

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: Second Round - Texas vs Illinois

Sunday, March 23, 2025

Austin, Texas, USA

Moody Center

Texas Longhorns

Vic Schaeffer

Bryanna Preston

Jordan Lee

Shay Holle

Media Conference

Q. Shay, tomorrow is your last game in the Moody Center. Can you talk about your career here?

SHAY HOLLE: Yeah, it's definitely going to be a weird feeling. Obviously, been here for a long time. It'll be really special, bittersweet for sure. But yeah, I mean, this team means so much to me, just this staff, being here for five years. I've really seen them grow and they've seen me grow, obviously. Yeah, I'll definitely be reflecting on a lot, but it'll be a weird feeling.

Q. Jordan and Bry, how are you able to learn from a veteran like Shay in situations like this and in the NCAA Tournament, and how have the rest of the veterans on the team helped you?

JORDAN LEE: I definitely think my favorite thing is seeing how they take what Coach Schaefer's messages are and seeing how they react and respond and communicate with one another. I think it lets us know what we need to do better and how we perceive his messages in particular.

BRYANNA PRESTON: I'd say leadership and accountability. They've just given us everything we need to know, and we just take it and be coachable in a way to our vets, and we go out there and do what we need to do as freshmen to ultimately win a National Championship.

Q. Coach Schaefer has now called all three of you guys energizer bunnies for the team. Why is that important to you guys to bring energy?



JORDAN LEE: It's just one of those special non-negotiables that we talk about, controlling what you can control, and energy is one of those things that you can bring regardless of how you're performing, so us being able to do that is something we take a large amount of pride in especially now that he's acknowledged that something we're going to continue to maintain throughout the tournament.

SHAY HOLLE: Yeah, I think to add on to that, Coach always said, if your shot is not falling, help me win another way, and obviously all of us want our shots to fall, but like Jordan said, it is a non-negotiable. For us three in particular, we want to bring that all the time and we want Coach to know he's going to get that out of us every single night, maybe if our shot is not falling or not, he has that at least.

BRYANNA PRESTON: Yeah, I think it's a great momentum shift, especially if we're down or don't start the way we want to, and then we can just bring that energy and pick it right back up.

Q. For any of the players, what's your impression and what you've seen from Illinois in preparing for this matchup?

SHAY HOLLE: Yeah, they're very talented. They have three really, really good guards. They're going to ball screen a lot. So we'll be working on that. We just watched on film on them. But definitely well-coached, and they flow really well on offense, I would say. We're going to definitely need to lock in on the defensive end.

JORDAN LEE: Yeah, like Shay said, great ball screening team and can score all three levels, so we're definitely going to need to show our chemistry defensively and how we communicate.

BRYANNA PRESTON: And they all can shoot really well, so I think we should run them off the line as much as we can.

Q. Coach, we'd like to have you make an opening statement, and then we'll turn the questions over to the



media.

VIC SCHAEFER: Yeah, thanks, everybody, for being here. Excited about an opportunity to play in the second round of the NCAA Tournament with this team. Going to have to -- again, want to give credit to William & Mary. I thought they were really special yesterday, and those kids, their coach, congratulate them again on a great season.

Then for us, again, I think we had some rust to knock off, and we knocked some off on offense and still got some on defense. So hopefully, we can continue to work and get better.

We'd better because we're going to play a really good Illinois team. When you watch film on them, they've got some really special guards. Obviously, Bostic inside is very special. Shauna does a great job with them. I can remember when Calamity was here, how fondly she spoke of Shauna and what a great coach she is and what a tremendous person she is. I think that's very evident in their team and how they play.

You can't get caught up -- you can look at wins and losses, and they've had some great wins, and they've been in every game that they might have not won. But again, playing USC, UCLA, being in those games, you just really -- when you watch the film on them, you have a great deal of administration and respect for them.

Their guard play is outstanding. Their post play is really good. They do a great job of putting them in the right position in the right place. We're going to have to really play better defensively. And then on offense, I was pleased at some things we did yesterday, especially inside and in transition.

But again, part of our statistics that we have sometimes is we -- I give them a hard time and we joke about it, but in reality, it's true. We're padding our own stats sometimes by some of the little easy shots we miss, and then we go get a rebound following it, which you want. You want to follow your misses and stay after it and be aggressive.

For us, I think our kids -- I don't know what they said when they came in here, but I'm confident they probably said, hey, we've got to be better. And so, I think that was the prevailing message in the locker room last night from them. I let them write on the board the good and the bad, and I think that was their prevailing message last night in the locker room. They knew they needed to be better.

Again, y'all, you can get real caught up and tight up by oh, my gosh, you won by 40, what could possibly be wrong or your concern, and my players know -- we have a saying

around here; if you're supposed to win by 60, win by 60. If you're supposed to win by 40, win by 40. I think no disrespect to William & Mary, but giving up 61 points, we just weren't quite as sharp defensively as we have been.

