

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: Regional 3 Semifinal - Notre Dame vs TCU

Saturday, March 29, 2025

Birmingham, Alabama, USA

Legacy Arena

TCU Horned Frogs

Mark Campbell

Hailey Van Lith

Madison Conner

Sedona Prince

Sweet 16 Postgame Media Conference

TCU 71, Notre Dame 62

THE MODERATOR: Okay, we are ready to get started. Mark, if you would give us opening comments and they be we will take questions for the student-athletes.

MARK CAMPBELL: That game was unbelievable. That's what March Madness is all about. I thank the good Lord for these three right here. How each of them ended up here and I'll take that trio against anybody in college basketball.

This was an amazing team effort, incredible defensive effort. The fight and spirit that this group showed in the second half is what you have to do to win in March.

They're so stinkin' resilient and keep finding ways to win. I thought offensively Hailey carried us there in the second half and we're really excited to be able to go watch this next game and we survived to play another day and compete on Monday night for a chance to go to a Final Four.

Q. For Hailey, your fifth Elite Eight, three different schools. I know your journey has been a lot of ups and downs. When you put that into perspective, what's that like to know the amount of winning that you've done. And both of you, third quarter down nine, she got a steal and a block --

HAILEY VAN LITH: Two blocks.



Q. What's she like on that side of the ball as well?

MARK CAMPBELL: Before she talks, five Elite Eights in three different schools is insane. There is no way that's ever been done in the history of college basketball. Keep going.

HAILEY VAN LITH: Yeah, I think at this point I just have ultimate confidence and faith in myself to compete at an intense level. What I've learned through my experience in these tournaments is you can't always ask yourself to make every shot, but if you're willing to compete and lay it all out there every game, you're giving yourself a better shot than a lot of other people are out there.

Like I said before the game to a lot of media, I was going to go out there and play as hard as I could to practice with these girls tomorrow.

And everyone else on my team played hard as well, it wasn't just me. We had everybody step up, Aggie did her role extremely well, Maddie did her role well, Sedona dominated in the paint. So everybody played their role and we were able to get it done and now we're going to another Elite Eight.

Q. For Madison and Sedona, how much energy Hailey brings on the defensive end?

MADISON CONNER: I think Hailey is a dog, regardless if it's the offensive end or defensive end regardless, she is going to do anything it takes to win. She has a competitive edge. She's talked about it a lot and you can see it in her game. She's been at an Elite Eight every single year in college, that's a testament to how hard she works. She knows what it takes to win at an extremely high level, and she doesn't care if she makes all of her shots but we like when you make all your shots.

But defensively we know we can count on her.

Q. Hailey, you're now the single-season record holder for scoring in a season for TCU.

MARK CAMPBELL: That's a pretty good season.



Q. What goes through your mind when you hear that now?

HAILEY VAN LITH: Yeah, I mean, obviously I'm super honored, very grateful to have done that, but I seriously -- there is no way I could do it without the personnel I have around me. Everybody on the court, no matter what lineup we have out there, their skill sets allow me to score.

When I'm being doubled I'm willing to get off the ball, but when they're -- when we're hitting shots, teams have to space and I'm pretty good when I have room. So I definitely wouldn't be able to do it if I didn't have these two especially but every single person that's out there in our lineup. They really help me do what I do.

Yeah, I mean, it's a give or take thing. I'm very appreciative for them.

Q. Hailey, you had a good game in the fourth quarter but it's mental when you are in that situation playing so many talented players. What was the mindset going into the fourth quarter in a physical battle like you had?

HAILEY VAN LITH: Yeah, I mean, we really wanted to play forty minutes. Notre Dame is an extremely explosive team. They're super talented, extremely explosive but we're a little bit more mature. I think if we were going to play steady all game, I was going to take us over forty minutes. They might win 10 or 20 but we will win 40.

So my message to the girls right before we went out for the fourth quarter is we're going to be steady, and that's what won us the game.

Q. Sedona, back in 2021 you called out very effectively the NCAA regarding its treatment of the women's tournament. Based on your experience here this year, what is your assessment of what has changed and what hasn't?

