

# NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: Regional 3 Semifinal - Kentucky vs Texas

Saturday, March 28, 2026

Fort Worth, Texas, USA

Dickies Arena

**Kentucky Wildcats**  
**Coach Kenny Brooks**  
**Tonie Morgan**  
**Teonni Lee**  
**Amelia Hassett**

Sweet 16 Postgame Media Conference

Texas 76, Kentucky 54

THE MODERATOR: Welcome to our press conference featuring the Kentucky Wildcats. Joining us today we have Coach Kenny Brooks, their student-athletes Tonie Morgan, Teonni Key and Amelia Hassett.

We'll start with an opening statement from Coach Brooks.

KENNY BROOKS: I don't think I've ever been prouder of a group of young women. Been coaching a long time, and what they've been able to do this year hasn't been easy. You know, we had to kind of invent ourselves, reinvent ourselves, and re-reinvent ourselves.

All the while they did it with positive attitudes and came to work every day to just try to make us better, and in the process we got to know each other, love each other, and throughout the year, I thought we had a tremendous season considering everything.

So tonight wasn't our night. I give credit to University of Texas. I thought they came out, and they played extremely aggressive, good basketball, but I'm very proud of our kids for the fight that they continued to show throughout the basketball game. I think this is going to be the start of something special for us.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up for questions for the student-athletes.

**Q. This is for Tonie. The game got away from you**



**early. What did you see in the first few minutes that made it so hard for all of you to settle in?**

TONIE MORGAN: Texas is a good team. They brought a lot of pressure early. They got transition points. That's how they went on their run for the most part. It got away from us in the first half, and we weren't able to reel it back into the second half, so yeah.

**Q. What was the difference between that first half and that second half response when you guys came out a lot stronger?**

TEONNI KEY: I think, you know, our biggest thing that we were talking about during halftime was just staying together. Like, we're not a team that's ever just going to roll over and let anyone do that to us, so I think just us coming out, staying together, fighting for each other, playing for one another offensively, defensively was the biggest thing we were talking about, because you know, they came out and then punched early. We just had to stick together.

AMELIA HASSETT: Yeah, what Teonni said obviously. We just want to do play hard, finish the season the right way, and we talked about just being available for each other, being there for each other, staying together, and just finishing the game.

TONIE MORGAN: Yeah, they hit it on the head, yeah.

**Q. If you could all reflect on just the season, ups and downs, how do you think you'll remember it? And hearing Coach Brooks say how proud he was of you all and your resilience? What sticks out about what you were able to do together?**

TONIE MORGAN: I would like to say this was a great year. We're not going to hang our heads. We made it to the Sweet 16. Is that where we wanted to end? No, but we stayed together through all the ups and downs we had through the season. We stayed composed. We kept fighting through all the things that was thrown at us, and I couldn't be happier to be able to do it with this group.



AMELIA HASSETT: Yeah, exactly. We had a lot of adversity. Teonni obviously getting hurt, different things like that. We just stayed together. We had so much fun. This season was amazing. We obviously enjoyed each other's company, had a lot of fun off the court, on the court. So, yeah, it was a great season.

TEONNI KEY: Yeah, I think this year -- it's such a good group. Everybody, we really care about each other. I think it's definitely going to be hard to say bye, but you know, what the foundation we were able to lay in Kentucky, the life we were able to bring back into women's basketball in the university was just unmatched.

I think, you know, when Coach Brooks and his staff said yes to coming and we all took a chance with them, I think that was the best decision any of us could have made, because it really does mean a lot to be a Wild Cat and just to be with this group.

This is honestly just a floor. I'm super excited to see what this group with Coach Brooks and his staff is able to do with Kentucky. Because I mean, this is only the second year and it's only going to keep doing better. We're super excited to keep watching. It's going to be weird watching, but you know, it's going to be amazing, and I'm just super excited to have been a part of something so special.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for your time today, ladies. We'll open it up for questions for Coach Brooks.

**Q. What can you say about the two-year seniors and the role they played in redefining the expectations of a basketball program at Kentucky?**

KENNY BROOKS: We are in an ever-changing landscape of just athletics in general, transfer portal, NIL, everything. I've been extremely fortunate to have my two-year seniors cause me as much emotion at the end of a season that my four-year seniors that I've ever had caused, because those two in particular, they were sitting up here, they took a chance on me, on us, the vision.

Came here blindly excited for what we could accomplish. Even through adversity from the very first week we were here, they've just adjusted and adapted in a way that has really made me extremely proud to have been their coach.

They're going to do wonderful things in life, and part of it is because of their experiences here at the University of Kentucky. It is getting harder, and it's getting harder to really get attached to kids, you know, with the relationship part of it just because, you know, they might be here for a year and they're gone, but those two really impacted me and this whole program and this university in a major way

in a short amount of time here, and they're always going to be a Wild Cat, and I think they're going to be remembered for a very long time.

**Q. Coach, with the understanding that the end of year two is still very fresh, how would you grade the first two years of your Kentucky tenure and what gives you hope going forward?**

KENNY BROOKS: It's been unbelievable. It's been everything and more that I expected. I didn't have to leave. Didn't have to come here. I had a very comfortable situation, and I wanted more. I wanted to be on this stage. I wanted to be on this stage consistently. We've continued to get the support that allows us to be able to do that. In a very short amount of time we've attracted tremendous young people to come and represent the University of Kentucky, and I think that they've done it in a magnificent way.

That's only helping us as we go into the future, because we're able to recruit and attract similar type players who are very good at basketball. I said this to somebody yesterday, and it kind of sounded funny when I said it out loud. We've been ranked every day that we've been here. That's tremendous. A testament to my staff, to the support that we've been given to be able to go out there and put Kentucky women's basketball back on the map and be able to go out there and compete against teams like Texas, like the South Carolinas.