Now offensively you score 105, I don't care who you're playing against, that's pretty good. I was proud of our offensive execution. I thought we got great looks, and we had a lot of kids shoot 50 percent or better.

But there's things to clean up, and when you're chasing something bigger than just a first-round game, you have to acknowledge that, be accountable for it. Again, I think everybody in the room knows my passion for what I do and how I do it. I'm passionate about these kids. I want them to reach their full potential.

If you're a good coach or if this is what you do, you can't worry about making somebody uncomfortable. That's how you reach your full potential. It's not about hurting somebody's feelings. It's about letting them know there's something bigger for them and they can get much better. But to do that, you've got to point out the good and the bad.

I think that's where this team is. Again, giving God the glory for 32 wins and this special group. This is a special group, and I think that's why, when you go through a game like last night and you see some of the things that we were inferior at, you want so much more for them. So to do my job, I've got to point that out and hold them accountable.

Q. When you're playing a team like Illinois that's coming in as an underdog, what's the challenge of that, a team that maybe has nothing to lose, and they're coming into your home building?

VIC SCHAEFER: Well, again, it wouldn't matter where I was playing them, home or away. I just think you have to respect the team, respect the coaching staff and realize that they're really good. Again, they've been in every game.

You look at the course of an 18, 20-game conference season, their statistics, and you look at their last five, and you look at those stats, which I'm big on, everybody on the floor 1 through 5 is shooting 33 percent or better from three. You have to acknowledge that with all five of your players. My five players have to acknowledge, Bostic will step out and stretch you now. 24, she's electric. She's special.

All those guards are. I can go down the list. There's not enough time in today's presser to do it. But they're all just really, really good, and they're good in their system.

Again, I think you have to acknowledge their staff and what a great job they do. So we've got to be on point defensively. We've got to clean some things up.

Then on offense, we've got to continue to be in attack mode. We've got to do what we do and do it well, and so in -- we had 10 turnovers last night, and of course, that's our goal, 10 or less. But again, when we watch film today and you watch them, they're all unforced. We don't need to be throwing the ball to the other team. We're a good shooting team. We need those shots.

Again, I think when you look at Illinois, you're looking at a really good basketball team, and again, it's not like they're playing bad. To me, they've been playing really well. They've just played some really good teams and they've run out of time. That's how I look at it.

Q. I asked Jordan and Bry about the veteran leadership, but what have you seen from the freshmen going into the NCAA Tournament, and what have they been able to learn from the veterans?

VIC SCHAEFER: You know, again, I think it's all a learning process. Sometimes when you're young, you don't -- when you're young, you don't really know what's out there. Sometimes that's a good thing.

But again, our crowd was so special last night. I want to say thank you to everybody that came out last night for a late ballgame. It was really electric in our building.

I think they understand the magnitude of things. I really coached Jordan and Bry a lot last night on some things that they need to clean up and do better.

But with those two, it's not like they're not trying, and it's not like they're not playing hard. Those two play really hard.

I thought Bry was really good in transition. Bry knows she's got to get back. That's her one job as a point guard is to be back and she failed on that a couple times, but to me, that's an easy correct. Again, Jordan brings so much to the floor, both offensively and defensively. It's good seeing that three ball going in because I know how much time she's spent on it. She's been working really hard the last week, getting in the gym, getting up a bunch of shots.

I know she's investing in her craft and shooting the ball with a lot of confidence in practice, which obviously, we need.

Q. Shay Holle has been here since you got here and this is going to be her final home game. Can you talk about her impact on the program and what she's

meant to your time here as well?

VIC SCHAEFER: Yeah, again, it's hard to put into words the value that Shay Holle has brought to our program here at Texas during my five years. It's going to be weird walking out on the floor next year and Shay Holle ain't going to be there. I'm trying to keep her there by trying to hire her because I think she has so much to add to our program from a coaching perspective. But the kid has stayed in the picture early in her career, worked really hard on her game, and has become -- I just don't know that you can put a value on her because she's done so much for us here.

One of the things, she's been is reliable and durable. I mean, when you talk about college athletics, you can say somebody is durable. She's never missed a practice. Obviously, never missed a game. She's just been as solid as any kid I've ever coached at being reliable and durable.

What she brings as a teammate, consistency every day in practice, never had a bad day, never had a frown, always has a smile. I can tell you, coaches across the country, we tend to appreciate kids like that.

Not everybody is like that. So I have a great appreciation for Shay Holle, and good night, we've won a lot of games with her.

Q. When you look at Kendall Bostic, what makes her so effective with her rebounding, and how much of a challenge is that for y'all who are really good at offensive rebounding?

