

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

Friday, March 29, 2024

Portland, Oregon, USA

Moda Center

**Texas Longhorns**

**Coach Vic Schaefer**

**Aaliyah Moore**

**Shay Holle**

**Shaylee Gonzales**

Sweet 16 Postgame Media Conference

Texas 69, Gonzaga 47

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Texas.

Coach, congratulations on the win. We'll open with your opening statement.

VIC SCHAEFER: Well, first of all, just want to congratulate Gonzaga on a great year. It's hard to win 30 games, 32 games in a season. Obviously that's a really, really good team over there. In the same breath, I'm going to say that I am so proud of this group, their effort, their intensity, their focus, their intentionality defensively, attention to detail. Just off the chart.

For those of you that haven't seen us play before, that's pretty much been the standard the last two months. This group's chemistry has just grown and grown and grown.

It's really fun to coach and fun to watch. I can tell you, I've had a front-row seat to it. Giving God the glory for 33 wins. Just what a blessing this group has been. Just how they keep continuing to get better.

I just thought our focus defensively was really on point. I thought we got great bench play tonight. I thought we had one of our signature things that we talk about after the game is how is your continuity through substitution. I thought Hadi and Amina really gave us some good minutes inside. Ndjak and G came off the bench, young kids that haven't played obviously in this moment very much. Did a good job.



We beat a really good basketball team tonight. This group right here, they had a little edge to them, I tell you. I don't think you want to play this team when they've got an edge. It's not like they need anything to motivate them, but they are highly motivated right now.

Again, it's pretty incredible to think that they went out and held them to 4-22 from the three-point line. I think they're averaging, what, 10 or 11, something like that, from three. Contesting everything. It's not like they missed them. They contested all of them. Our communication was on point.

Again, let me tell you something about Shaylee Gonzales. She has to move over, Booker gets in foul trouble. Obviously Book struggled a little bit tonight. Shaylee moves over and takes over the point and just plays spectacular. Runs our team. She's, what, 6-11, 3-5, she had four assists, no turnovers. How about that?

SHAYLEE GONZALES: Thank you.

VIC SCHAEFER: Two steals. Just playing her guts out. Absolutely just an incredible young lady and an incredible basketball player. She's done it for us the two years she's been with us. Really, really blessed to have her as well as the rest of our group. She did a heck of a job tonight.

You never know when these things happen, when you have a young player that might struggle a little bit. She took up the slack, so...

Proud of these kids. Proud of our team. It's a great win. We'll get ready for Sunday.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

**Q. Can you comment on your bench stepping up and giving you good minutes tonight.**

AALIYAH MOORE: Yeah, I mean, we compete every day at practice. They also compete. I think they were ready when their name was called tonight, which we need from them every night. It goes to show how people might say



we don't have a deep bench, but we really do. I'm extremely proud of them, yeah.

SHAY HOLLE: Yeah, I mean, we talk all the time about how it takes all of us to get where we are right now. We have all the confidence right now in each and every player on our team because we see the work they put in day in, day out. They've been doing the prep. That's why they're ready in moments like this.

SHAYLEE GONZALES: I definitely feel like the older girls are really big examples for them. It really drives them to be good and to bring energy, as well. It's super fun playing on the court. It's nice to get those girls in, get them minutes, see them play well.

**Q. Obviously your coach speak to it, Shaylee came up big in this game. Do you think she gets enough credit for what she does for your team? Can you speak about how big her performance was today?**

AALIYAH MOORE: I can't speak for anyone else. Being firsthand Shaylee's teammate for the past two years, I'm going to give her credit where credit's due every day. She is someone on our team that is very experienced, and Coach is very hard on her, probably one of the hardest on the team because she has that experience. We hold her to a very high standard. I think she excels that standard every day. She's a very hard worker. She's a great person outside of the court.

The work I've seen her put in over the past two years, it's not easy coming into this man's system, especially playing coming from a different school. I'm extremely proud of her, man.

I'm sad. I don't want her to leave. But I'm not going to talk about it because we have more games to play. I'm extremely proud of Slim.

SHAY HOLLE: Everything she said, but what makes her special is she doesn't care about the credit. We all know she deserves everything that comes her way and more.

Being her teammate is a blessing, for sure. She helps us every single day on the court, off the court. It's nice having a grandma around taking care of us. And she definitely did that tonight.

**Q. Aaliyah, you seemed pretty happy when Coach said you had six assists. What does it mean to you, going to the Elite 8?**

AALIYAH MOORE: My teammates I guess made some great catches and they finished, so I was able to get six

assists. Shout-out to them.

Whatever position Coach puts me in, whether that's rebounding, iso's, setting screens, whatever it is, I'm willing to do it. I'm just extremely proud of this team. I'm proud of myself. It has not been easy to get where I am now. Just happy that I'm back playing the game.