I love my time. I love my time that we've spent here. I would call it a tremendous success, but we won't rest on our laurels. We'll probably be talking about some stuff for next year when we're on the plane going back, but that's how hard-working group that we have. I think the future is bright for us.

**Q. Kind of following up on what you just ended with, Kenny, obviously this is a step forward from last season from the second round to here, but you've been to a Final Four before. What is it going to take to get to that next step and get to that final weekend here?**

KENNY BROOKS: Things are different. You know, you're going to need continuous support. There's got to be an investment in your sport, because it's changing. It really is.

You don't have to have the top of the top to be able to go compete, but you have to have a really good investment and a lot of just confidence instilled into your program. I think that we can win, we can attract the top-level competition, players, to come here.

We have three McDonald's All-Americans coming in next year. We have an All-American center coming back next year, and obviously we'll do our due diligence in the portal.

But we're excited about taking the next steps, because we weren't just happy to be here. I've been to one Final Four. When you've been to one Final Four, man, you're going to scratch, claw, fight, and do whatever you can to get back. It's a tremendous experience, and it makes you want to continue to get back there.

We know what we need to do, and we're going to get after it. Our goal next year is to go a step further.

**Q. This is kind of a question more so about the game, but having faced Texas earlier this year, watched them throughout the season and seeing how they're playing right now, do you think this is them playing their best basketball? If you look forward to what they could do potentially long-term, how do you see them kind of progressing?**

KENNY BROOKS: They were on a different planet today, especially that first quarter. They came out and they were aggressive. They play right to the rules. The rules allow a certain level of physicality. They play right to it. They don't go over it. They play right to it.

Today I thought they did a tremendous job of pushing us off of our mark. Their transition was really good. I think it was a combination of their transition offense being really good and our transition defense not being so good. They capitalize on everything.

That team that Vic has -- and Vic is one of the best coaches in the country, and that team is as well-constructed a team as I've ever seen in women's basketball.

I mean, they just keep bringing them in and out. You look at Madison Booker and, I mean, she's like a mini-KD. When she rises up, I just shook my head a couple of times.

Then you add the element of Rori Harmon who has gotten a lot better with her shot, and she's getting in the lane, and she hit a three today, and she knocked down some shots.

Then you have a budding superstar who may be as good as both of them and will continue to get better and better in Jordan Lee. Then you look at their size on the inside after the shot is missed, and they're there to clean it up.

They have to be the favorite or one of the favorites. I haven't had a chance to see UConn play this year, but I know that Texas is playing on a different level right now.

**Q. Kenny, when you look into next season, especially the point guard position, with that, do you just tell the transfer portal people, like, just look at the film the last two years. I've had a point guard set the single season school record in assists back-to-back seasons. What more of a recruiting pitch do you need than that?**

KENNY BROOKS: Do you want to say that again so everybody in the back can hear you?

**Q. I'm just stating what's out there.**

KENNY BROOKS: I think we have an attractive style. We have a McDonald's All-American coming in. She's going to need some help. I think we're an attractive program not just because of the university and the fans, the Kentucky brand. I think you add our style into it, and it allows kids to be able to showcase who they can be.

We had Georgia Amoore last year who got drafted No. 6 in the draft. We'll probably have a couple this year. We'll probably have one or so next year.

It's because we're able to -- we help these kids elevate themselves and their games. All the while win basketball games for the university.

We're excited for the future, and we want to enjoy this one right now. We do lose a lot. We lose our five seniors who are near and dear to us. I'll lose my captain of my ship who brought me here and the reason that I came here, Mitch Barnhart. He's going to a different role in the university, although he has promised me he will still be around if I need him.

Heck, I even lose my beloved trainer who goes behind the scenes. There are so many different things, man. I had a trainer for two years, and I know you guys don't know who she is, but her name is Courtney Jones, and she has been, I mean, absolutely wonderful for our program to help elevate it.

All that matters. All that matters, but still, there's so much excitement that is surrounding our program right now and what we're able to accomplish.

We've had some really good wins this year. Top-5 teams we've beaten already. That just lays the foundation for who we can be. We'll come back and look at this game. We'll learn from it. It's not just a shellacking that we took and we moved on. We're going to watch this and we're going to learn from it, because we want to be where they are at this point in the season.

**Q. How close is your program to having everything that you need in order to be able to compete consistently with programs like Texas? What specifically do you need?**

KENNY BROOKS: Well, we're close. I talk about the investment. I talk about just the confidence that we have from our administration and what we can do. Like I said, I am not one of those guys that's going to sit up here and say you have to have the most money to compete, but you need to be able to have the investment put into you. Then it is my job that I have to spread it out the right way. I have to make good decisions on kids bringing them in, and that's how you're able to compete at different levels.

That's something that we'll take a long look at. You know, you learn from each and every year, but I do think we're close. When you have -- the Lisa Leslie finalist for the top centers in the country, there are five on that list right now, and four of them are seniors. The one that's coming back is coming back to us, so that gives you a leg-up right there.

We have to surround her with some really good players, and we will, but to answer your question, I think we're really close because of those factors and because of the investment, because of the University of Kentucky's brand, because of the excitement that surrounds our program. We're going to capitalize on it. We're going to capitalize on it. I'm going to ask until they tell me no, and I'm going to just keep fighting for our program, because when I came here and I don't know if you were at our press conference, I said this place is a sleeping giant.

I think that we've done a pretty good job of tickling it to wake it up a little bit. Now we want to get over top with continuing to capitalize on the momentum that we have and if we're able to do that, then I think that we'll be where we want to be next year.

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