

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

Friday, March 21, 2025

Lexington, Kentucky, USA

Memorial Coliseum

**Liberty Flames**

**Carey Green**

**Emmy Stout**

**Bella Smuda**

Media Conference

Kentucky 79, Liberty 78

**CAREY GREEN:** Well first of all, I'm blessed to have been working with these young ladies for a whole year. We've had a lot of success. First and foremost I want to give God the glory for all the great experience we've had. Certainly proud of this group. We want to congratulate Kentucky and wish the best for them as they advance in the tournament.

But I don't think I can be even more proud of these champions, Conference USA champions and the heart that they really showed throughout this game. First couple quarters or three quarters didn't go quite our way, but we stayed in the fight. I've been around long enough to see how teams sort of check out. This group did not check out. It shows you that they are a body, one body. They stayed focused.

Real proud of their efforts. Just came up two points short. Real proud of them.

**Q. Could you take us through the fourth quarter as you were making the comeback? 16, 17 point deficit and you all were slowly chipping away. What was Coach saying in the huddle an those timeouts, and what was the team saying to each other at the end?**

**BELLA SMUDA:** Yeah, I think we really -- we've been in close games before. Been in games where we had to fight back. I think we just had that mindset where we didn't want our season to end. We wanted to keep playing. Unfortunately, you know, we came short. I'm just really proud of these girls and just how hard we fought.



**Q. Emmy and Bella, could you describe to me what this postseason run has been defined by for you guys? How would you describe it and the amount of fight your team showed?**

**EMMY STOUT:** Yeah, it's been such a blessing for us to make it this far. The team just has so much heart and we put a lot of energy and effort into this. Again, didn't go our way in the end but I'm still super proud of all the girls. Winning a conference championship has been amazing. Give God all the glory.

It's been a great experience. Making it to this, the NCAA, has also been a great experience for us. Now next year we're going to be ready to come back and win some more games.

**Q. Each of you, I was certainly impressed with the 300 or so Liberty fans that were in attendance. Outnumbered 6,000 to 300. Did you feel the energy from the fans at Liberty?**

**BELLA SMUDA:** Yeah, I think so. You know, Flames Nation, shoutout. They really go hard for all of us. You know, it means a lot just to see people cheering you on. Whether that's friends, family or just whoever it is, supporting the Flames really does mean a lot to us.

**Q. Bella could you take us through what you saw from Emmy tonight? Was at practice yesterday and you were working. I know you're the bigs on this team. What did you see as somebody who's a younger version you and getting that opportunity as a freshman.**

**BELLA SMUDA:** Emmy is a star and the future of this program. I've been telling her all year she just has to believe in herself. She has all the tools in the world to be so amazing, and she already is. Like I can't even wait to see what is next for her. She's going to break a million records and do a million things. Watch out for Emmy Stout the next year and the following years.

**Q. Emmy, talk to me about what Bella's mentorship**



**meant to you. She told us throughout the year that she wanted to be that figure for you like Mya Berkman was for her. Tell me about how that's helped you grow?**

EMMY STOUT: I think she exceeded that and all my expectations, from the beginning of summer she was always uplifting me telling me I can do this when I was coming in as freshmen not thinking I could do anything. Always encouraging. I've learned so much from her throughout the games and practices when I'm not sure what's going on.

I make a mistake and she's like, hey, keep your head up. Try this move instead. Just watching her I've learned so much. The moves she makes. She's a huge inspiration to me and not only on the court, but off the court being a woman of God. That's been a really great example to me and I aspire to be like her.

**Q. Bella, can you take me through your last memory as a Lady Flame will be making this comeback in the fourth quarter? What will you remember, this teammates, program, all this for?**

BELLA SMUDA: Yeah, the last five years have been like awesome and I'm just going to miss you know, hanging out with everybody and working hard. Yeah. Yeah.

**Q. Coach, you've faced Coach Brooks many times. What do you admire most about Coach Brooks?**

CAREY GREEN: He's a great person with strategy and I think he really cares about his players and relationship with his players are pretty strong.

Because of those relationships I really think he's getting the best he possibly can out of them. Sometimes coaches, we get locked into strategies and things like that. I don't think he ignores the growth and the empowerment that he has just with his relationship with his players.

And wish him the very best. I've known him when he was an AAU and an assistant at JMU, and from there to be a head coach at JMU and having opportunities to advance and go to Virginia Tech and had some tremendous teams there.

This opportunity he has with all the resources that KU has, Kentucky has, that he's put the program right there in the top 20, top 10 really quickly. He does a great job. I mean, he's in a very difficult conference and you have to come ready to play every night in the Southeastern Conference. He's been successful there.

