

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

Saturday, March 21, 2026

Norman, Oklahoma, USA

Lloyd Noble Center

## Idaho Vandals

### Coach Arthur Moreira

### Hope Hassmann

### Kyra Gardner

#### Media Conference

Oklahoma 89, Idaho 59

ARTHUR MOREIRA: Yeah, these guys are good. I mean, I'm really proud of our group. You know, the season that we had and how hard these girls battle, I mean, they're just a joy to work with every single day.

To go and win 29 games, school record, and 18 wins in a row, we lost to Montana State by 33 January 10th and I'll never forget because it was awful and we got our butts kicked.

The season could have gone two ways. We could have been the middle of the pack Big Sky team, but these girls locked in and worked hard. They cared and won 18 games in a row; won two championships, regular season championship and a conference tournament championship.

So I don't think this game takes it away from us, you know.

With that said, they're a really good basketball team. I mean, they beat South Carolina to weeks ago. They're a top 10 team in the country for a reason. They made the Sweet 16 last year.

We knew it was going to be an uphill battle. It's almost those types of games you have to play perfect to pull off an upset, and we fell a little short.

Again, I was really proud of our fight and really proud of these two here and our entire team.

**Q. I know this game didn't go the way you guys wanted it to, but just what was this experience like**



**winning 18 in a row? That's I'm sure something special.**

HOPE HASSMANN: Yeah, I've been on so many basketball teams in my life and this team is just so special. I love each and every single one of these girls, especially the seniors. Like that's why we are all just sad in the locker room. I know we're going to put up a fight no matter what, and obviously we're all so competitive and wanted to win.

At the end of the day we're going to have to say bye to the people who made such an impact on our team.

Yeah, kind of echoing Arthur, we did something that Idaho never done before. We broke so many records. I'm so happy to be a part of the team with so many special girls. I'm also excited to come back next year knowing we set a standard for Idaho basketball. This is our goal that we're going to strive for every single year and continue to break more records in the future.

**Q. For both of you, what was it like that the men play in Oklahoma City last night, you guys are here just down the road tonight? What's it mean kind of for the school and for the two programs to have this opportunity so close together?**

HOPE HASSMANN: Yeah, I mean it's awesome. We all pulled up to the men's game last night, and just to be in the Idaho section was so cool. And then also to see those fans travel here today, kind of had our own Idaho section, which was super cool to hear them cheer for us and our band and cheerleaders.

Yeah, I feel like that's pretty rare to have both teams in March Madness and in the same city. Yeah, it was just an awesome experience and thank you to all of the Vandals that traveled with us. Thankful for that.

KYRA GARDNER: Yeah, I don't know what else to say to that. She kind of said it all.

**Q. Coach, just same question for you: Just what's it mean for both programs to be here not too far away in March Madness?**



ARTHUR MOREIRA: I mean, it's incredible. I have a lot of friends in the business and I asked, have you guys ever had a chance to go watch your men's team play on the same -- technically not the same city, but close enough. Nobody has had this opportunity.

I mean, it was incredible. Our programs are really close. Coach Pribble and I have a great relationship. Our staff works together really, really well. We truly root for each other. I feel like we push each other as well, you know. Starting from the first day of season, we play Washington State on the same day, we beat them, and the men go and beat them; won a championship on the same day.

Always pushing each other to be better. It's really special. It's something that I don't know if we'll ever get a chance to experience again. Not only both team have to make it, but you have to get kind of lucky to be drafted into the same city, right? It was really cool to experience that and definitely memories we won't forget.

**Q. You mentioned that OU is a really good team. What makes them so good? What makes them so difficult to play against?**

ARTHUR MOREIRA: They are good everywhere. You know, they have really good post presence. I think Jennie does an amazing job with how she teaches them how to play and their fundamentals. The post players are so good at angles. If you try to front, they get you to a side and then they have a great angle to get to the rim and score. If you play from behind they'll just bury you. They're all just really good passers.

The pace they run their actions is incredible. You know, we like to play fast but that was a whole different ballgame there fast. We tried to kind of keep up with them in the beginning. Until the first media it was looking okay; then they just took over.

I mean, they shot the ball really well from mid-range, from three. They're just a complete team. I think they're equipped to make a big run here, you know. As I was scouting them it was fun to watch.

It's a team that I would love to come and watch at practice to see what we can learn and implement with Idaho. They do a fantastic job.

**Q. Coach, you guys came out and played fairly competitively for about half the first quarter.**

ARTHUR MOREIRA: Right.

**Q. What changed? What happened? In that third quarter you guys really struggled.**

ARTHUR MOREIRA: Yeah, we came out flat in the third quarter. You know, we weren't making shots. They're just so good and so athletic, so long; it was hard for us to beat them off the dribble.

The way we run our offense we rely so much on creating a little bit of an advantage so we can put two people on the ball and try to create an open shot or dump down.

When we are not shooting well we have our post players that we can throw the ball to. Our post players are dominant in the Big Sky. A little different when you go against Raegan Beers.

So I just thought in the third quarter we couldn't find an answer. We took 11 threes and missed all of them. We shot way more threes than we normally do, but that's kind of what was out there, right?

It was really hard for us to get into the paint. In the fourth quarter I thought we did a better job moving the ball. Didn't stick as much and were able to create some driving lanes and get to the rim to finish.

I mean, when you play a team at this level it's hard. I want to be able to be here every year with our program. Maybe it's a situation where you might have to go and play a game like that in the regular season. This year we've never seen anything like it. Even our guarantee games against Washington State, when we played at Cal, I was watching those SEC games. That league a brutal.

Watched them beat South Carolina, watched them play against LSU. I mean, in my opinion it's probably the best women's basketball league in the country. So we just haven't experience that had yet this year.

The third quarter was a shock. They came out ready to go and we were like, all right, this is what it feels like.

We'll learn from it. We'll be better next year.

**Q. Just building on that, they have the star power. How difficult is it when feels like they had as much balance across the board today? How much more challenging does that make them to try and slow it when it starts rolling?**

ARTHUR MOREIRA: Yeah, it's really hard because usually on teams like that you need to find a weak link that maybe you don't have to guard or you can help out of. Today with tried, but they're all draining on us.

It's just really hard to play against it if you don't have the athleticism to match it, the speed, and the size.

I mean, it's a different level. But I was telling the group, we lost last year in Boise in the first round. We learned from it; came back and won the whole thing.

It's going to be the same situation here. We lost this first round and hopefully next year we can get back here and now we know what it takes. We know what we're playing against and we can try to win a game in the tournament next year.

Or maybe two, who knows.

**Q. Asked your players what this experience meant to them. Same question for you: What does this mean to you? You're a young head coach. You make the NCAA tournament. What was this experience like for you?**

ARTHUR MOREIRA: Yeah, it was really cool. I've always wanted to make the NCAA tournament. I've never done it. As a player, assistant, manager, every role up to this point I was just never able to get here at the Division I level.

So it was incredible. From taking the plane with the girls, the Selection Show with the men on that Sunday, hopping on the plane, the charter plane was nice for the kids and getting here; the band welcoming us at the hotel; playing here in front of this great crowd.

There was an amazing energy in the gym. The women's side is kind of interesting because the Top 4 seeds get to host, so I feel like you really feel the home court advantage. Every time they made a shot I felt like that place was super loud, which is a cool experience to play in as well.

So it's definitely a moment we won't forget and I'm just so thankful that a lot of the girls that came here with one year of eligibility, that's always been their dream and goal. They bet on us and me to get them there and we were able to get that done.

That means a lot to me and to our program.

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