

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - Creighton vs Illinois

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Moody Center

Creighton Bluejays

Morgan Maly

Lauren Jensen

Media Conference



LAUREN JENSEN: Taking care of your body is first and foremost, especially us fifth-year seniors. We're in the training room a lot. Thankfully Flan does a really good job managing practices around when we're going to play and not going too hard and giving our bodies some rest.

But all the things like sleep, rest, recovery, we've been around the block a few times. So thankfully we have experience there and we know what we're doing. But come game time we're always ready.

Q. How has your experience competing in the Big East prepared you for the challenges of the NCAA Tournament?

LAUREN JENSEN: The Big East is a good conference. We've seen UConn three times. There's some other good teams in the Big East as well. It definitely prepares us going in.

You see a lot of different types of style of play and that definitely helps. You never know who you're going to be playing going into it. Having experience playing against different types of teams and different type of systems really helps. And playing teams in the Big East helps as well.

MORGAN MALY: I'll just add every night is not going to be your night, or different styles of play that you see. We've found ways to win in a lot of different ways. And I think carrying that experience into the tournament is going to be helpful.

Q. It's been four years. But what did that experience in 2022 teach you all about the NCAA Tournament and what it takes to win in March?

MORGAN MALY: It's unique. Luckily we've had a lot of NCAA Tournament games under our belt. You're fighting for your life. Every possession, every mistake is amplified. So you just gotta go out there, trust your game plan and not let the moment get too big. And I think our team is going to be good about sticking together and doing what we need to do to win games.

Q. You're all averaging over 30 minutes a game, alongside Molly. How do you keep the energy up as you go into the postseason?

Q. You've got an experienced team. You know what it takes to kind of one game at a time through the tournament. But as veteran players, it's kind of like is the pressure always mounting to make history before you leave? How do you balance that ultimate goal of winning the championship at this point in your career with the idea that, okay, we know we can't look too far ahead even though the temptation must be there?

MORGAN MALY: I think part of that is the challenge of when you find out where you're going, who you're playing is looking further down the bracket, we can play this team, we could play that -- that doesn't matter.

And I think we do have a little bit of pressure just because teams know our past and we know our past and that we've made our mark a little bit in the tournament.

But I think we're used to being the underdog. We're used to being overlooked. And we carry that chip on our shoulder this time of the year.

Q. You and Illinois shoot free throws really well, both top five. How much is that stressed in practice and by your coaching staff?

LAUREN JENSEN: Free throws can make or break a game. And they're good at drawing fouls and they'll make you pay when you go to the line. Showing our hands, making sure we're moving our feet, not picking up little fouls is going to be important because Illinois is a great team. We're expecting a tough game. And that could be the difference.



Q. What's intriguing to you about the Illinois match-up given that you guys both have personnel that can stretch the floor at maybe unconventional positions, and it seems like it's going to be a fun match-up. What's intriguing to you about this first-round match-up with them?

LAUREN JENSEN: I think it will be a fun match-up. They're both great players, like you said, who can stretch the floor. I know I'm looking forward to watching that match-up.

Yeah, it should be fun. Whenever two great players can go at it, it's a fun game. And they're both unique players, like I said, really good players. So it will definitely be a fun match-up for sure.

MORGAN MALY: I think pace of play will be interesting. Just like watching film, Illinois just likes to take their time bringing the ball up. And I think we're going to look to run as much as possible. And we can only do that if we get stops defensively. So that will be a key for us.

Q. Curious about Flan and you guys have talked a little bit about just nerves being natural at this time of year. I'm curious if there's anything you've picked up on, because this is your fourth tournament in a row, about how to mitigate those even though you can't stop them from happening, I guess, once you feel the environment, once you're on the stage?

LAUREN JENSEN: With nerves, I think a really big thing for us and for me personally is just leaning into the team and what we've done all season. We know what we're capable of and what kind of team we are. We've been consistent all year and just leaning on that work that we've done in games and in practices and individually is a really good way to mitigate those nerves.

MORGAN MALY: I think jumping into the game it will be important just playing how we want to right out of the gate because we haven't played in close to two weeks. So I feel like that's kind of a different approach with the women's tournament compared to the men's. I feel like we have a lot of time off.

So just being in that environment plus the NCAA Tournament is what's unique about our position in this game.

Q. Is that break good or bad, the break in playing, is that good or bad?

MORGAN MALY: I always think it's pretty good. I think

especially our team playing lets us reset and take some time away. It was spring break for us last week. A lot of people got to go home or do whatever they needed to do.

So the first five minutes might be a little rough, but that's I think maybe to be expected. But the game's not won in five minutes. Gotta play a full 40.

Q. Spring break, what did you do? Did anybody go have fun, get sunburned? Was there a warning -- hey, don't mess this up; we've got to play in a tournament? What did you do?

LAUREN JENSEN: I actually, thankfully, was able to go to Florida for three days, which is really rare for this time of year. It was kind of weird being there. But I was obviously still working out and stuff.

Morgan said it, but having that mental break and that physical break is, honestly, something that I'm really grateful for over these past four years.

It's a long season and having that break to kind of reset and be able to get back in the zone, I was never really fully in vacation mode because we're in the middle of postseason. But it was nice to let my body have a break and be able to spend time with family.

MORGAN MALY: I spent my spring break just back in my hometown. Spent some time with my dogs, my family. Worked out, of course. But I just kind of laid around.

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