

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - Harvard vs Michigan State

Friday, March 21, 2025

Raleigh, North Carolina, USA

Reynolds Coliseum

Michigan State Spartans

Robyn Fralick

Media Conference



THE MODERATOR: We're going to go ahead and get started with Coach Fralick. Coach, any thoughts, when you sit here and listen to the vast contrast of experience in the tournament, one that's never played and one that has in the last two, what are your thoughts when you try to mesh these two together to try not to make it too big of a moment but also appreciate the moment?

ROBYN FRALICK: That's the beautiful thing about being a team, right? We have freshmen. We have Julia, who this is her third NCAA. We have Jaddan Simmons, who transferred to us, and Grace, who a big reason they came to Michigan State is they wanted to play in the tournament. I love the variety, as a staff too.

I love what you said, you have to embrace the moment, but you can't make it bigger or smaller than it is. I think Julia's done a really good job with our team also of leading the way with that with her voice, with her actions, and with her experience.

Q. During your press conference after Selection Sunday, you mentioned that in year one after making the tournament, there's a lot of jubilation, excitement to be there. This year you saw your name pop up, and you said, okay, we know the assignment now. We can get to work. You also said the staff and the players learned something from year one they're applying to year two. What are some of the things for the staff that you're looking to apply in year two here?

ROBYN FRALICK: You always are learning. I think you shared it that last year there was such an excitement about making it. I think going into last year's season, nobody thought we'd make the tournament. There's a real appreciation behind that. Then all of a sudden the game starts, and it's like, oh, baby, we've got to play better than this, especially to start the game.

The time we have between is interesting. When I was a Division II head coach, there wasn't a big gap between when you finished the regular season and when the tournament started. As a staff we learned, okay, what do we do with that time? How do we make the most of it? What does this team need? What do we need to be ready to play when the game lights go on?

Those are things you write down, and those are things you take note of, and moving forward you hope you can learn and do better.

Q. Carrie has very fond memories of you, one of you flexing every time she would walk on the court whenever she'd step out for the starting lineups. I wonder if you could share some of your memories of her. It was your grad assistant days. I was wondering if you could share some of your memories and also your journey now that you're meeting here.

ROBYN FRALICK: Small basketball world. I was a graduate assistant at Western Michigan a while ago, and Carrie played, and Carrie was the leading scorer in the country, just an elite, elite player, elite person, elite student. I look back, and people are like what do you remember? I was like I don't think I knew anything.

I think I helped with food orders. I officiated practice, and I knew Carrie was really good.

But I love that. It's pretty full circle that we're now across from each other on sidelines. She's done a tremendous job, which is no surprise, everywhere she's been. Whether as a player, as a coach, she's put excellence into it.

So from our flexing days to coaching against each other on the sidelines, it's pretty cool that this has all kind of transpired.

Q. Do you remember anything about her style of play?

ROBYN FRALICK: I remember she got pretty mad at my officiating in practice. She's probably right, but I stood strong.



Q. From an Xs and Os standpoint, you guys are one of the top scoring teams in the country. Harvard is one of the stingiest defenses in the country, top four in scoring defense. What kind of gives there, and how do you try to increase the number of points that they're giving up from what they normally give up?

ROBYN FRALICK: That's a challenge in front of us. I think they've been a very good defensive team consistently throughout the season. I think coming off the Big Ten Tournament, Iowa is really good. We were pretty disappointed with how we played. One of the biggest things was just shot selection and quality of shot and doing a better job of making the defense work. Those are things that you come off that and you've got to do better, and we've had a little time to focus on that.

I don't think there's any magic wand. I think we're going to have to play good basketball, and we're going to have to take good care of the ball and get good shots and get some more of them.

Q. When I asked the players if they were familiar with anybody, obviously I saw you perk up right away because you have a situation as well. It's kind of the unique thing about this tournament, you can just bring four teams from around the country to one spot and all these connections are there. Is that unique or special?

ROBYN FRALICK: It is. I love that about this tournament. When we went into Selection Sunday, we really had no idea who we were going to play. A lot of teams, I think, have -- I think our men's team, who they're predicted to play, they're playing. With our team, we really didn't know.

Kind of another small world is I played at Davidson College when Wes was the coach at Chattanooga, which was a while ago. The basketball world becomes small pretty fast.

Q. You were both in the Southern Conference at the time?

ROBYN FRALICK: Yeah, we were both Southern Conference.

Q. Did you ever play a game in Reynolds Coliseum when you were at Davidson College?

ROBYN FRALICK: I didn't. We played at Duke and North Carolina, but we never played at NC State.

Q. She was talking just about style-wise, you guys are very similar to a team they've played before, similar in that you press a ton. One, is there anything you've

seen, just because they've seen it against Columbia a few times this year and how they've handled the press, whether it's better, over the course of the season, and how you addressed yours? Two, is that kind of a Michigan thing? Because she adopted the press, and she likes that gritty, kind of get into you defense, and I wonder if that's a personality trait where we're going to sit down and try to get stops?

ROBYN FRALICK: Maybe it's a Michigan thing, a little blue collar. Yeah, with our press, I think they do it too. I think we have a number of different presses we use. It's kind of up to us and our kids to make sure it's effective. Night in and night out, I think that looks a little different depending on who we're playing.

How did the press come about? Interesting, when I was a Division II head coach, we had a really good team, and I felt we were getting everybody's best game. We were going up against so many different defenses. The game was just harder than I felt like it had to be.

That next season I just decided we're going to set the tone for the game. We're going to be more aggressive, and we're going to increase possessions. That's kind of how it came about too.

My husband was a high school varsity boys' coach, and they pressed. I actually learned a lot from him. I learned a lot from high school coaches about how to do that, how to be kind of effective and change it up.

Game to game, I think it's a little different, team to team, personnel. So those are things we're going to have to pay attention to throughout the game.

Q. Was it a little odd to have to plan a road trip to play a conference game against USC and UCLA? In the Big Ten.

ROBYN FRALICK: The good news is our DOBO does all of that and did a good job with that. Yeah, totally new league -- 18 team league, 12 in the tournament, two Number 1 seeds. The four teams we added are all NCAA Tournament teams.

I always said the Big Ten was good, and we decided to go and make it even better. But it's coast to coast. I think we have a national print across the whole country. Some of the best players in the whole country play in our league.

If you really love basketball, if you really love a challenge, the league has only increased in that.

Q. I wanted to ask about Harvard a little bit, and kind

of going off of that, you went against JuJu Watkins. You went against some of the most elite scorers there is. When you put the tape on and see Harmoni Turner, maybe her -- the amount of percentage that she has the ball in her hands and is such a dominant hand, is there anything comparable that you've faced all season to Harmoni Turner and what Harvard provides?

ROBYN FRALICK: Some things, like definitely high usage, really good player. I think she's as good as advertised, right? We had heard about her and read about her. She had an amazing Ivy League tournament, season and tournament. On film she's an elite competitor, great speed, three level scorer.

You think of the best guards in the Big Ten, and you can definitely see overlap.

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