**Q. Shaylee, what is about playing Gonzaga that brings out the best in you? How important is good guard play in NCAA tournament, do you think?**

SHAYLEE GONZALES: Yeah, obviously I played against Gonzaga for four years, being in the WCC. I had a chip on my shoulder playing them again. Obviously I knew their team very well. I didn't want to lose. This win is huge for us.

Then guard play is super important for us. I feel like it drives our team. Obviously everyone is super important, has a good role on the team. But once that guard play against going, I feel like it brings the whole team together.

**Q. Your coach said you guys are playing with an edge right now. Why are you playing with that edge? How is that showing up on the court?**

AALIYAH MOORE: I feel like me and Coach always talk about how we love being the villain. We'll be the villain, it's totally fine. We'll be the underdogs, people can underestimate us. We know the work we put in every day. We're the ones going to battle. No one else is in our practices, film sessions, anything that we do.

I think because we know that, we have the foundation. It's up to us to prove it every night. I think we're doing that right now.

SHAY HOLLE: Yeah, I think we hold ourselves to a very high standard. We want to meet that every single game and practice. So I think that's where the edge comes from, honestly. We know what we're capable of. We know the work we've put in since the summer, since June.

It's for moments like these. We're super blessed to be here. But we have a very high standard for ourselves.

SHAYLEE GONZALES: Just to add onto that, starting from summer, we'd have 5 a.m. track workouts. All that hard work, then realizing we just want to keep winning and winning because we have put in that much work, and we know we're that good.

**Q. To see Aaliyah doing what she's doing at this point in the season, given what happened last year, how**



**incredible is that? What are some of the things we don't see that helped her get here?**

SHAYLEE GONZALES: I mean, ACL injury is not easy. I've been through it, so I know how she feels. It's super hard mentally and physically. I can imagine what she went through.

But just to see her excel and to come back and want it even more, you see a chip on her shoulder. It's just amazing to see how special she can be. Double-double coming in every single night.

SHAY HOLLE: Yeah, I mean, when she got hurt last year, first thing is like, Comeback is going to be crazy. None of us had any doubt bit because we know the type of player and person she is. She doesn't do anything half-hearted. We knew it was going to be the same with her rehab, when she came back. Obviously it's on display now.

**Q. Aaliyah, how are you feeling? Looked like cramps during the game?**

AALIYAH MOORE: Yeah, I need to stay hydrated, number one. Yeah, a hard fall. I'll be totally fine. I'll be staying hydrated.

One thing before we end it. I just want to give a shout-out to this man right here. We couldn't have done it without him. I would like to say he is the secretary of defense, and he always will be, no one else will take that position. I think we've proven it every night holding teams to under their average.

We couldn't have done it without him. The drills every day, the habits we build in practice. Let's give credit where credit's due. This man is special, and that's why we're special.

THE MODERATOR: Players, thank you very much.

We'll continue with questions for the secretary.

**Q. You've talked about it before, when you're at the University of Texas, you get everybody's best shot. How much does that influence your coaching philosophy and the message you send to your players?**

VIC SCHAEFER: I mean, it's what we all signed up for. I knew it when I came to Austin. I grew up in the era of Coach Conrardt and the standard that she set.

Quite frankly, it's what motivates me. I want to be like that, to be honest with you. I want my teams to be like those

teams. So we know the standard.

I've told the story. My second year we finish in the Elite 8, fifth in the country. I'm sitting at a head coach's meeting. There's 20 head coaches at the table. 10 of them played for the national championship, 10 of 'em. They either finished first or second in the country. We finished fifth. That's not even good enough to be in the top half at the University of Texas. Pretty humbling. But that's what you sign up for.

So our kids have seen it. We get everybody's best shot, their best two days of practice, their best pregame meal, their best shootaround. Then you throw on top of that you're a 1 seed.

But our kids have worn it all year. You go through the gauntlet of the Big 12, you wear that, that's a storied, rich, tradition-rich league. You're made for this.

I think our kids understand it. They're unflappable. They're tough. I mean, they really are. You just watch those kids for two hours. You see how hard those kids play, all of 'em, every one of 'em, because they know if one of 'em doesn't, they stick out like a sore thumb.

It just brings joy to my heart to see kids play like that. I've said it before. We want to lead the country in playing hard. We want to lead that stat. It's a slap in our face when people want to make joke of us, how we play, any of that. It is. We take it real personal.

I'm really proud of this group. Proud of my staff. That was a hell of a scout that Coach Lovato put together. We've been going through those actions for four days. Looked like we had, didn't it?

**Q. Taylor Jones appeared to be dressed and available today. Any particular reason she didn't play? Will she be available for the Elite 8?**

VIC SCHAEFER: She's in concussion protocol. She was not available. She didn't get through yesterday, so... She was not available.

