

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

Sunday, March 23, 2025

Austin, Texas, USA

Moody Center

**Texas Longhorns**

**Coach Vic Schaefer**

**Madison Booker**

**Rori Harmon**

**Taylor Jones**

Media Conference

Texas 105, William & Mary 61

VIC SHAEFFER: First just want to congratulate William & Mary. I just think that team is really what March Madness is really all about. They got hot, had a good run. They came in today and really played freely.

Those kids are really good, boy. You know, Dance is -- how appropriate is that to have that name in March Madness? But she's really special.

And Nascimento, I hope I'm saying that the right way, man, she's really good. So then 35 hurt us a little bit today which was -- we kind of felt like we knew what she was going to do but she hurt us some, too.

So we looked like we hadn't played in two weeks, and that's just part of it. We've had a long, long layoff. You have to give them credit. That team was fearless and that's what I want my team to be.

I thought Booker was really good tonight. Really efficient as she always is. 8 for 11, 4 for 4 at the line. She has 14 rebounds. I didn't realize old Book had 14 rebounds tonight and four offensive.

So that's a double-double with four assists, and had plus 32 on the chart. The biggest thing we could probably take from tonight is Jordans Codio. I thought she really came in and changed the game in the first half.

What a great kid. Just love that kid. She's worked hard



these last two weeks. We've given her some opportunities in practice, and tonight she played 16 minutes and she was also plus 32. Her and Booker were plus 32. Shay was plus 30 in the plus/minus.

So really proud of her and appreciate her tonight, her energy that she came in and gave us some energetic plays, offensive rebounds. Taylor was 7 out of 10, 5 out of 6 and then had 19 assists. Khyla had another double-double as well, 15 and 15.

So got that one out of the way. Now you got to get ready for a really good Illinois team. Familiar with them a little bit. You get one day of prep. I was just told -- are we playing at 1:00 on Monday? Make it make sense, please.

Well, in any case, we'll have a good day tomorrow. I'm sure my kids will be focused and have some good focus and intentionality in practice. You know, we'll need to be better. I don't think anybody in my locker room felt like we played that well, and yet you win by 40 in the NCAA tournament.

So I think that's where we are here at the University of Texas and with this team. And, again, when you win by 40 and you realize there is probably some things you can do better, that's always a good sign.

So happy for our kids. Giving God the glory for No. 32. What a blessing. It's hard to do ya'll. This group has done it. I continue to be amazed with this group and am very proud of them, because it's really hard to do what they've done.

**Q. Taylor, can you just talk about -- and for the other -- for Maddy and Rory, Taylor and Khyla, do you feel like there is any team that can stop your inside presence?**

MADISON BOOKER: You asking us or --

RORI HARMON: No. No. That's my answer. I'm just kidding. I felt like there was a lot of tussles tonight between our bigs and that's I think almost every night.

But I tell them like when they can't stop you they got to hold



onto you and hold onto you tight.

But no is my answer and that's why they -- there are five people on court staring at them at once every time we come down the court. I'm just glad they're on our team.

MADISON BOOKER: Yeah, when you think about it when Taylor Khyla are at they are best, yeah, they're definitely hard to stop, especially when you got one in, and then one subs out and another one comes in. That's double trouble right there.

And our paint points are definitely much better; three-pointers go in when they're getting buckets down there. When they're at their best they really help our team tremendously.

**Q. Rori, this question is for you. The freshmen...**

VIC SHAEFFER: Marie?

**Q. Freshmen Jordana, she shot all three of three-pointers from tonight and hasn't really played a game or started in one since December I want to say. Talk about her presence on the court and growth over the season and how important her role was tonight.**

RORI HARMON: Yeah, she's staying ready. Love her energy and willingness to just get better. She's just very coachable in my opinion. I'm glad she earned that today. And when she -- she's very confident in her shot and she's going to let it fly, let it go.

She's not really worried about missing one shot and being like, I'm not going to shoot anyone. No, she's going to shoot it again. I like that she has that mindset.

I'm just glad she stayed in the picture. That's another point on our team that will need to be stepped up, like she did today. She is stepping up, playing on the point guard, but putting ball pressure and all that stuff.

Yeah, I am super proud of her throughout this whole season. Just being able to be coachable and being a great teammate.

**Q. The crowd was definitely feeling it tonight. Sure ya'll felt that energy tonight, especially since we're going into the NCAA tournament. You know how it gets very loud. How are you able to keep your composure and ignore the loudness from the fans in the arena?**

TAYLOR JONES: It's really nice when the arena is cheering for us. So I think like being in this environment in

Moody. It's really unique, and I think it's a great environment. Honestly I like hearing the crowd and I like hearing when we make big shots and them being really loud.

I just really like playing in Moody and I'm happy that we have another game.

