

# NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: Regional 4 Semifinal - Virginia vs TCU

Friday, March 27, 2026

Sacramento, California, USA

Golden 1 Center

**TCU Horned Frogs**

**Coach Mark Campbell**

**Donovyn Hunter**

**Marta Suarez**

**Olivia Miles**

Sweet 16 Pregame Media Conference

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by TCU head coach Mark Campbell.

MARK CAMPBELL: I'll open up with just really, really excited to be here, to still be competing with our team. It's been a full-circle moment for our coaching staff that was here at Sac State for two years. And then to come back and get to be playing in a regional with a chance to go to a Final Four, it's been a really fun and special couple days.

**Q. You mentioned Sac State. Is this sort of not so bad you're not in Fort Worth that you're coming home to Sac State in some ways for this regional? And what does it mean to get this team back here again with a new group, but to be able to get back to the Sweet 16?**

MARK CAMPBELL: I'd answer the first question, it's a win-win. When you saw the two regionals, Fort Worth or Sacramento, for different reasons both are great. I would prefer to be in Fort Worth with about 15,000 fans at Dickies Arena. But this week has just been so special, and it means a lot because of where we came from in our time at Sac State. It's awesome.

Then getting back to this point, it's so difficult to do. We had to reload after losing last year's core group. And we have 10 new players that hadn't played for TCU. To get that group to come together and have the season that we've had, it's been another magical run. It's been another special group.

But it's just really hard to get to Sweet Sixteens. It's been



really fun. Totally different journey than last year's group, but a really fun journey.

**Q. You had two of your players, Olivia and Marta, that have probably more experience than usual playing Virginia. Has that helped at all with the scouting, preparing for them?**

MARK CAMPBELL: Rosters turn over so much each year. We're just diving into this year's Virginia team and really studying what they're doing, how they're playing.

But they're just, within this season, how much Virginia's evolved from the beginning of the year till now.

So I think with Marta and Olivia, they're just old veterans that have been in so many big-time battles. I think that's the greatest asset going into this game. Those two are just they're excited, they don't want their journey to end. They're ready to get after it tomorrow.

**Q. The opportunity you had at Sacramento State was the first head-coaching job you had in your career. Personally, how much did that mean to your career to be able to have that experience? And also what experiences do you take at Sac State that you applied to TCU in your coaching career moving forward?**

MARK CAMPBELL: Great questions. First is Mark Orr was the athletic director at Sacramento State. He's the one that gave me my first chance to be a head coach. So I'm just forever grateful for that opportunity and for him believing in me.

There's so many lessons that you took away from your time at Sac State that carried over to TCU. Both of them were major rebuilding projects. I think Sac State had won three games the season before we got there.

And, so, Sac State, you were able to make mistakes and learn and grow without necessarily being in the spotlight and figure out what you want to do as a head coach and how you want to build a program. And so we did that. And it was a quick flip, our second year, we won 25 games.



So those lessons really carried over to TCU, which was another major rebuilding project. And so TCU was 1-17 in the Big 12. So those lessons of how to dig out of a hole, how to build a program, what kind of people you want, just all the stuff that's non-basketball, those two years at Sac State was priceless. I'm very grateful for that.

And then I do, I think those lessons we learned from Sac State helped us flip the program at TCU really quickly as well.

So it's been an awesome journey. The last five years has been an absolute blur. I haven't really caught my breath from any of it. But I've loved it. I've loved every minute.

**Q. I was watching an interview with you yesterday that you were doing at Sac State while practicing, and you got particularly emotional when you were describing or asked about your coaching journey. And to see that emotion come out of you was just profound and remarkable. But can you just describe where that comes from and just the gratitude, and when you look back on your journey and your first opportunity there and where a lot of that emotion came from?**

MARK CAMPBELL: There's so many layers to it. There's all sorts of emotions. When we've got to go practice at the Nest and all the special memories we had there. But a mixture of my professional journey and the last five years of helping rebuild two programs that were just buried, and kind of the blood, sweat, tears it takes to get a program up and running at an elite level, and the staff that's been there with me for all five years.

And then just the toll it takes on your family. My wife and my two daughters, they're teenagers, and they've moved around the country from Eugene to Sacramento to Fort Worth. Just the life aspect sometimes people forget about. And that's a heavy lift.

I'm just thankful for my wife and everything she did for our family and my daughters, and them moving around is not easy.

There's just a lot that's gone into the last five years. It's tears of joy and gratitude, all sorts of memories. It's a lot of hard work. I don't think there's many examples of coaches in the last five years that have taken over two programs that have been just absolutely buried at the level that TCU and Sac State were at and to have historic seasons at both places.

Again, it's been an incredible journey. It's been a fun journey. But being back at the Nest, it did, it got me emotional in a good way.

