

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

Thursday, March 20, 2025

Austin, Texas, USA

Moody Center

William & Mary Tribe
Coach Erin Dickerson
Davis

Natalie Fox

Bella Nascimento

Media Conference

William & Mary 69, High Point 63

ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: I am so proud of our team, we have done things that we are so proud of. I want to give a special shoutout to everybody's bracket that we busted today. (Laughter.)

Q. Bella, making history. You guys made history last week and now just continuing that. Just the emotions, the joy of winning this game, tell me about that?

BELLA NASCIMENTO: Yeah, emotions are through the roof. We are still making history. This is a great group of girls we have competing. Just want to win everything we see in front of us, so dominate and just want to win.

Q. This is a question for both of you. What are your thoughts on the Moody center as a facility and the environment here tonight?

BELLA NASCIMENTO: Yeah, this is a great place to be in. Something I never imagined to be in. We were truly blessed to be in this position and the environment was great. Our fans, our support came down here. We got support back at home. The environment was awesome.

NATALIE FOX: Yeah, it was just electric being able to play in this sort of like environment, this arena. It's giant. It was almost intimidating before you get on the court, but once you're playing you get the flow and the fans and like all the loudness drowns out and it's just -- you just play basketball.



Q. Bella, you scored another double digit game in the 20s; Natalie, you scored a season-high 12 points. What does that good performance on the scoreboard do to carry you into the next game?

BELLA NASCIMENTO: Yeah, it gives us momentum. You know, the more we share the ball the more it opens up everything. So we just look for each other on the court. My teammates found me, I found my teammates. Sharing the ball is what we do and that's how we get each other open and get our energy boosted up. Once we see the ball go in the net, it's lit from there.

NATALIE FOX: Yeah, 100%. We just play together. We have each other's backs. You miss a shot, we get like a million offensive boards to just keep putting up shots and keep playing together, getting one more pass and getting everyone involved. It's just great.

Q. Bella, talk about the poise that this group showed tonight. I mean, out-shot them; went to the line and made your free throws; out-rebounded them by I think 15; 12 assists as a team. Talk about the poise this group showed in your first NCAA tournament game.

BELLA NASCIMENTO: Yeah, well, we seen this type of competition all season in the playoffs. We have seen that we could be up; we've seen that we could be down and just fight and our grit.

Through it all we just know to stay calm. It's going to pass. Just play together and stick together. That is our biggest thing. So no one is outside of themselves. When we stick together that's where we're strongest.

Q. What's happening? Good evening. Congratulations on the win. Bella, over the last couple days obviously just being in this environment now that you have been there, can you just describe what it's been like to do these press conferences, go through the calls, hotel, see all the signage, fans? Obviously it's on a different level than just a typical regular season game. What's that been like for you?

BELLA NASCIMENTO: It's been amazing. Like you said



it's a different level. It's a different stage. So it requires different things.

I'm here for it. I'm made for this. I'm comfortable. This is my spot. So I'm good to go whenever everybody is. Let's get it and win.

Q. Natalie, obviously everybody is playing in their first NCAA tournament game. Obviously as a freshmen it makes it special. What will you always remember about this journey with this team coming in as a freshmen and just being able to be part of this?

NATALIE FOX: I'll definitely always remember this team, my teammates, and just the excitement everyone has to be able to play this environment and do all these fun things, all the activities outside of basketball. Just spending all this time together. Like further past postseason and everything together.

It's just this team really. It's been a great experience.

Q. For both of you, obviously you're earned the right to play Texas with this win. What excites you all about Texas and that matchup?

BELLA NASCIMENTO: Yeah, we're excited to step on the floor again. It's another opportunity to play basketball, which we all love and which we're here to do. This is a business trip.

We think we can beat any team and that's what we're going to go out and show the world we can do.

Q. Both players, what was the leadup today like for this game? Like what was the routine? How did you guys get into this game? What was the emotions like?

BELLA NASCIMENTO: Yeah, the emotions were everywhere. There was nerves. There was excitement. There was, oh, my gosh we're going to play in Texas in the Moody Center. It was great vibes.

But we knew we had a job coming in and that's what our main goal was; we executed it.

NATALIE FOX: Yeah, I just think that everyone kind of did their thing. We're honestly a very superstitious team so we all have our routines, and everyone did what they needed to do for the game to get in the right mindset. We shot around today, made sure we saw the ball go in the basket, get in our groove, and did our thing.

Q. How different did it feel?

NATALIE FOX: It was just like any other game once you got into it.

Q. Just repeating the question I asked the girls, what are your thoughts on the Moody Center, the facility, and the environment here in Austin?

ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: This is one of the most amazing facilities I've ever been in. I've been in this business for a very long time and I've been to a lot of schools. This environment, this arena, when you walk in, like it is just incredible.

