

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Four - William & Mary vs High Point

Wednesday, March 19, 2025

Austin, Texas, USA

Moody Center

High Point Panthers

Jaleesa Lawrence

Nevaeh Zavala

Media Conference

MODERATOR: Folks, we want to welcome everyone to the NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Championship Pregame Press Conference for First Four participants, High Point University.

Congratulations on your successes to date, and welcome here to Austin.

First we're going to hear from High Point student-athletes, and then they will be followed with comments or we will follow with comments from Head Coach Chelsea Banbury.

Right now we welcome senior guard Jaleesa Lawrence and junior forward Nevaeh Zavala. And like I mentioned, they will give our opening remarks first, and we'll have questions for these student-athletes, and then we will dismiss them from the podium and welcome head coach to the podium.

First of all, ladies, we want to just welcome you here, and for each one of you, just talk a little bit about your reaction to your season to date. We'll start with you, Jaleesa.

JALEESA LAWRENCE: Wow. Really open question. It's just a blessing to be here. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I came here last year, and it's just so great to be able to accomplish that again with a new team. And we've worked so hard to get here, and I'm just so grateful that we can do this.

NEVAEH ZAVALA: I can say the same thing. This is my first time going to the March Madness tournament, and it's been a great experience overall, everything that's come with it. It's been amazing, and to do it with my team and my teammates, some of my best friends, it's been a fun season. I'm so glad I've got to be a part of this team.



MODERATOR: And we certainly want to congratulate you on both your Big South regular season and tournament championships. Great momentum coming into this tournament.

Right now we will be turning to questions from the media members here in Austin. If you could, just identify yourself by name and affiliation and address your questions to the student-athletes, please.

Q. Y'all just came off the Big South Championship. What does that momentum do to fuel you into this coming game?

NEVAEH ZAVALA: I'd say it's got us pretty high. Like all of our energy is pretty high, because like we just won our conference. Then we're going -- we find out that we're traveling to Texas to play in the March Madness tournament. Like everyone was so excited to find that out. Everyone is excited to be here. It's been pretty exciting.

Q. Can you describe just in maybe a couple of words, if you can do that, what it felt like to see your name pop up on the bracket?

JALEESA LAWRENCE: Wow. Wow is probably one of them. Excited. And then.

NEVAEH ZAVALA: To see that we were going against Texas, like that was the option of coming here, it was exciting for me because I'm from Texas, and none of our games are usually anywhere near here. So it was exciting for my family and everyone around to find out that we were going to be playing here. So for me I was like super, like, wow, like of all the states that we could have played in, like we're playing in Texas. It was super exciting.

MODERATOR: For clarification, it's Plano that you're from. Correct?

NEVAEH ZAVALA: Yes.

MODERATOR: Welcome back to the Lone Star State then. Absolutely. Any other questions? I don't see



anyone right now on Zoom, so just talk a little bit about your preparation to face William & Mary tomorrow and now what do you expect from that team?

JALEESA LAWRENCE: Yeah, well, Sunday was Selection Day, and then I know the coaches were working really hard. Coach had already watched their game that day.

And so just before that, before we knew who we were playing, we really just focused on ourselves, our offense and then our defensive principles, and then coming into this, like just really focusing on playing good team defense and then just doing what we do best and being able to share the ball and capitalize on what teams do.

MODERATOR: Nevaeh, do you have anything to comment on that?

NEVAEH ZAVALA: Yeah. When it came to the William & Mary aspect, like Jaleesa said, that night, once the coaches found out who we were playing, they were on it; they were watching games. So that following morning when we came into practice, we really hit it head on, like with scout, and going over plays and how we're going to guard things and what will work against them. And that's what we plan to keep on doing.

MODERATOR: Thank you. Any other questions from anyone here? Yes.

Q. Talk about the experience, I mean, just talking about experience, but from leaving campus yesterday to getting on the plane to having a whole big jet to ourselves and then landing in Texas, what's it been like?

JALEESA LAWRENCE: Yeah, well, we've chartered before, but we had dancers, band, cheer. And so that was just cool to share that with them, and then we got a way bigger plane. Coming here, like we got all of our March Madness stuff. I'm wearing my hat right now.

And it's just so exciting. Like you dream about this, and it's just way bigger than you thought, and then like everything is decked out in March Madness.

Q. The boys obviously had a pretty good season this year, too. Does that add any competition while y'all are on campus running into each other, and just who wants to be the better team kind of thing?

NEVAEH ZAVALA: I guess you could kind of say that, especially whenever we were in the conference tournament, because their championship game was before ours. So we got to watch that and see how they got to

celebrate and enjoy all of that.

We were like, like we have to do that, too. Like that would be so crazy to make history as a school for both men's and women's to win at the same time. So it definitely added a little bit of extra fire.

MODERATOR: Any other questions? All right. If not seeing any others, ladies, I just want to congratulate you again for your big run this year, and best of luck tomorrow against William & Mary.

So thank you for joining us today. We will now break for a few minutes before welcoming Head Coach Chelsea Banbury to the podium to join us for her remarks.

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