and time and we wish you the best of luck down the road.

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