**Q. Rori, you guys found yourselves in a track meet early, and those girls were up and down. As the point guard, was there a time where you go, let's settle down and get the ball to Taylor Jones? She kind of went to work there late in the first quarter.**

RORI HARMON: Our goal in this game was to try to get stops and run in transition, and they made a lot of shots at the beginning of the game. It was kind of hard to run in transition.

But, yeah, that was kind of the goal. Obviously when it gets just to be a track meet we do need to like settle down and see if we can get some paint touches and driving kicks or feed our post players.

Yeah, I think when it came down to the execution, it was perfectly fine. I just think our defensive effort should have been slightly better. But, yeah, offense was good.

**Q. Madison, after somewhat of a sluggish first quarter by the team, was your coach upset after the first quarter? Now that you're getting so many rebounds do you want to have playing time at center, too?**

VIC SHAEFFER: No.

**Q. He wasn't?**

MADISON BOOKER: I mean, they did score 18 points in the first quarter, so I feel like you know the answer. You've been here long enough to know that answer right there.

So I mean, you already know. This is supposed to be a defensive minded team right here. I think everybody on this team knows also how it's supposed to look on that end, too.

It wasn't pretty. I just think that's focus. I think they came out hot, ready, and we came out not ready to play. Coach said, you know, two weeks off, sluggish, rusty. I don't think that's an excuse to make about ourselves.

We been practicing for two weeks, so I mean, we been playing basketball. It's not like we just sitting around. It's just us coming out focused ready to play.

Coach is doing everything in his power, and I think at halftime it's kind of sad that he made the comment that he wants it more than us. I truly believed that. Like he's always up in the office. I try to tell him go home a lot, but he always up there, scouting. He's looking at film to see what can we do better.

I mean, that just shows how much he loves the game and how much he wants to win. I just think that for us to kind of respect that we have play better on that end. We have to play harder. So it's really is.

To answer your question, yeah, he was mad and we were, too. We knew what we were supposed to do, that we needed to better. So...

He's not mad right now. He's trying to hide it right now.

**Q. Maddy obviously had a pretty good game on your own and also a handful of assists. Talk about what it means to be able to lean on your teammates on offensive end of the court.**

MADISON BOOKER: Four assists, four turnovers. Coach don't like them four turnovers. I feel like that's just another part of my game that I take pride in, is passing to my teammates and just seeing them score the ball is off my assists -- not Rori's or Bry's, just off my assists -- it really brings joy to my heart.

I think today we passed the ball extremely well today. I think just me also just finding people, too, like Shay. I love passing Shay on the back door.

But it's just another part I take great pride in.

**Q. A lot of ya'll were at the game on Thursday. Did ya'll notice anything different between Thursday going into today, what you have to do to shutdown the players? Obviously Bella was going to get her shots off and you knew that. Was there any point in the game where you had to let her get her shots and shutdown everybody else?**

RORI HARMON: Our coaches perfectly prepared us for the scout and how to defend them. We actually guarded them very well in our scout this morning during shootaround.

We just really didn't translate that that well to the game. We didn't want anybody to go off at all. We have -- we hold teams like Georgia to 26 and we let them get 61 points.

They're a great team and have great scorers, but that's not

our standard here. Yeah, no, the people who went off, they went off. We were focused on one and two and five. They are great players obviously.

But that's just something we need to capitalize on and not let that happen again.

**Q. Texas had above average for a bench points. Can you talk about the bench production from Jordana as you mentioned earlier, Bryanna, and everyone else that you were glad shined tonight in this win?**

VIC SHAEFFER: Yeah, 35 bench points was something we wrote on the board as a positive. Was, again, really -- we started the small lineup with four guards tonight, and I thought we had some kids come off the bench that did a nice job. Jak had ten, Jordy had four; you know, Bry came off and had two.

But we had some kids -- when you have Khylla coming off getting 15 and 15 that, helps your bench points tremendously.

We had some kids came off the bench and did a nice job for us. It's always nice to get that. I think those kids, they've played enough this year in some big ball games to be able to function tonight. All those kids have played all year long. Jak start quite a bit since Aaliyah Moore went down seven games into conference.

Tonight is the first night she hasn't start in a while, so...

**Q. Vic, with kind of going off that, are you still tinkering with your lineup? Are you trying new things? Jak not stating, Justice not playing the first half and starting the second half, and Lee not leaving the floor? Just kind of a matchup dependant thing tonight?**

VIC SHAEFFER: You know, tonight the answer is yes and yes is a fair answer. You know, I told my team the other day they probably don't know this, but you have to remember I put three, maybe four starters on the bench at Mississippi State going into the '18 NCAA tournament.

