

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

Saturday, March 22, 2025

Raleigh, North Carolina, USA

Reynolds Coliseum

Harvard Crimson

Coach Carrie Moore

Elena Rodriguez

Harmoni Turner

Media Conference

Michigan State 64, Harvard 50

CARRIE MOORE: Yeah, I'm just really proud of these two.

As I said in the locker room, this game does not define our season, this game does not define who we are, this game does not define who these two have been and what they mean to this program.

Every time you earn something your goal should be to leave it better than you found it. These two have done that exactly. They've been our engine, our energy, our drive for the last three years that I've been fortunate to be the head coach here.

They deserve it all and I'm so very glad that they played their very last game on this stage. Unfortunate because I feel like we're a much better basketball team than we showed for 40 minutes today.

Like I said, so proud of these two and our team and this group and what we've accomplished this year. What we have done has not been done at Harvard in a very long time. It is a new standard.

Can't really think about the future, just more so just really proud of our group and so very fortunate and blessed to be the head coach here.

Q. Harmoni, congratulations on an incredible season. Can you just talk a little bit about your love for this program? Clearly you're very emotional right now. From watching you guys over the course of a year it's clear that's related to it passion you have for hear yard women's basketball. Talking with your teammates,



what it meant to get all the way over here. Yeah.

HARMONI TURNER: I mean, this group of girls, it's very rare to find and be on a team that is so loving and so caring and so hard working 1 through 14, coaches included. Like that's very rare, especially in college basketball.

I'm so proud of them because we've been through so much and I feel like only we know how much we've been through. We persevered every single time. I don't think we're going to take to this as a loss. I think we're taking it as a learning experience.

At the end of the day like we still are champions. We still have that sisterhood that a lot of people don't necessarily have. I'm super proud of them. I wouldn't trade them for the world. Yeah, I love them to death. I really do.

ELENA RODRIGUEZ: For me I couldn't have chosen a better place to come for my basketball career. They mean the world to me. They're my second family away from home. I couldn't have done this with any other group. I'm really proud of all of them. It just makes every day I go to practice, it just bring a smile to my face seeing all of them. They're really my sisters and I know like this is for a lifetime so I'm very grateful.

Q. Can you also talk a little bit about your coach? As seniors, you obviously were not -- you were the only ones or one of the few who were not freshmen when Coach Moore got here. Tell us a little bit about how she's made an impact on this program over the past three years and what she means to you two personally. Harmoni, if I may very quickly as well, I believe when you went out to start the second half you looked toward the family section and you yelled at them, let's have some fun. Did you have fun today? Did you have fun over the course of the year?

HARMONI TURNER: Yes, I have fun with all my teammates. Let's have some fun, you got to understand, yes we're on a big stage but there is still no pressure. The reason we have to circle back on is why we started playing. That's having fun. Joy is one of our core values and I feel



like we had a really fun season. Let's have some fun. It's always great to put on a show. I felt like we fought our butts off.

To answer your question in regards to Coach Moore, you trying to make me cry again. But, yeah, you can't ask for a better coach than that, you know. She cares about you as a person. She's someone that I deeply, truly love and care about. I feel like we have a relationship that's so unique because, I mean, it's grown so much, especially since she got here.

I love her to death, man. I'm just going to stop there because I'm going to start boo-hooing. I'm so thankful for her, thankful for her belief in me, and that she never gave up on me, especially in times where I was doubting myself.

She still had that belief in me. She still -- she told me since show got here that I was generational. She led me to believe that. You can't ask for a better coach than that. I feel like our relationship is going to go beyond Harvard as well.

ELENA RODRIGUEZ: Yeah, I mean, personal experience, I came here my freshman year adjusting to a whole new country. I didn't get a lot of like playing time my freshmen year and my confidence wasn't there.

And then Coach Moore came in and she believed in me even when I didn't. She gave this Spaniard a chance, and it's been huge since then. I'm just grateful for her for all she has done for me.

As I said the other day, she's been like an amazing coach but even better, an amazing person. She just built a winning championship program since she got here. We wouldn't have done it without her so thank you so much.

Q. Harmoni, can you tell me what you said in the locker room when you -- I saw you running after -- ahead of everybody else. What did you say? Any thoughts that you shared in the locker room right after?

