

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

Sunday, March 23, 2025

Raleigh, North Carolina, USA

Reynolds Coliseum

Michigan State Spartans

Theryn Hallock

Nyla Hampton

Media Conference



Q. What do you think the biggest challenges are for your team and for tomorrow's game?

NYLA HAMPTON: I would say tomorrow rebounding will be a really big thing on both ends. I think we can take advantage if we rebound offensively. And of course rebounding on the defensive end is going to be huge because we can't let them get second shots.

THERYN HALLOCK: I think they're more of a guard-based team, and we have great guards too. So I think it's going to be head to head with them.

Overall, I think, overall I don't think, like Harvard, they're ready for our defense because our defense applies a lot of pressure. They have great guards, but I think, if we get under them and stay poised in our stance, then we'll be good.

Q. You guys are from the Big Ten, a long ways from here. I wouldn't expect you to know any of this history, but there's a lot of (no microphone) and basketball in the South. I don't know if you've seen the statues outside the arena. I know your focus is on the games, but how much have you been able to take in the historic setting you're playing in?

THERYN HALLOCK: Honestly, it's just an honor. We're very grateful to be here. To be able to experience these other areas and these universities, it's a privilege for us.

We try to see as much as we can, but we're in the gym a lot of the day to try to prepare for the game. It's really cool where the history goes, and especially with women's sports, just all the things we can see around campus. It's really beautiful because it's a lot different than East Lansing.

NYLA HAMPTON: I think we all have our moments where we just kind of take everything in and just make sure we're not taking these moments for granted. Obviously we're not fully familiar with all the history, but I think the tournament itself is a big thing for everyone. So we're just taking advantage of every moment we get here.

Q. Last night in the Harvard press conference, the players and the coach talked about how they had never seen the defense you guys threw at Harmoni Turner. I was just wondering if you could comment on that. Also about how you were prepared -- the game plan had you prepared. When the coach does come up with a game plan, how confident are you in it when you see it to start working on?

THERYN HALLOCK: With Harmoni, I've got to give her a lot of credit, she's a great player. Obviously we've only played two Ivy League teams, and it's an honor to play different teams.

She obviously is very talented on all levels. She can shoot from the 3, she can get her midrange, and she can finish well at the rim.

Our scout was to kind of get under her and pressure her, and I think we did that. Also our press frustrated them a little bit, which helped. Coach's game plan was very specific, and we followed that.

Nyla might have more to add to that, but overall I think she's a great player, but I think we defended her well.

NYLA HAMPTON: I think, when it comes to every team, they all have that feeling when they play us, they haven't seen a defense like ours because of the way we pressure is a bit unique.

Like Theryn said, Harmoni is a great player, but I think we have some of the best defenders on this team, which helps quite a bit. With our coaches and our game plan, we trust them fully and completely lock in to whatever they tell us to do.

Q. How have you handled the road environments that you've been throughout the season? It seems like it's probably a little more intimate here than maybe some of those Big Ten arenas.

NYLA HAMPTON: We just, we treat every floor like it's our home floor. We always talk about protecting our home floor. So we kind of go in with that mindset no matter where we are and just stick together and lean on one another.

THERYN HALLOCK: I think it's cool to play in these environments. It kind of reminds me of like Iowa where in their arena it's bigger. There's a big crowd, and Caitlin Clark obviously brought a lot of fans in.

But to be in these more intimate arenas, it's cool to be in this environment because it's kind of cool to shut the crowd up here once in a while.

It's an honor to play here and very honored to play an ACC team in a great history made area.

Q. For both of you guys, the challenge and the opportunity in front of you where this could be the first Sweet 16 since 2009 in 16 years, how do you embrace that kind of opportunity that sits in front of you? What's the excitement level that goes into that? Nyla, we can start with you.

NYLA HAMPTON: I think you have to approach it with a sense of gratitude. It's not an opportunity everyone gets. It's not an opportunity everyone's going to get. So I think we all feel really lucky, and I think we all love the challenge that it presents.

It's not going to be easy. We all know that. And I think what we've done over this past season has really prepared us for what's to come.

THERYN HALLOCK: I think just overall we've worked for these moments. There's 32 teams left, and we're one of the 32. So it's just, again, an honor to be a part of it.

I think it's also cool to be the underdog. I mean, we're ranked lower than them, so to have an upset, it's going to be super fun if we can do that. Honestly, it's all under the excitement. We're excited to be here and grateful to be here, and we're ready to play.

Q. Since you play the guard position, NC State's top scorers are obviously guards. What's unique about each one in the amount of time you've had to scout them?

THERYN HALLOCK: I think they're three versatile players. Like with all three of them, you have to guard them for all three levels. They can drive, they can shoot, they can hit the midrange, but they also rebound, they come in and attack the rim.

We're just going to have to stay poised, and like I said, be ready in our stance and expect everything from them because, like I said, they do play guard-based?

NYLA HAMPTON: Like you said, they're really unique. They're not a team with high assist numbers, but they're really efficient in their shooting, which I think is a unique thing in itself. A lot of that comes from those three guards, so it's going to be just kind of dialing in on our defense and winning our one-on-one battles.

Q. Yesterday after the game we asked Grace about playing a physical game, and she just got a big smile on her face. You expect post players to enjoy a physical game, but as guards, do you enjoy a physical game as well, particularly the way you guys defend?

NYLA HAMPTON: I think for me personally, I would say yeah, a little bit just because it allows you to kind of pressure and get under people a little more. So it definitely gives you a little bit more of an edge.

THERYN HALLOCK: I would agree. I think it just makes you play better. Honestly, you've got to expect contact in any basketball game you play. There's a lot of gritty teams out there, and we're gritty ourselves. The toughness piece of that too and the contact makes you better.

So definitely need to push for the contact, but do it in a respectful way of you're here, I'm here, let's battle. But, yeah, definitely ready for that piece too.

Q. Coach Fralick, what she's been able to do in two years, obviously she's the first to take Michigan State to back-to-back. Nyla, you played for her before. I'm sure she's the same coach, but it's a little different level. From both of your perspectives, one who's been here the whole time and one that transferred in, what have you seen from Coach Fralick?

THERYN HALLOCK: I think she's done tremendous things in the past two years. I'm very grateful to be part of her staff and on her team.

First year we didn't make it in the tournament, and we didn't do NIT or any of that, so it was kind of weird not to have a tournament. But she came in and swept us all under her feet and really took us all in, and we really

appreciated that. She's just so consistent.

There's not another word to put for her. She puts her players first and also takes care of herself. She's a great mom. She brings her kids in with us. She does everything she needs to do as a coach outside of the court too, and that's another reason we look up to her.

She's also very smart. She's a very intelligent coach. She knows a good game plan and knows how to do her job, and I'm very proud to play for her.

NYLA HAMPTON: Definitely a big piece is the culture she builds. That takes you a lot further than all of the basketball things. You can have so much talent, but without culture, you're only going to get so far. She's really good about being intentional about culture. It helps keep the team together, for one, and helps everybody keep on the same page.

Like I said earlier, they come up with the game plans, and we trust it fully. We have no doubt that, when she puts a game plan in front of us, we have no doubt this is what we're doing.

Q. Earlier you mentioned a lot of things don't come easy, and you seem to be pleased by that. What motivates or what is so appealing about that part for your team?

NYLA HAMPTON: We're just a team of competitors. We want to compete night in and night out. No one wants to just walk their way through the tournament. You want to earn everything you get.

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