We made it all the way to the national championship game, you know. I know what I'm looking at every day and who is working hard and being productive. I believe in playing kids that are bringing it.

If we can be better with a different lineup, we're going to play it. The analytics told us all year that that four-guard lineup is pretty good.

But I've been practicing with our two bigs on the floor some. You know, you just never know when you're going

to need them. Tonight I think the four-guard lineup was okay.

Jak did -- our problem tonight wasn't offensively, ya'll, it was defensively. We were a wreck. We just really blew a lot of assignments. Out of bounds defense was horrible.

That's what got me all sideways is we just defensively were a wreck, not focused. Very disappointed in my five players, what they were supposed to do to help us.

And then our just like I told you our out of bounds defense and coming off shooters, we talked about who could shoot it who we didn't want to shoot it. We just really lacked focus. Again, I will wear the responsibility. It's my team. Obviously didn't have them quite ready to play. We got to be better.

Like I said, Illinois is way better and way different and we're going to have to play a lot better Monday afternoon at 1:00. Make it make sense.

**Q. On that topic, you of course have no say what time a game tips off. What are the difficulties of crafting your team's game day around a quirky game time?**

VIC SHAEFFER: Yeah, I don't understand -- when I say make it make sense, what time is it? It's 11:20 and my kids are going to be back in here tomorrow in the afternoon, and got to get them back up. If we're going to have a shootaround, got to be in here at 7:00 in the morning for a 1:00 tip.

Or Illinois, if they're going to shoot they're going to go 7:00 to 8:00 and we're going to go 8:00 to 9:00. I don't get it. We played the late game. LSU is playing at 9:15 tonight. Like I just don't get it.

And so anyway, but then to turn around and make us go at 1:00? Why? So, yeah, it's problematic just from a recovery standpoint. I mean, I think my kids are in pretty good shape and pretty tough. I don't know get tournament. Maybe Barb knows. I'm sure they called them and go, hey, what time you want to make Texas play? So anyway, it is what it is. We'll have to be ready.

**Q. Vic, I saw you scouting Illinois. What problems do they present?**

VIC SHAEFFER: Yeah, they're well-coached. Coach has done a great job with them. I think she's been there three years now. Has done a great job with them. They though got great guard play. Size inside. Bostic is a monster inside. Does a great job for them. They're big at three, four, and five. They've got size there and those guards are

really, really, really quick and athletic.

So we're going to have to really be good defensively and then we're going to have to really be -- I think we have to be better on the half court. I knew this team tonight would probably zone us a little bit. I don't care if people zone us. I think we shoot the ball really well.

I think our kids have been doing a much better job with zone offense here lately. But I think, again, I've been watching some film on Illinois and they have a nice team for sure and we're going to have to play really well. We got one day to get it ready.

**Q. I don't know if there was any discipline involved earlier in the season, just something to tinker with?**

VIC SHAEFFER: No. Yep.

**Q. Illinois played a lot of players. Do you feel like you can wear them down with your deeper bench?**

VIC SHAEFFER: I just think this time of year those kids been playing all year. I'm sure they're in great shape, too. We're both playing for an opportunity to move on, so I don't know how much all that kind of plays into it.

You know, I mean, if you remember that first team I had here, we had six and a half players that made it to the Elite 8 and we shouldn't have been in the Elite 50.

But those kids just really found a way, got hot, and bought in finally to defensively trying to guard people. So I'm sure those kids have done it all year and it's one game, so we've got to be ready.

Certainly our depth I'm hoping will play a factor. We do have some, so we need to make sure that we use it. But our depth has to play well.

We can't come in and -- we had some kids come in and first thing they do is give up an out of bounds play three or they lose somebody in transition. That's hard. Again, that's kind of what's got me a little sideways.

**Q. Can you just share a part of what you shared with Coach Dickerson after the game? I know you all had a nice conversation there. What was the message to Coach Dickerson specifically following the game?**

VIC SHAEFFER: Well, it was really just I wanted her to know that I thought she's done a great job with that team. I mean, to take a team that's a nine seed in your tournament and the team they had to -- I think the team they beat in the championship game had beat them pretty significantly two

times in the season.

I mean, that's coaching. To get your kids to believe and buy-in, you know, I just wanted her to know first of all congratulations; and then, again, part of this time of year is getting hot.

Her team is hot. She's got some really good players over there that whatever it took, she got them to figure it out. You know, I just want to commend her on that. I don't know her personally. Watching her the other night against High Point and going against her team tonight, you know, she's obviously a very good coach. I just want to congratulate her again.

Thought her kids were really tough. You know, they're competitors. She should be -- I told her, you be proud of you team because they really I thought were competitive and fought tonight. They did not back down. They were not fazed by our crowd. I just wanted her to be proud of that. Again, I think that's a reflection of your head coach.

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