

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - William & Mary vs Texas

Friday, March 21, 2025

Austin, Texas, USA

Moody Center

William & Mary Tribe Coach Erin Dickerson Davis

Media Conference

THE MODERATOR: We would like to start this portion of the press conference by have you making an opening statement if you would.

ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: Yes, I am so happy and elated to be here. Our team has worked so hard. We faced so many challenges. We have gone up against some really, really great teams, amazing coaches that I've seen coach for a very long time. We're just super excited for this opportunity and glad that we can be in Austin for another day.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.

Q. Erin, what does it take for a team to essentially win five straight do-or-die games like y'all have?

ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: Leadership. It takes leadership more than anything. It takes buy-in. We talk about believing but belief is not easy and that's something that we saw when we started to take a slide in our season. We had played really good basketball and we took a really hard turn of events and belief is hard. I'll say that. I think more than anything, it takes leadership. My veterans really stepped up when it was time.

My younger players, Cassidy Geddes, Monet dance, they came through and had some really good games when Bella struggled to score in the CAA Tournament and I knew that those were the leaders they could be as well. So between that and just buying into what we wanted to do, I think that's what got us here.

Q. I'm sure if I told you tomorrow your game's at midnight, your players would be on the bus ready to go, but with such a late start, what do you have to do



differently? Are there any adjustments you have to make throughout the day to get this team ready or kill down time? How have you handled that late start tomorrow?

ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: We've been trying to forget that out. I know that they're a little overwhelmed with some homework so there will be downtime in the morning. They can't do homework after noon tomorrow so I'm sorry to William & Mary. Sorry. They can't do homework. They can only do homework 8:00 to 12:00 tomorrow and that's it. We're going to come and do shootaround. We'll probably walk around, watch some games. We love that the games are on so we have a meeting space and just kind of shift everything back and hopefully watching the games. They see the excitement, they see the environment, they'll be ready to go.

Q. I guess just size up your matchup with the number one seed Texas, their size, their defensive pressure, what are you facing?

ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: (Laughter) Goliath. Texas -- I think I said this yesterday. I didn't watch Texas film coming into this because we were focused on one game at a time but I've literally watched them the entire season. We were transitioning offense and I knew that Vic Schaefer ran dribble-drive offense and so all summer and offseason I actually studied Texas women's basketball and their dribble-drive offense. So I feel like I've been watching this team for a very long time. They are so good.

You know, it starts at the top. Coach Schaefer is one of the best in the business. He's going to go down in history as one of the best to ever do it. He has a very well-coached team. They're disciplined, they're talented, they're humongous. We watched it on film this morning with the team. It's going to be a lot of fun. It's going to be a lot of fun. It's very funny because I know Lindsay Wisdom-Hylton very well from growing up and earlier in the year she said you should come down and play us and I'm like never! And then all of a sudden we're here. So it's very excited. Our players are just happy for the opportunity to go out there and compete and play our game and be on a stage with players and coaches of that level.



Q. As a coach, are you the kind to maybe pull the team together for like an inspirational movie night or anything like that to find that David versus Goliath thing or is that too corny?

ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: My players, they don't really like stuff like that. They already think I'm corny. I thought I was so cool until I met my players. They want this to be another game. That was our message the entire postseason. We talked about winning this next game, right? Playing this next game. Competing the way that we want to compete in this next game, so, yeah, it's a tall task. We all know that, how far, I think this is an opportunity for us to grow as a team still, right? Win or lose, you get to grow as a team. You get to grow together. You get to continue to play the foundation for the following teams, the following Tribe teams so I think that's what our focus is going to be. We have another game. We have another opportunity to play a basketball game this season and we're just going to take full advantage of that.

THE MODERATOR: We're going to turn to David Johnson joining us on Zoom.

Q. In the fourth quarter last night, you did the same thing you did in the CAA. You played so smart in the fourth quarter, made the plays and all that. Obviously you had Bella doing that and some experienced players but Natalie Fox was huge as well. I was wondering if you could talk about what she meant to the win with her six rebounds and eight points off follows.

ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: Yeah, Natalie had a rough go all season. She was battling a herniated disc, trying to figure out huh she was going to play, when she would be able to play, if she would be able to play. That was really rough for her. So to see all the work that she put in, all the tears, the adversity that she went through to get here, to see it all come together at the end I think was so special and I'm glad that she was able to get that moment. I was scrolling on Twitter and I saw that she scored the first Tribe basketball basket in March Madness and I think that is just so cool. It's cool for her, for her confidence moving forward. She's only a freshman. She has so much basketball ahead of her. To come out in the NCAA Tournament, have a double-double, career highs, it just shows her what is possible here and the kind of career that we know she can have here.