**Q. Was this the first time in a while you kept your jacket on the entire game? What were your thoughts about the way your bigs played with Taylor out?**

VIC SCHAEFER: I thought our bigs were special. Hadi just came off the bench and weigh so good defensively, gets that steal and layup. A-Mo smoked her layup. She had one, too.

I think our bigs, Amina, DeYona, were really special



tonight, knowing we were in a little bit of a pinch without Taylor. I'm really, really, really proud of them and how they played, how they defended a great player. Kid's averaging 20 a game, and we held her to 4-10. She had 14 on 4-10 with four turnovers. A lot of respect for Yvonne. But I thought our kids really did a good job with the scout and taking that away.

As far as my jacket goes, I don't know, it wasn't very hot in there tonight. Last gym I was in was pretty warm, so...

**Q. (No microphone.)**

VIC SCHAEFER: Probably, yeah.

**Q. If I told you back in December you were going to play a quarter of a tournament game without Rori, Taylor and Madison with foul trouble, would you have expected you could have opened up a 19-point halftime win?**

VIC SCHAEFER: You know, I've said this a lot. When Rori went down, I don't think anybody really gave this team a shot, except my staff and I. We refused to just throw our hands up and go, Well, that's terrible, it's devastating, which it was. We got what we got, let's make the best of it. That's never how we approached any of this.

My local media know I've referred to it as Apollo 13. When Apollo 13 was in the air, they had the short circuit, not only can they not finish their mission to the moon, now there's a question about whether we can get 'em home. They had to rewire the capsule. That's what we had to do, we had to rewire the capsule.

I can tell you, as a man of faith, somebody that asks why a lot, not supposed to, by the way, at that moment on that day, we had basically two hours to get ready to play a game after she went down. I can tell you, I had to give my team to God because I knew that there's no class I ever took in my undergrad or in my master's, there's no clinic to go to that teaches you how to deal with something so devastating.

It's not only missing the player and the impact she has on our team and her teammates, but it's the kid herself who is such a wonderful young lady. It's the mom and dad who are unbelievable parents. Your heart aches so bad for them. To get through that day and that game, I had two hours because we were fixing to play. I had to get myself together because my kids that were healthy fixing to play a game, I owed them my very best effort.

After that, it was, Okay. First of all, Booker is going to be our point guard. There was no tryout. We got to get

everybody else to raise their level and how they play.

Man, you talk about a team that's done that. It's amazing, y'all. Like, it's amazing what this group has accomplished. They're remarkable young ladies. Unbelievable kids. They work their guts out every day. They pay the price to be where they are right now.

I mean, these young ladies are going to be so good in the real world when they're done playing basketball. But I don't want their basketball to be done, because I love coaching 'em. Man, I had a ball tonight. Watching those kids play like that, are you kidding me? It was so much fun watching those kids play their guts out tonight on defense. It was just amazing. Amazing. Nobody thought that could happen. Nobody thought our team would be here today. You're right, nobody did. But us, 'cause we refused to think any other way because that's how we're built.

Those kids just kept winning and getting confidence, and here we are.

**Q. Can you share any of the stats you were circling now? Anything in particular?**

VIC SCHAEFER: Yeah, when I get these, I circle the good stats and I box the bad ones.

You circle A-Mo at 5-9. Shaylee at 6-11, 3-5. Shay Holle is 5-7, 2-3. Addie is 2-3, 4-4 at the free-throw line. Amina is 2-4. You circle the double-double with the 10 rebounds. The six rebounds that Holle had.

But now the bad boxes. Seven turnovers, Booker. Five turnovers, Holle. Four turnovers, Ndjakalenga. Of our 19 turnovers, they had 16 of them were for three people. That's about the only bad boxes I got tonight. I'm going to be a little easy on 'em.

Those are things I got a lot of boxes up here on that top stat sheet because we did such a great job holding those kids that can really, really shoot it, we held 'em down.

**Q. When you talked about your team playing with that edge, you just explained how people outside your program didn't think you could be here, is that what you're saying, is it that or is it something else?**

VIC SCHAEFER: Again, I think at Texas, you have to play with an edge because, again, we're getting everybody's best shot. If you don't play with that edge, you're going to get beat. It's just the way it is 'cause everybody else is going to give you their best shot.

That first year I was there, we had two or three teams,

they're throwing water on their coach when they beat me in my own gym. I inherited that team. It took a while to get them to come around. That ain't it, just so you know.

That's part of it, is that edge of knowing we have got to be our best every night, every night. Then, again, I think you add on the fact we're the 1 seed out here. We knew it was going to be a road game. It is what it is. We just played three straight in Kansas City in the Big 12 tournament. It's fine. This team's built for it.

I just think that's life at Texas really to be honest with you.

THE MODERATOR: That's all the time we have. Coach, thank you very much.

VIC SCHAEFER: Thank you y'all for being here.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports