

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

Monday, March 24, 2025

Austin, Texas, USA

Moody Center

Illinois Fightin' Illini

Coach Shauna Green

Berry Wallace

Kendall Bostic

Media Conference

Texas 65, Illinois 48

THE MODERATOR: We'll start with an opening statement from Coach Shauna Green. Congratulations on everything you achieved this year and can you just talk a little bit about today's game to start us up a please.

SHAUNA GREEN: Thank you, just first off, credit Texas. They're a really, really good team and we knew that coming in. We knew a lot of the challenges that they were going to present, their pressure, their length, their athleticism, just size across the board. Just a really good team, but I'm really proud of our guys for, again, just how we fought. We were right there in the first, just our second quarter really killed us. You can't score on the six points against a team of this caliber. Then our third quarter was good and we won the fourth, but, again, what I love about this group and why they are so special is their resiliency, their togetherness, their mindset to just never stop playing. There were times there where they got up big and we just kept our head down and continued to work, continued to fight and went on a run there late.

So, special group. It's been a special journey throughout this whole journey. I cannot be more proud of our team, of our senior group who has just completely revitalized this program and got us now to a place that we're sitting here today in the round of 32 and we're there. Our next goal, our next step in this process with this program is we want to get to a Sweet 16.

This doesn't take anything away from this team. These two to my right and everyone in that locker room, just so proud of them and absolutely love them to at the time and we



have nothing to hang our head about.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you so much for that. We're now going to turn to questions for our two student-athletes.

Q. What makes Texas defensively so difficult to solve?

BERRY WALLACE: I think just their physicality and knowing that they want to get downhill. They have a lot of good players, obviously, so they have a lot of people coming off the bench to put up numbers and being a good asset for their team. Just knowing that we've to be physical with them and they have a lot of bigs down low. They're taller than us, so just guarding that and trying to push them out and not letting them get what they want.

Q. Kendall, coach referenced it but that second quarter, what did you guys see there that was able to flip the game in Texas' favor?

KENDALL BOSTIC: I think we just started rushing our shots. We took the first available shot we got and sometimes that's what the other team wants, so I feel like just kind of maybe we should have slowed it down. I feel like that was the quarter we got the most frazzled by their pressure and I think in the third and fourth we handled it a little bit better. On the court, we have to be able to calm ourselves down and actually get into the offense we want, run it, look for all options, not just the first one kind of thing.

Q. Kendall, you played against one of the best front courts in the nation today and still pull up eight points and eight rebounds. Can you talk about your mindset going into today?

KENDALL BOSTIC: Yeah. I mean, it's just honestly another game for me. I'm undersized in the Big Ten all the time. It really wasn't that big of a deal for me. They're definitely very talented, being able to have that rotation of both of them. I think it's pretty unique. Usually you have a smaller one but they're both just as big, so it was definitely a little taxing having one rotate after the other, but I thought I handled it pretty well. I did the best I could and I looked



at it as another game.

Q. Kendall, when you look at what Berry was able to do against some of the top competition nationally, including today, what did you see from her in those big moments to hold her own as a freshmen?

KENDALL BOSTIC: I think a lot of poise and I think the experience. Like I said before, she got thrown into the Big Ten play in our rotation so just being able to rely on her and her have the confidence to do what she does and takes it on her own. We're not setting it up for her. She's capable to drive downhill or create her own shots so just to have that with her and be able to trust her to do that is huge. I'm really proud of her. She stepped up in big games when we needed her, so I'm really proud of her and really excited to see what she does from here on out.

Q. Just the moment the tournament for you to have these two games, what can that do for you just in terms of experience and moving forward.

BERRY WALLACE: Yeah, we'll use the experience from this year, me and Jas, going into next year just leading the team and knowing that we've played in big moments before and just taking that in and not shying away from the big moments. Keeping poise and being ready for what comes next year.

THE MODERATOR: Do we have any other questions for Kendall or Berry? Seeing none, ladies, thank you again. Congratulations on a fantastic season. Best to you in the future. Thank you for being with us.

All right, Coach, we're going to turn the rest of the press conference over to you for questions.

Q. The seniors that you guys have, you look at who is coming back and who is coming in, what's the keto that younger group kind of stepping into the shoes that they've left?

SHAUNA GREEN: I don't want to think about that right now, but fair question. No, you know, this... I've been dreading that locker room talk for a long time with this senior group and it was as hard as I thought it would be. It was as emotional as I thought it would be. I talked to our seniors but really talked to our returners as well and we learned a lot this year, whether people were playing or not, obviously with Jas and Berry playing a ton of minutes and just the expectations and I told them we're going to be back and we're going to learn from this and we're getting... just going to continue to push forward. This is going to be a learning experience for them. They got a great deal of experience and that's going to pay dividends as we go into

next year, so really proud of obviously seniors but really excited for the future of this program as well.