VIC SCHAEFER: You know, she's polished, number one. She has really good hands. Obviously, she can face-up from three-point in, so she can face and score. She's not just a drop-step-dunk player. The kid plays really hard. That's why she gets the rebounds she gets. She's physical.

When I watch film and watched her last night, you can see how physical and how strong the kid is. So again, I think it makes her unique. She's not only a power player, but she can step out and face. She can pick-and-pop.

It stretches you, and she's not just a pick-and-roller. Our 5 players are going to have to be really aware of when she's involved in ball screen action and where is she going and what's she doing, as well as the rest of our team.

Q. In the locker room talking to some of the girls, they mentioned how last night they didn't play up to their potential. What's it like having a squad that's player led in that way, knowing they can improve, but also

knowing that responsibility to acknowledge where they fall short?

VIC SCHAEFER: Yeah, that's what I love about them. Again, it's maturity. I talked to them today in film about most of them put on their sheets -- y'all know, that cover us, I give them a sheet after the game, pros and cons of their individual play, pros and cons of our team play. There's five or six things they can write on each one. That doesn't mean they write five or six things on each one, but we do that right after a game.

Almost everyone wrote on there, focus. I asked them in film, I go, you've got to be kidding me, we're in the NCAA Tournament and we have a focus problem. So for me as the coach grading papers last night at 1:00 in the morning, I take that as, I didn't have them ready.

Now, they told me in film, Coach, you had us ready, but if we're not focused, if we're not laser focused when we step on to the court, to me that's -- I accept that responsibility. Y'all know I'm an accountable guy. These kids are 18 to 22. They've got so many things going on, and I try to take as much of the Heat off them as I can.

But again, I think that's them understanding that we're better and we need to be better, even on March 23rd in the NCAA Tournament. They realize we're not satisfied, and we've got to improve, and we've got to go out today at practice and get better.

I think that's where my teams always are at this time of year. I think they always acknowledge that. They always want to get better. They always work to get better, no matter what time of the year it is, whether it's September and it's your first practice, or it's March 23rd and it's a practice in the NCAA Tournament.

Q. You mentioned Calamity in your opening statement. She spent some time with you. What makes her a good assistant coach?

VIC SCHAEFER: You know, I think the thing that really impressed me about Calamity was just her thoroughness. When she was at work, she was involved in so many things, recruiting, and I think that she's really invested in what you're trying to do, no matter what you need her to do.

She's somebody that, to me, she's been around greatness. She's worked with Coach Summitt in Bennett, Tennessee, in their heyday, been around Coach Harston, and she just knows what it looks like to be a pro, and I think she's a pro. I think she cares deeply about your kids. She cares deeply about what you're trying to get done as a head

coach. She wants to be on that page with you in whatever your focus is.

But I think that she brings so much to the table, and I think that's why Shauna wanted her back as an associate head coach, because she knows she can fill so many roles.

Trust me, in today's world, especially as a head coach, those people are few and far between. That's why I'm so grateful to have Elena. Elena has been a head coach. She's won two National Championships as a head coach. Elena can run this team, this program if I'm not here, and she knows how to do it. She fills so many roles and does so much, including mentoring my other assistant coaches, which is --

Blair has been really fortunate to be around Elena for a lot, both as a player and now as an assistant. She sees what it takes in all facets, including recruiting. I mean, recruiting at our level, Illinois's level, man, it's a dog-eat-dog world, and you'd better have some dogs in your office.

Again, I think that's where we as head coaches, Shauna, myself, we feel really blessed with our staffs because they really do the job that's necessary to be successful.

Let's face it; Illinois got it right. They got a great staff. They understand what it takes. They're doing it. They're getting it done.

I think you have to acknowledge that. They've got some good young players. They've got some older players. But they continue to recruit well, and again, I think you have to give it to not only the head coach but the people she chooses to hire and put around her.

I say it all the time, I'm smart enough to know I can't do it by myself. I think Shauna probably feels the same way.

Q. You talked about Bostic's versatility and her strength that makes her a difficult matchup, but she's now facing the prospect of facing your rotation of Taylor and Kyla for 40 minutes. How can that work to your advantage as a fatigue factor after she plays basically almost the entire game every night?

VIC SCHAEFER: Well, again, I think this time of year, you've got kids understanding it's win or go home. So I think their kids will have that mentality, and our kids know that we've got to be -- we've got to be as clean as we can be, as well.

But obviously, I like our depth both at guard and post, at 5, and I think the versatility of our lineups, too, can create some issues for people.

We'll continue to play Taylor and Ky, and you never know when you'll see them together.

But those two are really special. That's what makes this team, y'all, so special, and that's what makes them have an opportunity to do something really unique and special. That's where we are right now, and we've just got to go out today and really have a good practice. We've got to really do a much better job with some things, clean some things up so we can have a chance at playing a really good Illinois team tomorrow.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports.

