

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: Second Round - NC State vs Michigan

Saturday, March 21, 2026

Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA

Crisler Center

NC State Wolfpack
Coach Wes Moore

Zamareya Jones

Tilda Trygger

Media Conference



Michigan as well. How do you think that game really prepared you for Michigan's press tomorrow?

ZAMAREYA JONES: You know, we got to handle pressure well. We have me and Ky'She in the back court. Maybe Zoe. Just going out there playing the game like we played Tennessee, not letting them speed us up and play our game.

Q. What did you know about Coach when he was recruiting you? What was he like in that setting? And now that you played with him, what new thoughts and perspectives do you have?

TILDA TRYGGER: I think Coach is great. He has a lot of trust in his players, which you can see. He love his guards and both the players and him have a lot of trust in everybody that he puts on the court and bench players.

So and he's a great guy outside of the court, too. So it's just fun outside and then when we're on, it's about business. But that's what everybody that comes here wants.

ZAMAREYA JONES: I can agree with what she said.

Q. Obviously this game is being played in Ann Arbor. Have you been treating this as a road game and are you preparing like a road game? Are you focusing on that or is it like a neutral site tournament game?

ZAMAREYA JONES: I don't think we thought too much about that. Just going out there playing like it's the second round of the playoffs; not really like home game. Of course they're the home team but we haven't really played much into their crowd.

Q. Zam you mentioned something in the press conference yesterday about your team coming together in a moment when things weren't going right, and how that affected the team and brought ya'll together. Talk a little more about how that affected the team as a whole, your confidence and relying on your teammates throughout the struggle?

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Congrats on making it to the second round of March Madness. Since your game last night what have you learned about Michigan so far?

ZAMAREYA JONES: I would just say they play hard. Definitely offensive rebounds, so we got box out. We haven't really watched much film. We just get into the gym, going over their plays and sets, but really just go out there and play our game.

TILDA TRYGGER: Yeah, I think we're trying to focus a lot on ourselves, and rebounding is a big part. One and done is usually what we focus on. As she said, they play hard so we got to play harder.

Q. You spoke about the things that NC State does well. What does NC State basketball look like when it's functioning at its best and how would you describe the key points of your team's identity?

TILDA TRYGGER: We talked a lot about this as a team. When we put our jerseys on we got to be proud that we're wearing an NC State jersey.

So we need to play for the team, for NC State, and I think that's the most important part.

ZAMAREYA JONES: Yeah, I agree with that. Just playing for one another. Not just playing for yourself is the biggest issue.

Q. Tennessee is heralded for their press, just like



ZAMAREYA JONES: I would just say it's all about leadership. We had Zoe go out. She's a junior so one of our biggest leaders. So stepping into the role of getting everybody on one board. Tennessee makes a run. That's what they do.

So just not getting frustrated and turn against each other. A lot of teams once teams get down start to turn on each other.

Us, we just came together after every possession and we're going to continue to do that versus Michigan.

Q. In the Notre Dame game in the ACC tournament you didn't have a shot; yesterday seemed like you were a lot more involved in the offense. What was that like for you and getting back into playing your game?

TILDA TRYGGER: I think just keep being aggressive. Sometimes you don't get the looks and sometimes, yeah, it just happens. Just sometimes demand the ball and when I feel like I have it inside just keep being aggressive.

Because I trust my guards to make the right decisions so it's just keep going, yeah.

Q. Michigan has got a variety of offensive weapons. What are going to be some keys for your team defensively tomorrow?

ZAMAREYA JONES: I would just say lock up and defend. Take pride in playing defense. You never want anybody to score on you, so it's a regular game, go in, we got the scouting report, so just take away what they do best.

Q. You guys have a very guard-heavy offense. Found a lot of success driving into the paint last night. Brooke Quarles Daniels is on the Big10 All-Defensive team. How does they impact the game and what are you hoping to do against her and that defense?

ZAMAREYA JONES: To that question, I mean, I'm just going to play my game. I guess all the guards is going to play their game. We're not really worried about one specific player.

If she plays good defense you know that she made -- I guess she plays good defense. We just playing our game. Not letting anybody speed us up. Just going to play our game at the end of the day.

Q. You had mentioned Ky'She. How much confidence does last night's performance give you in her?

ZAMAREYA JONES: She's a great player. Glad she went

out there and played. She's a freshman so it's kind of nerve-wracking coming in. I was nervous before the game and I'm a sophomore, so I know she was before the game.