HARMONI TURNER: During halftime or after the game?

Q. After the game.

CARRIE MOORE: I ran into the locker room and cried honestly. I hugged all my teammates. I feel like I'm comfortable being vulnerable with them. That's an emotion that they don't really see a lot, and I am so grateful for them because they accepted that.

You know, my story is, man, one for the books. I feel like

being comfortable and being vulnerable with them is a beautiful thing. That's exactly what I did.

I feel like we made a lot of history this year so at the end of the day it was tears of joy, tears of gratitude. I'm incredibly grateful for the game. Grateful for my teammates, my coaches. That was just all that emotion going out. Really not much to say other than loving on them and reciprocating that same energy as well.

Q. Kind of wanted to ask you about the huddle at like -- as you left the floor. You guys are already crying and I don't want you to cry any anymore.

HARMONI TURNER: Too late.

Q. The outcome is the outcome. I think that's their third lowest scoring game of the season. This was a defensive battle. Did you know that coming in? The first two minutes were tough and you guys were in a fight the entire time. What was it like being in that kind of game knowing stops were going to win it?

HARMONI TURNER: I feel like defense is our identity. It caused us to win a championship in the Ivy League. Our shots weren't falling, but that's basketball. They're not going to fall every game. We still didn't give up and that's all you can ask for.

I mean, we prepared. We left it all out there. It's March. This is what happens. This is what happens during March. I feel like we still left it all out there and that's something to hold our heads up to.

Q. (No microphone.)

HARMONI TURNER: I feel like Michigan State is a really great team. They have really great coaches. At the same time I feel like it's something I haven't seen before. We know the work we put in. Kudos to Michigan State for getting a lot of stops on defense.

That's just what it was. (Smiling.)

Q. Harmoni, Elena, for both of you, first of all, thank you both for your time all season and for being here. I wanted to ask you about Carrie's "believe it" mantra. Obviously she brought that in the beginning. Now that you've gotten this far and gotten everything you were believing in for the most part, how much does that resonate now?

HARMONI TURNER: I think you kind of sort of answered the question. Believe it is pretty self-explanatory. It's not just in basketball, but in life. I feel like Coach Moore is the

definition of believing it. We just follow suit. We followed the leader. She's been a tremendous coach, tremendous leader for the three years I've been here. It's not only believing it in basketball but in life in general.

Because at the end of the day, like life is hard. Life is hard and you have to believe in yourself. You have to surround yourself with a lot of great people. I feel like Coach Moore and my teammates and the coaching staff has done a really great job making this a family orient team.

ELENA RODRIGUEZ: I mean, we don't say believe it very lightly even though we say it a lot. We have to believe in ourself, our teammates, coaching staff, in this program.

I feel like that's what it's been about the last three years. As Harmoni said, this is going to go beyond Harvard, and we're grateful for her to introduce that to us. That makes us better persons.

But following her lead it has been amazing.

Q. Great game, great season, great team. Thanks for letting me hang out. I didn't get a chance to ask the players what they left behind. With that particular group, what do you feel like they're leaving? They're sad because the moment is over, but I feel like they left a lot, too.

CARRIE MOORE: Yeah, definitely. Just a new standard, right, new standard of excellence, new standard of championships, new standard of how to show up, new standard of how to handle adversity, new standard of how to be a great teammate, how to be coachable, how to fight.

I think those two do one heck of a job at all of those things and more. We wouldn't be able to do what we did this year without them. But I hope that the ones that are underneath them really see what -- who they are and how they show up and how they go about things.

Because that needs to be the way that, you know, our entire team goes about things. So just really looking forward to now so much opportunity, right? You lose two really good players that play a lot, score a lot, defend a lot, do a lot for our team; now it's next man up. Excited to see what that can look like.

Q. Coach, you told Harmoni and people around you that she's a generational talent. What comes next for her in your mind?

CARRIE MOORE: A lot. (Smiling.)

I mean, I think she will just have to -- she probably needs

some days to just really process, as I do. I think you see the emotion coming out of me because like you just go, go, go, go.

You just don't really have time to sit and think about all that you've done, especially for her, right? Like we only had one other player in the history of our program that has every compared to what she's done. That's a lot. She's been through a lot and it has not been easy.