**Q. Through all the in-game moments that might be more frustrating than others, whether it's in general or throughout the season, how does it feel to see Olivia maybe react to one or two of them but then shortly, just stay calm, cool, collected and just take full command of her troops like she does?**

MARK CAMPBELL: The journey with Olivia this season has been awesome and special. Getting to know her on the court, off the court and what makes her tick and how to coach her and how help her, it's just been neat to see her growth, especially as a leader.

I think it was on full display the second half against Washington, when we were just struggling in the first half to have a flow and a rhythm. And Olivia's will and spirit in the second half was not going to let us lose.

I absolutely love that kid. I am so proud of her. I'm glad we get another 40 minutes to go to battle together.

**Q. Marta Suarez battled a bunch of adversity early in her collegiate career. Now that you've had some time with her, what about her do you think allowed her to overcome that?**

MARK CAMPBELL: She's overcome a lot of life adversity, not just basketball. She got dealt a tough hand, and she is a resilient kid. She is a brilliant human being. She has a brilliant mind. One of the most talented artistic people I've ever been around.

And then her basketball skills and her work ethic, her grit, her toughness, just all those characteristics has allowed Marta to overcome a lot -- and not just overcome it, but just thrive.

She's our warrior. And she's been that way this whole year. She's got one of the greatest work ethics that I've ever been around.

So, again, she is someone -- it's been so fun to get to know her and really truly understand what makes Marta tick. But she's got a great family, and dad and brother that have been just an awesome support network for her throughout this journey of her college career.

**Q. Olivia Miles has opened up about finding her love of the game again. It's the same thing that Hailey Van Lith said last year. What about your program has helped these high-impact transfers fall in love with the game again?**

MARK CAMPBELL: Man, great question. There's so

many parts to that. We are very intentional on trying to find the right people. There's a basketball piece to making sure they fit with what we're trying to do with our scheme. But then there's the human element that's a lot harder to figure out and get right.

And we work really, really hard to try to find the right young people that are going to fit our culture, our environment.

So both Olivia and Hailey have truly blossomed. I think both of them got their love of the game of basketball back.

But I think it's our village. And within a program, from your strength coach, to your trainer, to your nutritionist, to your coaching staff, to your GAs, there's so many people involved in having an impact on these student-athletes. So I think our village is special.

And we allow young people to be themselves, and for Olivia to be the best version of Olivia, and for Marta Suarez to figure out what's the best version of Marta Suarez and allow her to be herself.

And to put all these people together -- and it's intentional. You're trying to find a right blend of egos and personalities and alphas and humble kids and get that whole thing right.

So it's not an exact science, but right now in the portal era, I think we're doing as good as anybody in assembling teams each year.

**Q. It really isn't that long ago that you were -- I think you put as America's team because you were having to basically look to the student body. Can you talk about doing it that fast? You talked about your last two jobs have been digging programs out of the dirt. And you've been able to do it. But to be able to do it that fast, could you have imagined that, say, back in January of, what was it, 2023 and you're trying to do that at that point and it seems so far away?**

MARK CAMPBELL: Great question. When we were holding open tryouts and forfeiting games because you didn't have enough healthy bodies and we were at the rec center and trying to figure out which kids we're going to add to our program, at that point it was overwhelming.

But we've been able to flip it relatively quickly. And I think my coaching journey from Oregon State days. If you go back, Coach Rueck, I got to be part of his staff, and we had to hold open tryouts in August when we took over. It was the Pac-10 at that time. And you literally had to build a team from scratch.

So that learning experience in how to build a program brick

by brick, I've carried those lessons with me my whole career. And Scott's an incredible program builder. And Oregon, when we went there and I got to be a part of the staff with Coach Graves, it was another program that kind of bottomed out.

So I think it took four years for us to break into the NCAA Tournament and kind of have that Elite Eight run.

So part of my coaching journey has been a part of being at these journeys from day one and helping restore and build them from the ground up. So, as daunting as that time at TCU was when we were holding open tryouts, I kind of have lived that over and over again.

And there is a blueprint. There is a formula. Finding the right people. At the end of the day, you need elite talent and elite people to win at the highest level. So we have been very strategic with the talent we've added, the people we've added.

Obviously the Lord has blessed our labor and given me wisdom in figuring all these things out and all these moving parts and variables.

And right now, you guys, the NIL and the portal era has created kind of chaos in college athletics. And we dove into it. We didn't sit back. I would say we embraced the portal, we embraced the NIL scene and attacked it. And I think it's paid off. I think we've been at the front end of that in college athletics.

**Q. How big of an X factor can Donovan be for you guys up here?**

MARK CAMPBELL: Donovan Hunter is our backbone of our whole program. She is one of the most humble, hardworking, selfless players I've ever coached.

