

# NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - FGCU vs Oklahoma

Friday, March 21, 2025

Norman, Oklahoma, USA

Lloyd Noble Center

## Oklahoma Sooners

## Raegan Beers

## Payton Verhulst

### Media Conference



host, how to be in March Madness.

But this is where we are. We're present with this team, we're present with this group, and it's been a fun ride. We're present right now, ready to host, and ready to play tomorrow.

PAYTON VERHULST: I think it goes to show that really anything can happen in the tournament. This is the best time of the year because, again, it's one game. You're not playing people two or three times. I think we're really excited. And, again, coming from teams where we know what it takes to get there, I think we know that we have what it takes too.

**Q. If both of you could touch on this, you talked about the five-out offense, but I'm also noticing that they allow only 53 points a game. If you could speak to what you see that makes them effective and what kind of challenge that will present.**

RAEGAN BEERS: From what I've seen and what we've worked on this week especially, they're relentless. They're a relentless team. They're constantly coming after you. They're really, really scrappy, and they have to be to be able in March Madness and make a run. Not surprising. Every team is. But with them, they're really scrappy.

I feel like how they get a lot of points that they do, how they limit the way they do, it will be a fun challenge for us to face tomorrow to hopefully score more than that, which would be the goal. It's going to be a difficult task, and we're ready to get going.

PAYTON VERHULST: I think especially our style of play is what people look at when they're scouting us. We like to get up and down. I think this will be a fun match-up, seeing as they're a really good defensive team, and I think we're a really good offensive team. I'm just excited.

**Q. Since the end of the SEC tournament, getting to this point, what's gone into the preparation for you all? Not just looking at FC, but the entire preparation for this moment.**

THE MODERATOR: We will open it up for student-athletes Raegan Beers and Payton Verhulst.

**Q. Raegan and Payton, this is a unique team. Payton, you played them last year. Raegan, you haven't played them yet. They're a five-out team and shoot a bunch of 3s. Talk about the defensive match-up that you have in this game.**

RAEGAN BEERS: We've obviously been scouting them. Phenomenal team. 18-0 in conference. That's very impressive. We're excited to go in.

Obviously, this match-up, we haven't seen anything like them. Well, some similarities, but every team is different. Trying to figure out the five-out offense will be a challenge. It's going to be fun. We've got one more day to scout, and we'll be ready to go.

PAYTON VERHULST: She summed it up pretty good. Again, we played them last year. They're a different team, we're a different team. I think just really excited to be able -- we've been watching March Madness games in the locker room. We're just excited to get on the court.

**Q. Both of you have gone on runs in the NCAA Tournament, but at different schools, deep runs. Does that help you at all? Do you talk about it in the locker room, the run you went on at Oregon State or at Louisville and kind of the leadership that goes with that?**

RAEGAN BEERS: Obviously, that's experience that we will never forget. Obviously, Payton has gotten really far with Louisville. Last year, had a phenomenal experience in the tournament. Occasionally we bring it up, how it's fun to



PAYTON VERHULST: This was a unique year because we got that off period from SEC tournament to NCAA. For us, it was really resting our bodies, getting recovery, and also kind of pushing this last week and a half. Because, again, this is the time of year where anything can happen. I feel like the closer you are as a team, it's kind of like the further you make it in the tournament. I think that was a big part that we were focusing on this past week and a half. A unique situation that we got that. So we're excited.

RAEGAN BEERS: Going off of that, this is obviously a cool moment, March Madness. The opportunity to host is super, super fun. As much as we'd have loved to play, we had a lot of time to focus on ourselves. Looking back, we were thankful for because after the SEC tournament, losing to South Carolina, again, we had a lot to learn from that game and that loss as well as the other games.

To have the extra week to focus on us and things we can improve on going into March Madness and FGCU tomorrow was a fun week for us to rest and push and get ready and focus on us.

**Q. There's been a lot made about hosting this regional, and Jennie's talked a lot over the last few years about building this program up. What is your message to fans about coming out and how important it is to be at these games Saturday and possibly, obviously, Monday too?**

PAYTON VERHULST: Absolutely. I think from our experience last year, honestly, we saw how big and how much it impacted Indiana being able to play at home. I think that kind of maybe gave them the push they needed to get past that second round.

So, again, we're real excited. We took care of business during non-con and during conference this year to put us in a position to host. We're excited, and I know that we can rely on our fans to be able to show up tomorrow. I know that Jennie and our staff and everyone has done everything they can to try and get as many people here as possible. I think it's a big deal and something that matters when it comes to getting past the second round.

RAEGAN BEERS: To go off that, our coaching staff, our supporting staff have done a phenomenal job of promoting this. It's not every day you get to host March Madness, and it's a cool and unique opportunity we have. So our staff has done a phenomenal job of getting it out there and getting as many people as out here as possible.

As Payton says, truly an advantage. We felt it at South Carolina and the SEC tournament. It felt like a home game in the third game for them. To have the environment to

play in is super fun. Not only that, as Payton said, we've worked hard to put us in a position to host. We're excited to put on another show for you tomorrow. This is why we do it. This is why we play. We want you to come. We want you to have fun. So be there Saturday.

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