SEDONA PRINCE: Yeah, I mean, this is my first Elite Eight as well. We were just talking five years ago, we were in the COVID bubble. It was during that year. Being here and experiencing this, so many years later and seeing also from the sidelines, year by year, watching each just amazing female athlete, college basketball player do what they do and bring attention to the game, it's so cool. I'm so honored and blessed that I have had an opportunity to be part of that push, right?

I feel like God used me to do something through me, and He knew that I had a platform. So I'm brave enough to call

people out when I need to. So just blessed, really cool to be part of this.

It's night and day, truly. Super, super cool. The women's game is so awesome to see how many fans out there and people talking about it online and this room full, it's just really cool to see how in seven years of college I have experienced a major shift in women's college basketball.

But it's awesome to be a part of this and just to see the game like this. I cannot wait for it to keep going.

Q. Hailey, you talked about what you said going to the fourth quarter but there was a timeout with 4:43 in the third, Notre Dame had stretched the lead to eight points and you were animated coming over to the bench during that timeout. What was that moment like? Was that the desperation of this is it, guys?

HAILEY VAN LITH: Yeah, I mean, we know the make-up of our team and the DNA and the natural tendencies of how we play. I just knew that if we continued to make them take tough shots over us, it was going to be in our favor. And sometimes you have to be assertive and loud to really get your teammates to bring their intensity up.

I think I do a good job of mixing it up. When I need to get loud, I'll get loud and they respond to it really well, they love it. So I'm going to keep doing it and basically I wanted us to continue doing what we were doing and not let up.

Like four minutes left in the game it would be a shame if we took the foot off the gas. So I was just making sure we didn't.

Q. Hailey, we've talked about all of the accomplishments and the runs. Is there anything that is particularly rewarding about this one?

HAILEY VAN LITH: Yeah, I mean, the common theme of it, one, is I really think -- I've had a special platform this season to speak on my relationship with God and my faith and how He has just done amazing works in my life but also, again, the people that he has put around me to allow this to happen, and the joy that I have every day.

You know, going into this game I really was just going to have no regrets. I wasn't going to put any pressure on myself to necessarily win. I was going to go out there and play with the joy that God gave me. That's what makes this team so special is it's not like we have to win. It's let's go out there and just have fun and have joy and play the game that we love, and that's the part I love about it.

Q. Madison, Notre Dame had 21 points off of 15 TCU

turnovers. How do you personally and as a team shake that off and let you play your own game and be not worry about that?

MADISON CONNER: I think we have been thrown at so many different types of defenses throughout the season, and in this first match-up I knew in the back of my head I had 7 turnovers, that was the goal for tonight. Anything less than 7 I was good. I had three, whoot!

But I think as a team we knew that we had to take care of the ball and we couldn't let them get out in transition and they had 8 points off of turnovers in the first quarter I think and that was why they had so many points and why it was a one-point game. So I think that was an emphasis for us throughout the entire week of practice. We knew if we took care of the ball, they couldn't necessarily guard us in the half-court. It would be hard for them to score.

Q. Madison and Sedona, Hailey mentioned she wanted to play as hard as she could for the right to practice tomorrow. What do you think that says about how close this team is?

MADISON CONNER: I think this is the tightest-knit group you could get in college athletics. It's so unique. We are all from different places. We have a whole bunch of people who just came here for one year, and me and Sedona were teammates last year, and I think we just love each other.

Practice is fun every single day. Sometimes it might be difficult but at the end of the practice we're all just happy to be around each other, we will sit in the locker room and talk. We're all just veteran people. So I think we are just so excited to finally be around a group of individuals and play the game we love with people we love, and I think that's why we're having such a special run.

Q. Sedona, Hailey mentioned the maturity of your team. It felt like Notre Dame was really trying to get under your skin and be really physical with you in the first half. How do you overcome that in the second half?

SEDONA PRINCE: I was going to speak to his point as well. Madison hit it on the head but each of us as individuals has been through so much adversity, as people, as players, as young women each in our own individual paths and we came together. Last year, right, was an adversity of its own. But Mark is so good of putting together this puzzle of people, of humans, of individuals, that are good people to their core that love each other and are here for the right reasons.