Q. What do you think the legacy of this senior group will be and what do you want it to be?

SHAUNA GREEN: You know, I keep getting asked that question and I don't do a good job explaining it because I don't have enough words to articulate what they actually mean. Like, it's more of a feel. It's more of a when I'm in there and I give them a hug, that feel of just everything we've been through and what they have done here is just... it's been absolutely amazing.

I took this job I think it was three years ago two days ago to the day and if you would have told me then that we'd be where we're at, I don't know, I probably would have told you you're crazy. I thought it would take some time and there would be steps to it but it was a senior group that came in and believed and we kind of -- two stayed. We brought some other guys in. They bought in from the start. They worked every day. We went through a lot. No one ran. Everyone just stayed and they were loyal. They were loyal to our people. They were loyal to the university. They were loyal to the vision, and that's something very unique, especially nowadays and for that, I will just forever be grateful for them and there's no doubt they left a legacy here. They put Illinois women's basketball back to being relevant and back to where we're now in NCAA Tournaments. We won the first postseason championship last year with the WBIT and this is... their legacy is going to be left in the culture, in the standards, in the way they worked every day and the way they loved this program and that's going to be something that our younger guys need to take and run with and let this propel us into bigger and better things.

Q. I think you got to 20 turnovers I think for the third time this year. What did they do to cause these issues?

SHAUNA GREEN: Texas defense, it's what they do, right? And what Vic is known for. It's the cumulative effect with it more so, and obviously we're playing six people right now and really one true point guard so that probably doesn't help it, but they're just so... they're so strong and physical and long. So even when we got some open shots, I think, you know, you're thinking about it a little bit just because of their size and their length. We missed some layups when we got those. You can't miss layups. You can't miss some of those easy shots we normally make against a team like this.

A ton of respect for how they play and how hard they play and the physicality with how they played the game, so, but

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

it does, it wears on you.

Q. Coach, you held a really good team to 65 points. You've got to be proud of your team and your players. Can you talk about how you prepared them to go into this matchup after seeing Texas put up triple digits the other day?

SHAUNA GREEN: Yeah, our one thing that -- and I don't even think our defense was great-great tonight. I thought we did some things and credit Texas, their size, you know. They would shoot over us sometimes. We wanted to try to deep them out of the paint and really be more physical with them to where they would just -- Booker is so good. She just rises up. We had some great possessions defensively. She just rises up and shoots over you. Elite players make elite plays and she's one of them and multiple players are but she was really -- I thought our defense was really solid, which is what we hang our hat on, our defense and our rebounding, but, again, you got to put the ball in the basket and against a team that's so stingy defensively, those missed layups really, really hurt us and then we missed some free throws too. We don't normally do that. You got to play almost a perfect game offensively and the turnovers didn't help, so.

Q. Of all the teams you've played this year, where does Texas stack up and what do you think of their chances?

SHAUNA GREEN: You know, it's funny. I was thinking that coming into it and now after feeling them and seeing it live and seeing that defense and actually we walked back and our staff, we were talking, I said do you think Texas can win it all? And we all said yeah, I do. I think that they have the guard play, they have the size. The pressure is just different. Even UCLA and USC, their size was the same, but they don't pressure you as much as what Texas does, which for a team, it just takes you out of your rhythm. It makes you think a little bit more. You can't run your stuff as freely and when you do that, that's a game-changer, so I have nothing but respect for Texas and I think they can go very, very far in this thing. No doubt about it.

THE MODERATOR: Do we have any other questions for Coach Green? One more. We have time for one more question.

Q. I just want to ask you about Berry and you talked about the other two number one seeds and she had good games there and today, like, what did she show you this year in those big moments against the length, the talent, the athleticism?

SHAUNA GREEN: Yeah, just obviously her talent alone

but then the poise. I've said this all along. She never gets too high. She never gets too low. She doesn't... it's the big moment's almost the better for her, which is the sign of an elite competitor and that's what Berry is. She was huge for us tonight. She's been huge for us all year. We do not have the success we've had this year without Berry and could not be more proud of her. As a freshman to do what she's done and she just continues to grow and get better every single day but I think her poise, the confidence with which she's been playing all year, she's just an unbelievable player and someone that we're going to really need as we go forward and this year has been awesome because she's gotten such great experience overall on both ends of floor and big moments, big games, the NCAA Tournament. The sky's the limit for her. No doubt about it.

THE MODERATOR: Coach Green, thank you so much. We enjoyed watching your team play this week. Congratulations on your successes this year, Coach.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports