

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

Saturday, March 22, 2025

Austin, Texas, USA

Moody Center

## Creighton Bluejays

## Jim Flanery

## Lauren Jensen

## Morgan Malyd

Media Conference

Illinois 66, Creighton 57

JIM FLANERY: Congrats to Illinois. They played really well. Defensively, they took us out of a lot of what we wanted to do. They got off to a good start. We played from behind pretty much the whole game. I think that was tough, and it seemed like every time we got back within three or four or five, they made a big play or two to push it back up to eight.

That wasn't our best, but that's not to discredit Illinois because I thought they were really good. But really proud of our group. I think these seniors, the two to my right and the rest of them, are a dream to coach. I just wish we hadn't gone out like we did tonight. But that's part of the deal in athletics.

But I'm really proud of them and super grateful to have had the opportunity to coach them because they're special people.

**Q. For both players, what did they do to take away the open threes that you guys usually make?**

LAUREN JENSEN: I mean, Illinois is just a solid defensive team. They're not necessarily going to get up and pressure you and get in your face, even though we did have more turnovers than we probably would have liked to, but they're just solid. I thought they did a good job of getting through screens and showing that effort and kind of bothering us, especially early.

We had some good looks early, and then I think we kind of got a little tight, which is different. You would think it would



be the other way around. But we stabilized a bit, and we unfortunately weren't able to make some, but good defensive teams are also going to bother you and take you out of your rhythm.

**Q. Coach, what did you feel like they really kind of disrupted the most for you guys offensively?**

JIM FLANERY: Yeah, I thought they were really attentive to the three-point line. We missed probably too many lay-ups. I thought -- especially early, I thought that was a big deal because, like I said, I thought we played from behind. But they're physical defensively, like Lauren said. They're really good at getting through screens. Then when they had to switch, they were good enough to do that. They didn't want to switch, but they got a veteran group. I knew they'd be well prepared. McKenzie does a really good job. She guarded Lauren in their big lineup and then she'd guard Morgan in their small lineup, but I thought she really knocked Morgan out of the post, didn't have as much efficiency in the mid post as she normally does, and yeah, I thought -- we obviously had some threes that we didn't make and some mid-range, but in the second half, like Lauren said, we had too many turnovers. We only had four in the first half. I don't know what we finished with, but we had some costly turnovers there in the second half that kind of really, I thought, stifled our momentum.

Every time we'd make three or four, I thought they'd either make a hustle play or knock a shot down or got a turnover. I thought we were just a little bit -- like Lauren said, I thought we played a little tight. Again, not to discredit them, but I thought just some -- we dribbled the ball off our foot a few times, and that doesn't happen usually more than once every three, four games, but we did it multiple times tonight.

But having said that, I knew it was going to be tough to score. They're a very good defensive team and a veteran team, and I thought they -- when you play from behind -- we knew they weren't deep. They were going to play six people. All the more important it was for us to play from ahead instead of from behind because I thought they did a good job controlling the pace of the game, and I think if you play from the lead, that looks a little different. But we



didn't.

**Q. I guess I'd just ask for some final reflections on this group. Obviously, consistently made the tournament and some memorable wins.**

JIM FLANERY: Yeah, I told them, when you walk in the locker room after a night like tonight, it's the hardest speech you make to your players. I just told them I'm proud of them, I love them, I'm thankful that they came and I'm thankful that they stayed because this group didn't have to do that. In this day, you talk about two 2000-point scorers and they stayed at Creighton for their fourth year, fifth year, so really grateful to them.

This right now sucks, but when they have a little bit of time and they're able to zoom out, they'll be really proud of what they accomplished, and they'll also be really grateful for the relationships that they have because I think that's a big thing that we try to preach is, you may hop around and have either more success or more money, but what this group is going to have is down the line going to be, I think, much greater than what a lot of people in their position are going to take with them.

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