

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

Sunday, March 23, 2025

Austin, Texas, USA

Moody Center

William & Mary Tribe

Coach Erin Dickerson

Davis

Cassidy Geddes

Bella Nascimento

Media Conference

Texas 105, William & Mary 61

ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: Okay, thank you. I have some thank yous to say, so just bear with me, ya'll. I have it written down so I don't forget. First, I want to thank this team for believing in me and the vision for this program, and most importantly believing and not giving up on each other.

I want to thank our president, Katherine Rowe for rallying all troops from Williamsburg to get to Austin to support us. She's always been our No. 1 fan. She has a boot on her foot and she bedazzled it with green and gold.

I want to say thank you to our amazing administrators who put up with me every day, but most importantly support me in everything that we do. Brian Mann, Karai Lockley, and Jason Simms.

Thanks to our commissioner and deputy commissioner, Joey D and Jen Canderes (phonetic) for supporting us in Texas this week.

Our staff is one of the best in the country. I said it before and I'll say it again. I stand because they hold me up. I'm so floored by our fans and supporters throughout this entire process.

They showed up and they showed out all across the country. Our students were in Kaplan. They packed the Kap. We had 400 students at watch parties. I am just so floored by their support, so thank you to all of them.



And then lastly, I got to thank my family, my parents, my brother. They travel everywhere to watch me coach. My husband has followed me all on the country for 11 years to follow my dream. And my baby, Layla, she's proud of me no matter what, so I have to shout them out.

Thank you guys. Thank you everyone. We're so happy to have had this season and I'm proud of these girls.

Q. You guys put on 61 points against a Texas team that honestly held teams like LSU to 58, South Carolina to 62. What went right for ya'll offensively today?

BELLA NASCIMENTO: First I would like to praise the most high. Thank you Lord for having us here. Thank you my family, my mom, everybody, all the fans for the support and our amazing coaching staff for putting us in an opportunity like this.

But back to your question. Yeah, we just came out swinging. Came out fighting. We knew this was a tough defensive, offensive team. We did everything we could to try to stay in the game, not give up, not fold.

CASSIDY GEDDES: Yeah, echoing everything she said, we believed in each other. We knew ball screens would be good for us. We wanted to be confident coming off it, confident in our shots going to the basket and just never giving up and being strong and just really not coming out scared.

Q. You heard your coach talk about your fans. What did you think of the William & Mary fans who made the trip to Austin? They were sitting behind us and very loud and into it game.

CASSIDY GEDDES: Yeah, they were standing the entire game going crazy. I know my family especially. My dad was getting them to stand the entire time. He lost his voice the entire time we were here. Mom, grandparents. I mean, just having all the support is then even seeing it back home, all the friends and people from class and like group project like group chats were sending us, good luck and all of my professors were sending me best wishes. It's



just been amazing to feel the support.

BELLLA NASCIMENTO: Yeah, it was incredible. Thank you everybody all of our William & Mary people out there who came here, people back at home. It was also too just to be out there on the court and seeing all the fans, not just our fans. An environment like this, they came out here to see us play. They came out to see me play, Cass play, every one of us on the court. So that was just incredible.

Q. Your team is very fun to watch. Obviously play with a lot of energy. Is it sage to say ya'll weren't the least bit intimidated today? Just what were your impressions of Texas as a team?

BELLLA NASCIMENTO: Yeah, we knew they were a big team. You know, Texas, everybody in Texas is big. They do what they got to do. They muscly. Like okay, like we know they got a little size and height on us. That's not going to deter us from playing hard and with passion.

I think just finding that within each other, boosting our confidence, playing together, I think that held us stronger together.

ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: Everything is bigger in Texas.

CASSIE GEDDES: Yeah, we knew they were a great team. We had watched team and done the scout. We also knew we were a great team that deserved to be here as well and won the games we needed to be here.

I think it was just trusting ourselves it wasn't just like everything we had done all season was going to stop working when we got here and not letting the moment be too big.

Q. Congratulations on everything. Obviously it's probably hard to answer right in this moment, but I am going to try anyway. I feel like I'm out of questions for you all. How would you describe this week? Sunday in D.C.; then ya'll won; got to selection; flew to Texas on Monday; win Texas; played the First Four; spent the week in Texas; it's Saturday now. This whole week how has it been? Just describe it.

BELLLA NASCIMENTO: Yeah, this whole week has been hectic and exciting. A lot of moving pieces. A lot of, all right, we got to do this; all right, next thing this, next thing that.

But we're just enjoying the moment because this is like a once in a lifetime opportunity, especially for me. I'm a senior. So just enjoying every bit of it.

CASSIDY GEDDES: Yeah, I agree. Just been full of joy and fun and just wanted soak up everything we had in this moment and just make the most of every opportunity we got here, and just have as much fun with these teammates, and especially ones like Bell, seniors that won't be back. We just wanted to have the best time.

Q. Bella, what was Coach Shaffer's message to you in the handshake line? Looked like he had a few nice words for you?

BELLLA NASCIMENTO: He was just telling me congrats on a great season. Congrats on the championship and I'm a hell of a good player. Just all good things.

Q. Bella, you're obviously a WNBA prospect. Do you have any eligibility left?

CASSIDY GEDDES: I hope.

BELLLA NASCIMENTO: Unfortunately this is my last year. I do still want to play pro overseas, anywhere that would be happy to take me, I'm there.

Yeah, this is my last year. Happy to go out with a bang, so...

Q. Your players just seem filled with joy even after that tough loss. Can you talk about what it means to have the joy and happiness in that locker room and on this team?

ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: Yeah. I mean, I've said it a lot. I'm sure I'm repeating the same things. But this team has been through so many trials. Been through so many adversity. I do think that that makes it so much sweeter.

Not to say that if you win out and go to the tournament it's not fun, too. But I just think that because of the things that we've gone through that's why this team is filled with so much pride and joy.

It's been a rough go and they were able to figure it out and I think that's extraordinarily rewarding.

This is Texas, right? This is a national championship contender. To be able to come out here, compete, to see growth in ourselves and our program, I mean, what could they be upset about?

Q. Bella just said it's going to be her last year at William & Mary. What have you seen in her in the past few years of her growth as a player, as a person to get to the point she is right now?

ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: Well, if the NCAA wants to change the rules to let people play five years, like tomorrow or Monday, I mean, that would be really cool.

But to see Bella come from transferring in from Manhattan, and more importantly, like she came in wanting to be in the background a little bit. I think where I'm the most proud of her is seeing her shine in this light. This is what we recruited her to do. This is the player that he with knew she could be.

I'm a firm believer that if your kids are not playing free they're not going to play well. I think if you guys have not noticed, Bella is on that floor and she plays free. That's a testament to the work that she's put in. It's a testament to her believing in the vision of that program.

So to see her come in as a young junior who was just in the background to her one shining moment, I mean, what more can I say about her?

Q. Hey, coach.

ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: Hey.

Q. Again, congrats on the phenomenal season, phenomenal job. Two questions: One, can you just -- who designed the shirt for you that you wore tonight? Just take me -- what's the back story on the shirt?

ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: So for those of us that have been watching the entire season, every single game I wore one of our players on my T-shirt. It was typically baby pictures. It was really fun reaching out to their moms and asking for a baby picture to put on my shirt.

For the senior night I put all the seniors on. But for this one Kenia has an amazing graphic designer that she works with and my husband had it designed and put it on a t-shirt for this game to represent the same way I have done all season long.

I want to put my players and my girls on the forefront at all times. It was a way for me to rep them.

Q. That's awesome. Yeah, and then secondly, what takeaways do you have from this whole week that you can build off for moving into next season or summer or just recruiting in general? What are some of those takeaways for you?

ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: Well, from my team, it's in them, right? I think that's what this last couple weeks has shown. It's in them. It was always in them. Now that it's on the for front they just need to keep riding the wave. I'm

never ever going to allow them to slide backwards.

I'm going to let them have tough days and I'll pick them back up but they'll never be able to go backwards from here. They have played the foundation. Every year the bricks have just kept getting higher, all right?

And this is where the experience that my young players were able to get, especially Cassidy Dee and Monet. They'll be leading the charges with these seniors graduating.

So I think that now we have a standard. This is what our standard is. We were fighting to get here. Now we've had a taste of it. We can't go backwards.

As it pertains to recruiting, we recruit young women that want this, that are hungry and extraordinarily smart. I love recruiting smart student-athlete. I love that they have maturity and know what they want. They have these goals.

Sometimes a little egregious. I need to reel them back in. But they know what they want. Those are the young ladies we want to be a part of our program to continue building on this vision that we have to sustain success.

Q. Coach, playing in March Madness in front of a packed out crowd in Austin, Texas, describe how it feels for you and your team?

ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: It was mind blowing. That's probably been the word of the week for me. You know, we had a chance to play at the University of Maryland this year and it was their Kids Day game so it was a completely sold out crowd. Kids yelling at the top of their lungs. You couldn't hear. You had earplugs in. It was wild.

But to come into this environment, NCAA tournament game, see our fans standing up the entire game across from our bench, see the entire arena filled, I mean, it was such a mind blowing experience to be here.

For us to be able to compete against a team like Texas, I mean, it's just a testament to belief. I know you guys have heard me say it a million times. I'll say it again. I'll get it tattooed at some point. That's it. That's what this has shown us.

And to walk out and there are Texas fans coming up to us and congratulating us, this is -- everyone here has been so kind. Vic Schaefer, his staff, everyone in Austin, in the Moody Center, they've taken us on tours.

It's just been literally top of the line.

Q. Coach, two days ago you said Texas could contend for the Final Four, if not the national championship. You just put up 61 points on them. Do you still think Texas can make that deep of a run?

ERIN DICKERSON DAVIS: I think they especially will now. I hope they do. I'm so sorry. I have coaching friends all over. I love you guys. But to lose to a national champion doesn't sound bad.

No, to answer your question, yes. I've coached for a long time. I played college basketball. You know, their defense, their ability to run the floor, their size, I mean, they have it all. They have it all.

And they showed that in the SEC this year. They have extraordinary players. It starts with their head. Vic Schaefer is incredible. He has given me, my players so many words of encouragement. His staff, I know them very well. They absolutely have a chance.

I think that this was a -- they haven't played in a very long time, right? Took them a second to get the rust off, and once it was off they were rolling.

So I wish them the very best in the rest of the tournament.

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