

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

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Moody Center

William & Mary Tribe Erin Dickerson Davis

Media Conference



ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: Yeah. So for the entire CAA tournament we just talked about one game; we just have a game. Right? We didn't really say, hey, we're going here and we're going to try to win a championship. We literally went into the tournament and said we're going to win one game, and this is how we're going to do it.

And so I think by keeping it just laser focused on the two to three things that we know we need to bring to be successful for this game, I think that kind of keeps us grounded and not so overwhelmed, right, with possibilities and anything that could come from that.

So we are just talking about one game. We have High Point coming up. We have one more game. They can't be tired. They can be tired the next day. Right? And just stay laser focused on the scout and the things that we have done to bring success thus far.

Q. Coach, how much have you personally been able to -- I know as a coach by nature you're always kind of looking at the next game, but how much have you personally kind of been able to soak in the last 48 hours, the excitement of everything? And then how have you also tried to encourage your players to enjoy this moment?

ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: I probably have done the latter more. You know, there have been so many people that have called and texted and DM'd. I'm still trying to get back to everyone. I love you all. I promise, I'll get there.

It's been kind of hard for me personally. I think once everything is over and we have a banquet at some point to celebrate this, I think I'll really have a chance to kind of sit in everything that has happened and all that we were able to accomplish. But for now I really have just been putting it all into my players, my staff.

You know, my staff, they're the unsung heroes. Right? I was in the lobby at like 2:30 in the morning before our Campbell game, just doing scout stuff and watching film, and I see my assistant coach, Dane Sparrow, come down. And I'm like, what are you doing? And he's like, I'm watching film.

MODERATOR: All right, folks. You can see that we are now joined by William & Mary head coach. Coach, first of all, congratulations on your fantastic run to the NCAA Tournament. Congratulations on, of course, the first bid in program history as well. We would like to begin this press conference by asking you to make a general statement, please.

ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: Well, first, thank you. Thank you very much. This is what we all dream of when we take on these jobs and make all the sacrifices, and I'm just so happy to be here. My team is filled with joy and pride, especially for our Tribe community. So, yes, thank you all.

MODERATOR: All right. We're going to take questions.

Q. I was wondering, with your first appearance in the NCAA Tournament for your program, and your recent success this season, how has this impacted the community and the university as a whole?

ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: Well, we didn't quite know until we got back to campus. You know, it was a whirlwind. We finished our game; we went straight back to the hotel to watch the selection show, and then when we got back on Monday, we got there, and there were so many of our fans, the community members, people from the university, President Rowe, our provost. Our athletic department really showed up and showed out for us.

So it was just so cool to see the pride that everybody had in that moment, all the green and gold, the pom-poms, people yelling and cheering. It was just -- it was so cool. It was an experience that none of us will ever forget.

Q. What are you doing to, I guess, mentally prepare the team for tomorrow night?



They have put so much of their time, their effort into this. They need to enjoy this, too. Yes, we have a game to play. Yes, there's scouts that need to be done, but this is an experience that we all should be able to enjoy.

And then just going to our players, like this is history, right? Win, lose, draw, it doesn't matter. Like we have solidified ourselves in William & Mary history, and I want them to go out, I want them to have fun, play this game and just enjoy this entire experience.

Q. Again, congratulations on everything. You answered one of the questions I was going to ask, but I'll take it another direction. I'll ask two questions.

My first question, what have you seen about High Point that you like as far as this is a nice matchup for you, and if there's a comparable team in the CAA with High Point.

ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: Yes. So High Point is a really well-coached, disciplined team. They are great defensively. That's one of their strong points. They're great at getting to the rim. They can shoot the three. I mean, they're here for a reason. They're a really good team.

We have talked about the similarities between Campbell and Drexel, you know, their styles of play, which is very beneficial for us because we just played those teams. And then to be able to play against a powerhouse like North Carolina A&T, their rebounding ability, their ability to go one-on-one, get to the basket, I think that really helps us as well.

I think this tournament, four opponents in four days. They're all different. We had to really learn how to communicate. Like it couldn't be so scout focused. It had to be focus on what we do, do what we do, guard it how we guard things. And I think that those four games have definitely helped us as we go into this game against High Point.