He's doing a lot of things good, but we know him

personally. I know how he really does care about his players.

**Q. Georgia Amoore, really great first half. You did a really good job containing her. Was there a change the second half, a look you maybe gave her that changed things up or shots not falling?**

CAREY GREEN: I can't keep from smiling saying we held her back for 12 pins in the second half. She was on fire. We felt like their team was struggling a little bit. We knew what she could do, and she played very, very well. Take her away, we lose by one, you take her away, two points and we win by one.

She had an outstanding game against us, and she'll be one that unless there is an injury or something like that, she'll be playing at the next level.

She's a high quality All-American candidate and will be playing in the WNBA. What did we do? Again, I sort of laugh because who knows what her motivation was, okay? Because we beat them last time.

I'm sure she can remember that. She just had her A game going, and shot the three very well. I mean, it's above her shooting percentage, and everything that she did today, shooting percentages, was above her norm, okay? She got her norm, call to her norm, she got 20 points, we win by 13, okay?

But she had an A game. She was playing very, very well. We didn't do a whole lot more other than we changed our defense up a little bit and tried to keep them off balance.

When she came off screens, we tried to double and get the ball out of her hands. She was very good at finding open people, too. So I think that changed it up a little bit. 22 at halftime; she didn't have 44. We kept her down to 34. But she played very well.

**Q. When you see the day that Emmy Stout had and someone like Brooke Moore who played significant minutes as well, how much excitement does your coaching staff have for the future and the team is a whole knowing the kind of talent you possession?**

CAREY GREEN: Well, it's not just in this game. You've seen us all year long. In this game, just look down the line: 28 to 2 bench points. That tells you a story.

Our bench has been critical to our success and they're going to have a great future.

I think Emmy Stout, Avery Mills will be chosen



all-conference USA and the freshmen, just indicating that other people see it as well. Brooke Moore is coming back from a pretty serious injury, and you know.

Those are people that will have some impact on our team in the future. Very proud to have them here with us. Unfortunately with Asia Boone injured, and I'm not going to say what's going on there because I don't know exactly what's going on. It's not my position. We certainly could have used her today, but her health and her future is more important than just to win a ballgame. We have that bench to put her in to come in.

I thought they did really well, especially just looking at that number 28 to 2 from the bench.

**Q. You've had five years with Bella Smuda. Probably a lifetime of memories with her. What will you remember most about her as a Lady Flame?**

CAREY GREEN: Yeah, you know, there is so many things that stand out. My two are going to be quirky, different, I guess, okay? She makes a last second shot at Kennesaw State to win the game.

How excited she was. She was so excited. And that was a booster for her confidence. Second one would be how humble she was or her humility that she impressed as being named the conference USA tournament MVP.

We needed her to step up and she really did step up in the tournament, especially the last game. Those two just jump out at me immediately. You know, the others, probably battles that she has with Mya Berkman just in practice.

But she was so excited. Probably shouldn't say this, but childlike excitement when she makes her two points to win the game.

I just thought that was so real and just showed you her excitement and she was just bouncing all over the floor. Man, that's so great to see her experience that. Then carries that right on in. She was pretty confident from there.

So, in fact I think there and we had Middle Tennessee and Western to close out the season, so her confidence was really up at that point in time.

**Q. Kind of playing off it as well, just talking with Emma and Jordan, when I asked them about their time as a Flame, even though obviously emotional right now, they light up. So happy to think about what they accomplished here. What have you enjoyed most about coaching this group? It takes a lot to come back**

**from 15 points in a March Madness game, and they did it.**

CAREY GREEN: Good question. We've had some games that unfortunately we got behind. Western Kentucky last game. Regular season we were down 14. They are one body and they don't give up and they lift each other up. They've been a very easy team to coach because they're coaching within their own ranks. That's what I'll remember. They have been so easy to coach and so hungry and committed to one another.

They're exceptional. You don't usually have teams that are that close. I think it's because of their hearts and their desire to be successful. I really believe -- previous years they're building up and they're just closer. They just gotten closer. I like to give a shoutout to our shepherd who's or chaplain, and she spent time with them in the summer building relationships.

She's there and helping them grow in so many different directions. So really appreciative to all the resources we have and resources from administration to the doctors, mental health, counseling, and my trainers, academic advisors, it's all inclusive. I really think, again, our Shepherd had a lot to do with it, giving them clear direction.

There is a lot of chaos in the world. We all want a little clarity. She did an excellent job and the group has been so easy to coach. Really have.

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