I remember walking in, I said to the girls, welcome to the big leagues, you know. But this university has done such a great job with creating this environment for its student-athletes. They deserve it. It's beautiful.

Q. It seems like when Bella and Natalie talk you beam with pride. Can you talk about what this team means to you and to be here with them?

ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: I could melt right now. I'm so filled with pride. They were so nervous. I spent the entire day figuring out how to calm their nerves. I kept saying I need to figure out what things I want it execute after timeouts and all this stuff.

Then I couldn't focus on it because I needed to make sure that my girls were okay. These are my babies, right? They have been through everything. They have giving everything to be at William & Mary. They chose this place and they have completely bought into me, my staff, and what this university stands for.

So to see them have the success that they are having right now, I could melt. I could melt.

Q. Erin, what's happening? Good job tonight. Again, like you said, beam with pride. The way you rebounded the ball especially in the final five minutes tonight, what allowed that? What did you see out there? Obviously your bigs, Kayla and Natalie, sometimes overlooked sometimes because of your guards, but tonight they came through huge for you.

ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: They did. We put on the board for the entire conference tournament and into today that if we can rebound we have a chance at winning. We can't give a team like High Point a lot of chances to score the basketball. We needed to limit them to one and done.

And I think that we really came through with that. It was great that we were able to also crash the offensive boards. That was something that was a huge priority for us today.

And, yeah, so I'm proud that they were able to do it, to execute it. I know that's something we can do and I'm just glad that that's not the thing that's been or Achilles' heel in the postseason.

Q. Obviously as mentioned earlier, next game is on Saturday. Opportunity of a lifetime for you and your program to compete against a program like that. Again, sure you probably haven't had a chance to think about it, but what's going to be the message to your team? I know you say "believe" and everything like that. Is it going to be a part of you that's going to step back and say, hey, let's embrace this?

ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: Absolutely. I actually didn't think anything about Texas and that's not because they're not one of the best teams in the world.

It's just because just like the conference tournament it was one game at a time. Now, I've watched Texas play quite a bit this season because they're a great basketball team, so I know who they are. I know what they do.

We'll be able to go back after this and shift our focus to Texas. I do want them to embrace this. I want them to have a good time. You're about to play against a team that respectfully to every other basketball coach should get to the Final Four. Vic Schaefer is such a great coach.

I actually played back in the day with Lindsay Wisdom-Hylton. I know their staff very well. Just going to be a fun time, fun environment. I have to assume it's going to be wild in here. So to be able to have that kind of experience, how could you be mad.

Q. Seems like I guess externally you have spent the last week or so winning a bunch of games that people would say you probably shouldn't. Mindset-wise what's the key to that? What's it going to take for that to continue?

ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: So only people on the outside felt like we couldn't win these games. That is I think probably the hardest thing to explain. Even when I'm talking to my team. Like we're supposed to be here. We are not as bad as what our record shows.

We found ourselves spiralling, and instead of coming together, everybody separated. That is what created this record that we have, right, the slide that we had.

It took people to come together. It took my leaders to come together. It took Bella on the bus coming back from Campbell after our last game to say we are not quitters. We're not quitters, right?

Finally, I don't know why it took us so long, I'm not sure. I tried and I tried. But they figured it out and did it on their own. They needed that time and space to figure it out. These are very smart kids. They need time to think through things.

Unfortunately it slid us in the season. I'm just glad that we're back on track. We were on this track to start the CAA Conference season. We were on our way to the best start in conference history at 8-2 or something like that. So we know that we were built for this.

I'm glad we were able to show everyone that we can fight and be resilient and we can stand up after we get knocked down.

Q. You talked about the nerves today. How did that kind of show up? Put me there. And then you guys showed a lot of poise in this game. Didn't seem like you guys were nervous. You played so well. How did they shake this off to pit out the performance they did?

ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: So I knew we were nervous. I drew up this play to get Bella a wide open layup and she got one and missed it. That is how I knew that we were nervous, right? Bella is a prolific scorer, one of the best that I've ever coached, so to miss that initial layup...

Cassidy missed a couple early. We missed a couple free throws. That's where I saw the nerves on the offensive end. Defensively being able to get some stops I think really helped us kind of settle in. I called a timeout in the first quarter as well just to settle us.

The score was like 10 to 8 or something along those lines. I just saw that we were kind of moving slow, sucking wind. I needed to kind of calm us down and regroup us. I think, again, we talked at some other press conference like in the timeouts they are taking control. I come in, I'm drawing up what we're going to run, then what we'll do on defense, and they are talking and problem solving and figuring it out.

So after that first timeout when we were able to settle in, into this environment, into this stage, you know, the NCAA tournament, I think that we were able to regroup and go for it from there.

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