Q. And, secondly, more so on the theme of everything happening the last few days, about how many media interviews or requests for media have you had, because obviously this story, I mean, obviously what you all did, that really picked up nationally, right? So there was a more vested interest in this as opposed to one of the top two teams that won the CAA. For you how has that time been?

ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: It's been a lot. It's been a lot. Shout out to my SID, Jack Angelucci, Kris Sears in here. They've really been keeping my head straight. I literally go

to Jack and I'm like, you're the boss, Jack. Like whatever I need to do, just let me know. Whoever I need to talk to, put reminders in my phone, if you need to, so I don't miss anything.

I want to be able to talk to people. I want to be able to get my team out there. They have worked so hard. They have been so resilient. We were gutted at points throughout this season, and for us to be able to bounce back, like whoever wants to talk about this team, I will talk until I'm blue in the face, about the team, though, not about me so much.

Yeah, it's been amazing. It's been a whirlwind, and my people over here have been helping me out.

Q. Awesome. Thank you so much, and good luck tomorrow. I look forward to the game and look forward to talking with you all afterwards.

ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: Thank you.

MODERATOR: I don't see any other raised hands for those folks that are listening in on Zoom, so I'll ask one more time, are there any follow-up questions from anyone here in Austin.

Q. So in March Madness new viewership comes to various schools. What can new viewers expect from your program, and also along with players like Bella, what can they expect to see from her?

ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: You're going to see passion. You're going to see passion from this team. You know, we do good things. We make mistakes. We make shots, we miss shots. But you're going to see a lot of passion, and you're going to see a lot of togetherness. Those are the two things that I think have brought us this far.

I would love to say that it's just Xs and Os and this amazing strategy, but it's more than that. It is a team believing, believing in themselves, believing in each other, believing in us as coaches to find success. I think that's what we're aiming for. I think that's what people are going to see.

You're going to see us having fun out there, once the nerves -- once we get the jitters out, you're going to see us having fun. And I think that is what we did when we were even down in the CAA tournament. You know, we were down double digits. You're down 14, down 13, and we never folded because we believed in each other and we had some fun.

So I do think that. When people tune in tomorrow, they'll see that. They'll see a lot of passion. They'll see Bella yelling at least one time. They'll see Bek Frisby-Smith

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

throwing her body around on the floor, taking a charge and getting the whole bench hyped. They'll see our bench standing up and having a good time and really just enjoying this experience.

Q. I know you don't really want to talk about yourself, but if you would say something about how the basketball program, the women's basketball program is different now than when you came and kind of what are some of the, I guess, strategies that you implemented?

ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: So when I first got here, I had a team meeting. It was right when I think they announced me as head coach. I had a team meeting with the remaining players, and I said, I have one goal for this team, and that's to be top four, and they looked at me like I had 100 heads. They were like, yeah, okay, you know, cool, whatever. And I'm like, you can say what you want, but this is what I believe we can do.

And I spent so much time from the very beginning with the team, you know, talking about what a team looks like. We read books, right, "The Five Dysfunctions of a Team." We've led "Legacy." We've read a lot of books and articles and things that I -- I mean, these are William & Mary students, right? So they love to get the articles that I send sometimes.

And, you know, we just spent a lot of time on just confidence building and believing. I think that is where overthinkers and perfectionists fall short sometimes, and that's what we have at William & Mary. We have overthinkers and perfectionists. It's great in the classroom. They have amazing grades. But in basketball, not so much, right?

And so just saying like, hey, you're going to shoot 35 percent from the field, and that's pretty darn good, and I know in the classroom a 35 percent probably isn't, you know. But that's okay. You're going to make a lot of mistakes. This is a game of mistakes, but do you make less mistakes than your opponent, and I think we'll have a chance to win.

So just trying to get them to see the game a little bit different, for them to see that it's not black and white, that it is 100 shades of gray. I can't tell them every single thing. What I say one possession might not work in possession number two, right? Like it's evolving. It's ever changing. And we just spent so much time focusing on that stuff, and at the end of the year we made it in the top four. Right?

And so I think them doing the work, that first team really doing the work and really buying in and believing, I think

really set the stage and the foundation for these following teams.

MODERATOR: Coach, I just want to thank you so much. And we appreciate so much your time and your thoughts today, and, of course, very, very impressed with your run to date, and best of luck to you tomorrow evening.

ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: Thank you so much.

MODERATOR: Thank you for joining us.

ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: Thank you.

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