Q. Hey, E. I have two. First one, how important is it to build that legacy for other programs, for other teams to follow that this is the first and now moving into recruiting and moving on to those things that you'll do

in a few weeks, how important is that for you and your program and the school?

ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: I really wanted, when I first got here, to prove to people that William & Mary was not just a school that people went to because it was a good school. I came in in my first meeting, I said I don't want people to think of us as, oh, you guys are just the smart girls that just happen to play basketball. I want you guys to be ballers that happen to be brilliant. I said that from day one. I say that today. Like, if nobody knows anything else about us, we're not just those girls that are just taking some scholarship to get school paid for. We are here to be ballers and they're going to get an amazing degree. That helps with our sales pitch, right? That was a dream, that was a vision on day one. My first team, second team, they laid the foundation for that to be a reality today and I think that I'm most excited that we can kind of move forward with that vision. Look at what we can do.

Is it easy? No. It's not easy. We're going to go against some really good coaches and really good teams every single year. The CAA is such a competitive conference but I want them to know that you can be both. You can be a baller and you can be brilliant and you can get an amazing degree here.

Q. And then speaking of CAA, have you heard from different people in the CAA? If so, what has that meant to you and your program to know that other schools in CAA, y'all compete against -- I know it's all love. Y'all compete against each other all year. Now they see you all doing this and now you're here. Are you hearing from coaches and players or just on social?

ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: The CAA is probably one of the most close-knit conferences I have ever been part of. I have been a part of a lot of them. We all support each other. We are huge competitors. We want to beat each other every single day but we support each other. I have heard from almost every single coach in the CAA up until this point. That is just a testament to what our commissioner has created. It is a true family environment. You can do both. You can love each other and compete and want the best for each other. I'm just very happy to be part of something like this.

Q. My last question is last night as the game ended you hugged your staff. You hugged your assistant coaches and they play a huge, huge, huge role and somebody who has worked in college athletics for 17 years, I know all these things that assistant coaches go through... obviously an opportunity to shed light on how important they've been to you, your program, your young ladies and helped you through this week.

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ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: I mean, I stand most days because my assistant coaches carry me. They hold me up. They hold me down. Whatever I need, they're there for. They're in my room at 2:00 a.m. calming me down when things don't go well. They're in my room at 2:00 a.m. if things are going right celebrating. They are the definition of family, right? These are not just my assistant coaches. These are people that I get to be around every single day. They help me. They lift me up more than anything.

My assistant coach, Dane Sparrow, has had almost every single scout in the postseason and he does it without complaint. He does it with the same passion that he did the very first scout this season. Sugar Rodgers and Kenia Cole, they go work overtime with my players, making sure that they're good, making sure they have a good mindset. They're prepared. They're ready to go. They're calm. There's no way I would be able to be sitting here speaking to you guys without my assistant coaches. So I am just so incredibly grateful for them, for being here with me, for believing in me too, right? They had to believe in me first and because of that, we have been able to create something really special.

THE MODERATOR: We're going to return to questions here from the media in Austin.

Q. Erin, going back to something you said a couple minutes ago. How well do you know Lindsay? Did you guys grow up? Go to school together? How do you know her?

ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: We're both from Illinois. We're maybe one year apart in age, so we played against each other a lot. We played with each other some, so we've literally known each other since I was like 14.

Q. Do you get a sense from your players that they're just happy to be there or are they completely focused in wanting something more heading forward?

ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: No, they still want to -- they love this. They don't want it to end so I am happy that they get to be here, but they are in full competitor mode right now, right? We have another game. We have a practice today to prepare for Texas. They know. This is a one-seed. They don't have to watch them one time to know that this is a really good team, right? However, they're asking in film today how are we going to guard this? What do you want us to do on this screening action? What offenses do you guys think are going to work? They are in full, full go mode right now. Again, that's a testament to our leadership, right? The seniors saying, hey, I want to end this on a bang. Let's keep moving. Let's not just show

up and say we're so happy to be here, but let's really compete and show people that we can keep competing even with the best in the country.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Any other questions? Thank you again for your time.

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