That's what this group is, it's a joy to play with them every day. It feels surreal to be part of this team. I've never experienced anything like this. It's also this thing we are playing so we don't want to not be teammates anymore, right, so we're going to play as hard as we possibly can every possession that we get for the rest of the season.

THE MODERATOR: Ladies, thank you.

Q. Hannah Hidalgo is one of the best scorers in the country. What can you say about holding her to 3 of 19 shooting?

MARK CAMPBELL: She truly is one of the most explosive scorers in college basketball, but we have a team. I mean, it was Taylor Bigby, Donovan Hunter, Hailey and Agnes, all four of those kids had different opportunities to guard and defend her.

And then you guys on the back end of our defense you got the best shot blocker in college basketball hanging out around the rim and impacts shots. Even when she doesn't block it, she changes lots of shots. So incredible collective effort.

She is so talented, you just to make those shots difficult because she is capable of hitting a whole bunch of difficult shots. Thankfully tonight she didn't.

But this group overall defensively as a team, I think they're so talented offensively. Sometimes it overshadows our defense abilities as a unit. To hold Notre Dame to 32% from the field, 20% from three with the offensive talent and fire power that they have, that's an incredible job and just really proud -- that kept us in the game until we got our feet under us in the fourth quarter.

Q. There are a lot of programs that use the transfer portal and it doesn't always work out. What is it about this group? All five of your starters are transfers. What is it about this group that makes that work for you guys?

MARK CAMPBELL: Great question. It really is. Part of it was necessity. Like when we took over the 1-17 team, the portal allows you to get old really quickly. It allows you to get talent really quickly, but a lot of people try it and it doesn't work.

I want to give a lot of credit to my staff. We value our culture. We value getting the right personalities, egos, alphas. As you put together a team, you have your basketball piece and your style of play -- you've got to get that piece right, and I think that's what most people spend their time on. But you've got to get the locker room right.

You've got to get the people part right.

So we have worked incredibly hard to vet and try to get the right pieces. We have passed on really talented players that don't quite fit. And you need a little luck in there, too, to get things right. And we have.

We did six portal kids last year, six this year and we've signed 12 portal kids to go from 1-17 to an Elite Eight team.

Q. In every game since the Big 12 Championship you guys have been able to accomplish something that hasn't been accomplished in TCU history. What does that mean in only your second year at TCU?

MARK CAMPBELL: It's a testament -- one, it's an incredible ride that we've been on and it's a testament to these young women in the locker room.

These three get a lot of attention and well deserved, but we're at this point because of the group that's in the locker room. There really is a sisterhood. There's a unique blend of talents and personalities that have come from a lot of different backgrounds, which is what makes us so fun. So they thrive -- some people are nervous when they step into these stages.

To win a Big 12 Championship we had to win in Waco against your rival who you hadn't beaten in 35 years. This group embraced it. When you go to the Big 12 Tournament and you had never won one in school history, this group doesn't flinch. There is no fear.

This run we're on in March Madness getting to the Sweet 16 and Elite Eight, like Hailey said, she is just ready to go to war and give it everything she's got. I think that's what allowed this team to keep on doing stuff that's never been done.

Q. She is the first to every lead three different teams to the Elite Eight.

MARK CAMPBELL: Thank you, that's a remarkable feat.

Q. Is it fair to call her Miss March since she is the first to do this? Along those lines, her defense in the third quarter kept you in the game, maybe it overshadows your offense but that defense was pretty good, too.

MARK CAMPBELL: You hit a lot of good stuff right there. The Miss March is deserved and earned. In this era of the portal and the modern-day college athlete, and there are a lot of bad stories in the portal, but Hailey Van Lith leading three schools five times to the Elite Eight, Miss March, yes,

she gets that title and she can own it.

And it's funny, you guys, one of the narratives with Hailey coming into the year at the highest level is can she defend? I mean, gosh dang, she is an elite defender. I don't know where that came from, but with us she laces them up and she wants to guard the other team's best player and she does it. It's not like you're trying to hide Hailey.

The competitive spirit that she has to be our playmaker, it generates offensive opportunities that we have. And on the other end always being willing to square up against the other team's best guard, she is elite, man. The kid's competitive spirit, DNA and the heart that's inside her chest is unmatched.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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