So I just told her on the court, it's me and you. We're here together. She did a great job, so I'm just ready for her to step up and do it against Michigan.

Q. You guys are the 7 seed playing against the 2 seed. Does that give you a chip on your shoulder, underdog mentality at all?

TILDA TRYGGER: I mean, yeah, they're a higher seed than us and it's their home court, but I love being the underdogs because I don't think it's something we think about. I just think we're just going to go in there and get the first punch and do our thing.

Yeah, of course. It's a part of it.

Q. You guys at least in past years have some experience playing deep into Marche, whereas this Michigan team is younger and last year they I think bounced first, second round. So how do you think you're going to be able to exploit your experience and what do you think that brings into a matchup like tomorrow?

ZAMAREYA JONES: I would just say we just continue to stick with what we did for the last couple years. Not leaning on that, you know what team -- we also young, no seniors on our team, so it's kind of just roll with it.

Like at the end of the day we have to play our game and if we get far we get far. We're going to try to get as far as we can.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Coach Moore.

Q. Michigan has a few losses this season, and from like your read of that film and of those performances what do you think it takes to beat this Michigan team?

WES MOORE: Again, great team. Obviously as I mentioned yesterday, I had an opportunity to see them on TV against UConn and obviously they had a chance to win that game. Great game.

But, yeah, they present a lot of problems. Play really hard. They crash the boards hard. They're going to press. A little bit different than Tennessee's press but still man to man, similar press.

And, you know, again, got a lot of players that can hurt you. Again, three starters in double figures. So Olson,

obviously a great player. Swords shoots the heck out of it. Holloway can score at all three ranges.

Again, we'll have to play extremely well, but we're excited for the opportunity.

Q. Checking to see if you had an update on Zoe and what you expect tomorrow?

WES MOORE: Yeah, hard to say at this point. Obviously our medical people, we're fortunate to have a couple of doctors with us and our athletic trainer, so they do a great job. Obviously the first priority is going to be her health and making sure she's not at risk as far as her future goes.

But some of it may come down to just how she feels tomorrow. She won't be practicing today. Taking all precautions with a boot, crutches, trying to keep weight off it. Like I said yesterday, sending up a lot of prayers.

Q. You have been around a long time. How has this game changed for the better? And in terms of talent, like the level of play but also challenges of the new era with NIL, revenue sharing, et cetera?

WES MOORE: Okay, well, that was very nice way of saying you're old, so I would like to know your opinion on these things. Very nicely worded. You must be a journalist.

What's happened in the women's game is unbelievable I started out Division III; been Division II, mid-major, now blessed to have been at NC State for 13 years.

It's amazing. I was with Coach Yaw back in the mid-'90s at NC State as an assistant, and wow, you know, the players have caused a lot of it. They're so much more exciting to watch. Entertaining, skill level, athleticism.

So they're the ones that have put the game on the map so to speak.

But like in our case, we sell out almost all our home games and it's a great atmosphere. It's just really exciting time to be in it. The portal, NIL has definitely changed things and is a challenge.

Probably if I was just a GM I would be fired right now, but you got to wear lots of hats and depend a lot of help from a lot of the people. We're fortunate our AD and administration has been supportive of women's basketball and they're giving us a chance to compete at this level.

And so just trying to navigate it all. So somewhat in my advanced age that sometimes is a challenge. (Smiling.)

Q. Just following up on Zoe, if it she can't go tomorrow, how much confidence do you give you yesterday watching Ky'She deal with the press as well as she did and plays the most minutes in a month?

WES MOORE: Yeah, you know, got a lot of confidence in Ky'She. She probably doesn't realize it a lot of times because I'm hard on them. Your freshmen year is tough. You're going from high school to playing at this level, elite level, it's a big step.

But obviously Ky'She is very talented player. It's a big adjustment from the mental standpoint and all the things that are thrown at them, but she's handled that really well. She played well the first time we played Tennessee. She handled it really well and was a big part of that win.

I've got a lot of confidence in her and I think the other players do as well. That helps. Still not the same as having Zoe out there, a junior with her experience and all that she's done, but either way we'll be ready to play.

Q. You mentioned Holloway scoring at three different levels. She sometimes is overlooked because of Swords and Olson. I know you just started cramming on Michigan, but give me some more observations of Holloway.

WES MOORE: First of all she's shooting 40% from three and has made the second most on the team. And then with her quickness and ability to get to the rim, that's a tough matchup.

So I think start there.

She's one of the top in the category of steals, so she makes plays on defense and gets them going in transition.

Again as you said, I haven't had an opportunity yet to watch as much film as I will this time tomorrow, but, yeah, I mean, again, just does a lot of things well for them.

I think to me when you're recruiting if you can get a player that can shoot 40% from three and be explosive to the rim, that's a heck of a player. They present matchup problems.

Q. You mentioned a few times you talked about last night wanting to watch the film of your game. You talked about watching film here. When you watch that film, what are you looking for? Tendencies? Looking for specific things that players do that you feel like your matchups could take advantage of? What is it that that film study gives you to try to prepare for the game?

WES MOORE: Yeah, so obviously I've had a couple assistants working on Michigan all week. They're able to hand me scout clips, maybe 75 clips from about two or three games that they each watched. So that covers about six games for me.

But, yeah, I think you look at how other people have defended and you obviously look and see scoring-wise who were effective slowing them down somewhat defensively.

You do look at their strengths and what they do well. I always start out on my scouting report first thing I do is write down the stats that I want to know. That's whether it's steals, rebounds, offensive rebounds, three-point percentage, things like that, just to figure out -- again, you got to have a backup plan. I'm a real advocate of that.

But, yeah, you kind of figure out how you want it matchup with them and what you want to do versus pick on the ball, things like that. We play several different ways, so what we think will be good against that team.

But, you know, again, comes out pretty quick how talented they are. They're a No. 2 seed so they're one of the top teams in the country. So just trying to figure out how we want to offensively what when think might work against what they do or their personnel.

Again, it's tough when you're playing somebody like Michigan.

Q. Your players talked about playing NC State basketball. What does it mean to have that established team identity, especially in games like this with such a short turnaround time?

WES MOORE: Yeah, this year has been a challenge in that we have no seniors and we've had some new players playing key roles. We have returning players that maybe have now a bigger role than maybe they've had in the past. So it's been an adjustment.

But, that's what's nice. Now your freshmen are really sophomores. They're played 30 games now, which is what all some people will play anyway.

You feel like you've had a lot of time and you've hopefully covered everything you might see. Now you get ready, got a quick turnaround. It's really just a matter of reviewing things we have already done at some point in the season.

So yeah, I'm proud of this program. Finished in the top 10 six of the last seven years. Again, we've had some bumps

in the road this year and hadn't been as smooth as we would like, but we're right here. To me, a big step in March Madness is to make it to that second weekend.

So that's what is in front of us right here. One of these two teams is going to make it to that second weekend.

Again, we know it's a big challenge, and I like the way our kids played last night. Hopefully that's something that will carryover and give us confidence and momentum.

I wondered when you were going to jump in. I heard you blew the players up again this morning. Feeling a little lonely up here.

Q. I thought I would let other people have a turn.

WES MOORE: Nice of you.

Q. Michigan plays mainly with one forward. You got two who played over 30 minutes last night. How will you be able to use that to your advantage in the front court and generally could you reflect on that matchup?

WES MOORE: Yeah, I mean, again, they had a little bit more of a cushion last night, so I'm sure they were able to rotate pretty well and keep everybody fresh.

You know, they're a well-coached team. I'm sure they're very well conditioned, so I don't really think that that's going to be a big advantage.

You know, we do obviously Khamil, Tilda, we got a lot of confidence in them. Then we go to the bench. Maddie Cox has been playing well and even Mallory. We hadn't got her in a bunch lately.

So I do like our depth. We do want to be able to score inside. I think you have to be able to do that.

But, yeah, I mean, again, I think Olson, she can probably play -- she been averaging almost 35 minutes a game anyway. I don't think that will bother her. They can rotate at the post position some, so I think, again, that won't probably be a big factor.

Q. You guys played some close contests against similarly ranked teams, Louisville, UNC, and you guys got the short end of the stick in those games. What do you think it'll take to convert some of the high level matchups into victories?

WES MOORE: Yeah, you know, as you mentioned we lost some tough -- lost in overtime to Louisville and lost in overtime to Oklahoma on the road. So we've played some

high level teams and then obviously the ACC, you know, we did win overtime against Virginia. Won some other close games.

Beat Tennessee in a close game early in the year as well.

So we have been in a lot of those type games. You're right, we haven't always finished them. Hopefully that experience will give us some confidence to know we can finish a close game like that.

So, you know, again, big challenge. Great team. On their home court. But at the same time we been in that environment and so I don't think, again, we'll be overwhelmed or intimidated by it.

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