So I think for her to just take some time it like rest and just really like reflect on everything that has happened is the best thing she can do.

And then after a couple weeks I'm sure she'll be back in the gym hopefully preparing for a professional career, and I think she's proven that -- I think there are three rounds in the WNBA draft; 36 something in and around there picks.

I think she has shown her name should be called on that night. I'll be right there alongside her waiting to hear her name. She's a pro, and everything that she does, she's only scratching the surface.

Believe that or not, but she's got an incredible career ahead of her.

Q. Carrie, thanks for the really the whole year. It's been great following you guys. Harmoni said something about like this loss is a learning experience for us. Just curious what you want your team to learn from to this and what memories specifically you want them to remember about this whole NCAA tournament experience, not just the game today?

CARRIE MOORE: Yeah, definitely. You know, you can't like create this experience any other way than just being here. I think at times during this game I felt like the moment maybe was a little bit too big for our team.

Because we hadn't been here before, and I think this experience hopefully fuels us to do everything that we need to do to get back to this point and show up at our best in this moment and meet the moment.

I think you saw our team a week ago, weekend ago show up at our very best because we had been in that position before and knew how we needed to show up and play in order to get done.

Now we know. Now we know. I think culturally it is my job to do everything that I can to make sure that we get an opportunity to get back to this place.

I feel like we've got a lot coming back and coming in and I



feel like that's something we can do.

Q. Thanks, Coach, for everything all season. When you get it down to one in the third quarter and the offense looks like it's clicking then they hit you back with that 11-point run, like did you think you had another run back in you?

CARRIE MOORE: Yeah, of course. Our team has been a season of runs, as you know better than anybody.

I don't think any time that we're down that we ever feel like we can't get back in the game or that we're not going to win the game. I felt like during that 11-0 run we were unhinged a little bit and started to unravel in a way that I didn't love.

We just needed to get more stops. I felt like we were overhelping in moments we didn't need to. Couldn't keep people in front. We fouled way too much. You put a team on the free-throw line 27 times, it's just hard to kind of overcome that over the course of -- especially the later in the game that it gets.

So just I felt like we then responded again even after their run. Just really proud that they finished the game playing Harvard basketball.

Q. I was wondering, what did they do that made it difficult to generate offense? Obviously they were keyed on Harmoni. Overall. And then, two, it was emotional after, but it was emotional during. How do you try to keep people composed during?

CARRIE MOORE: Yeah, to answer your second question, that's what I'm saying about this moment. There is a lot of emotions that have never been felt before in this moment when things are getting heated and they're physical.

We felt like we're not getting fouled. They're calling every foul on that end for us, so I think it's my job to make sure that this moment that I'm trying to calm folks down and really settle us.

We talk a lot about 6-2-8s. It's a big breath. Feel like in a lot of the moments I asked our team to really do that and get present and refocus and make a run and respond.

But, yeah, that's the experience factor. And then I just felt like they're a BigTen team. You know, they're not a huge team, right? But they're athletic and they play really well together defensively. They're connected in a way but they're long, super long. Is they bet to spots.

Honestly I love our league. I think it's an incredible league. But that defense tonight looked a little bit different than

what we've seen consistently throughout the season.

It's been a while, so I think it took us a second. Took Harmoni a second to settle in. You know, took us a little bit to kind of make plays in and around what they were doing at the point of the screen.

Q. Coach, when I look back at last year, Harm and Elena you both dealt with serious injuries. They came back but came up short. With that as a backdrop, how happy are you for them that they got this experience the last ten days the way they did?

CARRIE MOORE: Yeah, so happy. So happy for them and just, again, everything that that we have been through and how they persevered. You know, the way that we have lost in a lot of our games in league and years past has been dramatic and tough on us as a group.

I think even the season you saw us lose some games in the regular season we felt like we should have won. I thought they just did an incredible job of coming together and playing their best basketball at the right time. That's all you can ever want as a head coach. I really felt like watching them the last week has been such a blast. I mean, the smiles on their faces the joy they've been having together as a group is -- you can't replicate that. Can't replicate that.

They worked so hard to get here and it's been really cool as a coach to experience it with this group. You never forget your first. We laughed about that a lot this week. But this has been quite a ride. Just such an incredible group to do it with.

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