An example for you guys that don't know Dono, we've been there -- she's been with us two years now, and in two years, the kid -- I mean this literally -- any set of lines and any conditioning drill we've done in the last two years, Dono has never lost one drill, not one time. She is the ultimate competitor and winner.

Dono allowed Hailey Van Lith to be Hailey Van Lith a year ago. And Dono has allowed Olivia to be Olivia Miles. She is what makes this whole thing work. She'll be ready to go tomorrow. And every night she regards the other team's best offensive player if they're a perimeter player and she brings it.

**Q. Can you talk about how great women's basketball is now, rising programs like yours, Virginia, a low**

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

**seed, and just the star power and the popularity and you're riding this whole wave?**

MARK CAMPBELL: Yeah, women's basketball has been a rocket ship. And it's taken years and years and years for it to get to this point.

Ironically, I think it was the Sedona Prince NCAA Tournament, when she brought to light the disparity between men's March Madness and women's March Madness and brought a healthy spotlight that has allowed women's basketball to grow at an elite level.

There's just been incredible star power that's been coming along at the right time. I'm highlighting Caitlin, but there's just been so many people. Caitlin came along at the perfect time.

And then now there's just all sorts of stars. And then just last week, the WNBA, and the new Collective Bargaining Agreement and the new salaries, it's just been brick by brick and step by step for women's basketball.

Like you said, it's been a rocket ship. I'm trying to jump on that rocket ship and do my part. But it's not slowing down. It's been amazing.

I think one of the next evolutions -- and I don't know how many years out that is, but I think the women's game is going to be able to hold its own and be at neutral sites, like the men's tournaments, from the get-go. Again, I don't know when that happens, but that's going to be another evolution that unfolds over the next couple of years.

I just want to say, it's so cool seeing so many familiar faces out here. It's awesome. Stingers up, go Frogs!

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by student-athletes Donovan Hunter, Olivia Miles and Marta Suarez.

**Q. When you guys entered the Nest yesterday with Coach Phillips, what was your first impression of him coaching in that gymnasium, or whatever you want to call it? How was that, the thought process for that?**

DONOVYN HUNTER: (No audio), so to be able to go from that section and then be with your present team now, just to kind of reflect on it, I thought it was cool for him.

OLIVIA MILES: It was a cool experience to see where Coach Campbell came from and what he was able to build there. And obviously they allowed him to be a head coach first and then allowed him obviously to go to TCU after. Just a cool place to be a full-circle moment for him, and I was glad to be a part of it a little part of his journey.

MARTA SUAREZ: Yeah, he was very excited. I think we were very excited for him. We've heard some stories about Sac State.

And also just cool to see how many opportunities and the access to the facilities that we have and the comparison between TCU and what he's built there and then Sac State and then what he had to work with. Just cool to be a part of it.

**Q. Marta, I know a deep tournament run was one of the reasons you came to TCU. How much does it mean being here in the Sweet 16 with your teammates?**

MARTA SUAREZ: Blessed. I'm just so excited. And then obviously Fort Worth would have been a great experience, but being back here in Sacramento, it also kind of feels like a full-circle moment for me, too. I have a lot of people in the Bay that I love and that I got to know during my time in my previous schools.

So it's awesome to come here and be able to to experience it. And then just to have more time with these girls -- I'm just very excited, up for the game. Like, it's as competitive as it gets. The level is as high as it gets. I think that's what we play for, what we live for. I'm just excited for that.

**Q. Olivia, I talked to Coach about those frustrating in-game moments and how you certainly have been able to stay even keeled and command your troops, so to speak. Just what goes into just moving on from those moments and being able to stay calm and command the troops?**

OLIVIA MILES: My teammates. They save me from literally running out the building and running home, literally because I get so frustrated at times when I'm missing easy shots like I was at Washington.

But ultimately, these girls have my back and they understand that I'm a big part of what we do, and they want to keep me as confident as possible. Especially these two right here. They're always in my ear. Marta especially. I was screaming the other day, and she's, like, you're fine.

And it just takes people around you who believe in you to enable you to make that switch. That's why I'm able to play the way that I play and get us back into games and get people open because they keep my mindset in a good place.

Not saying I can't do it myself, but sometimes people need a little help. And these two really help me with that.

**Q. Olivia, this is for you. I think a year ago all of us were bugging you at the Sweet 16: What are you going to do next; are you coming back to college; are you going into the WNBA draft? And you made the decision, you felt like another year of college season would be good for you. What has this year been like for you? And what are the ways you think you have grown to now be ready for the next step, in a few weeks?**

OLIVIA MILES: [Inaudible] but unfortunately I only get one year. And while it's sad, I think it was meant to be this way, so I can cherish and appreciate it and everything I've been able to do here and the people I've been able to meet and impact.

