

# NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - Liberty vs Kentucky

Thursday, March 20, 2025

Lexington, Kentucky, USA

Memorial Coliseum

## Kentucky Wildcats Georgia Amooore Dazia Lawrence

Media Conference



put in a position like this.

**Q. For both of you, after losing the last two games of the season, how are you using that as motivation going into the tournament? Probably left a bad taste in your mouth. How are you using that as fuel, as motivation?**

GEORGIA AMOORE: I think the way we look at it, we didn't really remember that we lost two in a row. But I think the biggest takeaway, it sucked losing in the SEC Tournament, but it was also a blessing in disguise because it goes to show it's one and done. If you're not for real every possession, a good team like Oklahoma, 5 seed, probably a little better, a new conference, getting used to it.

But teams like that, that's who we're going play. Going forward, every single team is good. Coach Brooks said it yesterday, a good day can send you home. We have to have great days. We have to stack great days.

So we're present with that, and we've had a really, really good couple weeks of practice. And I think we all got our confidence back and worked on some new things, yeah.

DAZIA LAWRENCE: I agree with G. We take everything and use it as a lesson, not necessarily as a loss. So we've been able to learn from a lot of our mistakes from those last two games. And we've been working hard. Ready to come back and bounce back.

**Q. Georgia, this is for you. I know you had some time at Virginia Tech, you've made some runs in the NCAA Tournament. What do those runs do for you as you're now a leader on this team? You had a role on those teams as well. How do you take those memories and share them to the people who are going be making their first runs in this tournament?**

GEORGIA AMOORE: Every experience I've had in the tournament has been completely different. But definitely like having that run to the Final Four, you kind of know what's expected, and the biggest emphasis that I could place on it is just the chemistry.

THE MODERATOR: Welcome Lexington, Kentucky. Pleased to be joined at this press conference today by the Kentucky women's basketball team. We are joined at the podium by Kentucky student-athletes Georgia Amooore and Dazia Lawrence. Questions for our student-athletes.

**Q. Dazia, this is your first NCAA Tournament you're going to through. What are your expectations? Is this the reason you came to Kentucky as well, to make it to this part of the season?**

DAZIA LAWRENCE: For sure. I'm super excited to be here. Obviously, this was one of the reasons that I wanted to come to Kentucky because I knew that I wanted to win, and this is a winning program. And I know with Coach Brooks and with G we were going to make it far. So I'm super excited.

**Q. Georgia, obviously, you're a veteran who's been through this process a lot. Does it change at all for you now that you're with Kentucky? How do you also help out the women as they get started in the process as well?**

GEORGIA AMOORE: It's definitely the same. I've been lucky enough to go to five tournaments. Being with Coach Brooks, we went all the way to a Final Four one year. I think what he does, we trust it. Obviously his vision is reliable. It's put us in positions to host and go far in the tournament.

But it's exciting to be with this group. As Dazia mentioned, it's her second year in the tournament, and it's exciting because the group we have and the coach we have. But all the girls are ready to take this experience and make the absolute most of it because it's not very often that you get



We don't have to be superheroes. No one has to turn insanely great, like we maybe have to do half a percent better than what we were. And collectively, if we all step up our game even just the teeniest bit, it elevates the whole team.

But in saying that, I can say all that to the girls, and come game time, it just depends on how much energy we have in the game. You can always give the person a little cheat sheet. Whether they use it or not, it's up to us. But I feel confident with us.

**Q. You guys had some time to rest, regroup, reset, those kind of things. Obviously, winning is the number one priority, but what else is the main focus going into this game?**

GEORGIA AMOORE: I think using the past couple of days, as you mentioned, like to rest. We kind of scaled it back at the start, and I think it was good for a couple of the girls to kind of get back into a rhythm.

I think it was so important for someone like Amelia to get back to what she was good at, hitting shots and being critical on defense for us and being that anchor. Not saying she was bad at it towards the end, but I think definitely having this week to her to get her confidence back and realize her importance. She's a big X factor for us, so I think this week was so good for her going into this game.

DAZIA LAWRENCE: I agree. Just getting back to who we are. A couple of us had a few days just to go back to the basics. You lose that when you just focus on a lot of games back to back to back. So we had time to go back to the basics and really just focus on ourselves, and I think that's going to show in the games in the tournament.

GEORGIA AMOORE: We also spent the last -- since November looking at whose next. So I think to finally not have an opponent -- as much as it sucked to not know, it was good to have some internal reflection.

**Q. What challenges will Liberty present that you all have seen on film, and do y'all approach the scout differently for a postseason game like this compared to a regular SEC game?**

GEORGIA AMOORE: We've done it the same way all year round, so it'd be really wild to approach a scout differently. This is the routine we're in. Liberty is a completely different team to what we've seen in the SEC. They have a lot of sets. They are very smart, well coached.

And I think it's going to kind of be different to what we've

experienced, a little bit more intentional with their sets or their reads or how many options they have out of these sets compared to the more fast-paced game of the SEC.

But we're smart. We communicate well. So it'll be a good challenge to see the way we've played in the last couple of months, how different it's going to be.

DAZIA LAWRENCE: For sure, everything that G said. We've approached it just like any other game, just who's up next. But, yeah, like G said, they're definitely different from a lot of the SEC teams that we've played. Like she said, a lot of sets, threes, screens. So we're going to be doing a lot of communication on defense for sure.

**Q. (Question regarding hosting.)**

GEORGIA AMOORE: It's a game changer. Obviously everyone would like to host to kind of bring that community aspect here, and obviously the men's side is hosting, but to have your hometown team hosting on that court, it's a great push in a good direction.

But for us, it just gives us that comfort, that feel, the crowd will be on our side.

But it means the world to us, considering maybe a couple of months ago, maybe in November, who knew that we were going to be in this position to be able to host and be one of the top 16 teams going into this tournament is -- it's a huge honor.

DAZIA LAWRENCE: Like G said, it means a lot to play in front of your home crowd in the first two rounds in the tournament. That's going help us. I think we play really well at home, and we love playing at home. Just playing at home, it means everything to us. We've very grateful for this opportunity, and we're ready to show out in front of Memorial.

**Q. In that light, what's your message to Big Blue Nation to come out tomorrow, see the game?**

GEORGIA AMOORE: What else do you possibly have to do that could be possibly better than watching us play at noon?

(Laughter.)

No, but seriously, I think the games we've played, we've played against Alabama, it was a close game, and the crowd pushed us over, seriously. We had that run against LSU, and although we didn't finish it out, it made it a close game. That building was rocking. Tennessee, you know, nothing pumps up Kentucky fans than putting on a good

show against Tennessee.

So we see how crowds affect games. And no matter where you go, any great team that gets a great crowd, they'll think that and say that because it's true. The energy, the momentum, it changes like the dynamic of the game, really.

DAZIA LAWRENCE: For sure, what G said. What else are you doing tomorrow at noon? Come out, come support. The boys aren't playing. So just come out and support. I'm not sure the last time Kentucky hosted, women's hosted. So this is a great opportunity to just come out and show support to the women's basketball program here.

**Q. You were a member of the team at Virginia Tech when you played Liberty in 2021. Do you remember any of that game, faces, anything from that?**

GEORGIA AMOORE: I was like a fresh-faced sophomore. I would be really going back into my memories for that. I know we played there, and I know they're a good team. Obviously the Virginia region, a lot of great teams coming out of there. I think I played bad. That's all I can tell you.

**Q. You've been one of the best teams in the country in defending three-point line, and they're a team that shoots a high volume of threes. How important is guarding the line for you?**

GEORGIA AMOORE: It's huge. I think that until you're up against us or playing us, I don't think you really realize how long and tall we are, and that is rich coming from me. But I think that our defense obviously is able to disrupt. And Coach Brooks always says we don't need the stacked categories and the prettiest of things, whenever we're going to lead in steals -- we actually do lead in blocks, but that's because of our length.

And we're going to do the most to disrupt the flow of the game or people going to their shots, or at least having someone on at all times. Sometimes that's all you can do. You're never going to take a good team completely out of rhythm. You just have to make their shots as challenging as possible.

**Q. I just wanted to ask you how your game specifically is better when G is on the court? What about her makes you better?**

DAZIA LAWRENCE: I mean, all around. One thing that I've learned with G, you always have to be ready. You never know with G. So I've just learned that always being ready, always -- and stay confident because she's also

looking for you.

She just brings that energy. Whenever she's just on that court and she's fired up, she fires you up. I know personally anytime I'm on the floor with her, I'm just ready. I'm always ready. I'm ready to compete, and I'm ready to win.

**Q. I wanted to get your reaction to Coach Brooks being named National Coach of the Year?**

GEORGIA AMOORE: I've been with this man for five years, and finally. I think that what he's done has been phenomenal. People really don't realize how much he does. I think it's one thing to see how he coaches on the court, the wins and the runs that we've made, but like I don't know anyone that does player development the way that he does.

And I mean, I speak for myself. We go down to the minuscule of details. He covers all aspects. He teaches us so many off-court lessons as well as on-court. I think that he just -- his love for the game, you can't even quantify it. You can't put a limit on it.

I think that even just his -- the way that he bet on himself to come here and within a year completely turn it around and be competitive, be in a position where Kentucky is back in consideration for top recruits.

We're ranked high again. That is just -- he did that recruiting 11 new girls, girls he's never coached before. And in saying that too, someone like Clara, he coached her, but she didn't really play much last year. His ability to create greatness out of what he has is something that's like truly amazing.

DAZIA LAWRENCE: Yeah, it's -- he's more than deserving of this award. I've only be with him for a year, but I've been a fan of him for years. But he's just -- what he's been able to do in just this one year is just a testament to who he is as a person, a coach. How he shows up every day no matter what he's going through, he's always put his best foot forward to us.

And that's something I would never take for granted. He's more than deserving. His development, his coaching, his life lessons that we will take for the rest of our lives is something that a lot of coaches don't do for their players.

I'm super excited for him. Yeah, I'm just super excited. His little dance yesterday was really cute. We kind of put him on the spot.

But, yeah, I'm super excited, and I'm glad that he was



recognized.

**Q. What has Coach Brooks' message been heading into this tournament?**

GEORGIA AMOORE: The same it's been all year round. I think the way that we've prepped, the way that our chemistry has developed, like why change now. Obviously we know the importance of playing great.

I guess the message he said yesterday was the biggest message, was a good day can send you home. We have to be great. That's pretty much all I got from it because I think we've been consistent all year round.

And he's not one to -- I don't know, I don't want to say freak us out, but kind of when you start focusing so much on one thing, it could take you out of rhythm. But he's just been so consistent all year round, and that's what he's been these past couple of weeks. Yeah, I guess the message is you have to stack the great days.

**Q. Georgia, I wanted to ask you about how this year has gone for you and what it means to be able to have these postseason games on your home court and what the expectation is moving forward. What do you think the chances are of Kentucky making a deep run and going -- obviously dancing past the first two rounds here, but making a deep run into the tournament this year?**

GEORGIA AMOORE: Yeah, I think the move to Kentucky was the best decision for me. And I'll stand by that. I threw myself into a situation, obviously, where it was brand new. I trusted Coach Brooks. I've always trusted him. He's literally never steered me wrong.

I knew this was a huge responsibility coming here. And the way it played out, I got so much better in a lot of aspects of my game, my leadership, my ability to adapt to change. It's what I needed going forward for whatever my future holds.

But I couldn't be more thankful to be part of a program like this. It was kind of a blessing to have a bunch of new girls because we all had an emphasis on being great now. Like, we didn't want the excuses of being a rebuild program or getting people being like, oh, that's okay, they're new; oh, it's okay, give them time. We wanted to win now.

Obviously, that's evident having the season we had. Going forward, Coach Brooks is going to do amazing things with this program.

But tournament-wise, I like the way the bracket is set up, and obviously I've been a part of a team where, you know,

we were successful and we had a deep run. And we played teams that were challenging. We played Ohio State that pressed a lot. We tamed that trust. We played Tennessee that was hungry to finally get past a Sweet 16, and we beat them.

I guess at this point it just -- we can go on a deep run, like depending on our perspective and our energy towards it. This part of the year, March, it's the teams that want it bad and it's the teams that are starving that get the chance to keep on playing.

THE MODERATOR: We thank our student-athletes for participating, and thank all of you, and they are now excused.

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