But this year has been nothing short of spectacular for me. The wins and losses are what they are, but it's truly the moments in between that have helped me grow as a person and a basketball player and helped me to gain the confidence that I need to be a pro. And that's ultimately why I came back.

That was my main priority was to find Olivia again, find her joy, find her spirit and her love for the game, and play at a level that I knew I could reach but I really wasn't getting there for some reason.

TCU has allowed me to do that. Very glad I made that decision. And ultimately it came with a bunch of bonuses, like the WNBA, figuring stuff out and me getting healthier and me meeting awesome teammates and whatever that may be. It came with a bunch of bonuses as well.

**Q. Did you guys pack your number 40 practice jerseys for this trip? And if so, what do they symbolize to each of you, especially considering your comeback win over Washington in the second round?**

MARTA SUAREZ: Yes, ma'am, we did pack those. 40 minutes -- for us that just means we understand who we are, the potential we have, the talent that we have. And we also understand that in March, in these games, that's not just it. You know what I mean? We need to figure out how to put 40 minutes together.

But if we do that, we have the potential to do whatever we want to do. So I think it's just a matter of pride and of confidence, as well as just kind of like a commitment and hard work.

**Q. Dono, when you're going through a stretch, maybe your offensive numbers aren't where you want them to be, how much does Mark's approach of always**

**uplifting and providing that confidence, how much does that make it easy to maybe navigate that storm?**

DONOVYN HUNTER: At the end of the day, not just to me, but to all of us, he just says, keep shooting. I have teammates around me that are just continuing to say be confident.

So I think just words of positive affirmation, just keeping your head up. He knows all the work that all of us put in. So if there's a night where my numbers aren't up on the board or the highest numbers, I think he knows at the end of the day the work that I'm putting in behind the scenes. So he just says continue to work, keep going.

At the end of the day, I know it too. I don't place just all my eggs in one basket in terms of just offense. If I'm on on offense that's great. But I focus on a lot of other things in the game. He also knows that, so he kind of pushes me in other categories to be able to just focus on that, too, if my shooting isn't great.

**Q. All three of you chose to transfer into this program and have talked about how much this has sort of relifted your basketball careers and just personally. What is it about Coach Campbell and this program that has helped all of you and all the other transfers that have come in before sort of reinvigorate them and find that joy again?**

OLIVIA MILES: I think, number one, it's the culture and his ability to allow us to play with freedom, I think. It's very appealing. No one wants to be in a system where it's, like, you can only shoot a pull-up jump shot, or you can only get to the rim, you can't make one-hand passes -- stuff like that.

I think he allows us to be creative and be ourselves, obviously within some structure, but he allows us to find our joy, which is similar to when we were kids and when we just rolled the ball out and played and hooped and we weren't worrying who was around us or what Coach was saying.

It's the same feeling I get when I'm here. I can speak for myself, but I'm sure it's similar for these two sitting next to me.

MARTA SUAREZ: Going off what she said, I think he has a very cool ability to see people and see what their gifts are and what their strengths are and what moves them. Or at least he's intentional about figuring that out and he understands the importance of that. From then on, he just gives space for you to do that.



Of course, he's not just a free spirit. He's going to give you some guidelines and kind of try to channel you to do it the right way.

DONOVYN HUNTER: Basically what they said. Everyone's experience is obviously different, but we can all say the same thing in regarding he wants us to be successful. He wants us to reach our full potential. And he states that for everyone that comes into TCU.

So I think that's just important in the world of college basketball or sports in general to be able to kind of have that outlet where your coach wants you to reach your full potential.

**Q. TCU is sort of a model for the current state of basketball in terms of the portal and NIL and all of that. For all of you, you all have different NCAA experiences with different programs and things. How quickly did it come together this season, and what was that like? What was it like to pull a team together of people who come from a lot of different places and with different experiences? And were any of you nervous about coming in in a one-year situation and having all of that come together?**

MARTA SUAREZ: That's a very good question. I think you can always keep getting to know people. So I wouldn't say there was, like, one moment where we figured it out. We're still growing. We're still growing as individuals, therefore, the team is still changing. We're still getting to know each other.

But to me personally, in the summer, I found myself so excited about the team. It was very early. I knew we still had to get to know each other. But, first of all, trusting the coaches and the people that they bring in. And then just starting to have conversations and having fun in practice with them, I just had a very good feeling. I kept talking to my dad, like, we're going to have a great year. I did have that intuition.

But, of course, you've got to go through, like, any type of relationship, the relationship is not real until you've really broken it down and then figure out how to get it back together. So in every season, you're going to have ups and downs, and I think that's what keeps building us.

We're not there. Like, nobody's there. There's always more to grow. But I think our hearts are always in the right place and we do love each other, which is priority number one.

OLIVIA MILES: I was a little nervous. Obviously I had been at a school for four and a half years before and had

grown up with a lot of the girls there and played with them all my career. So jumping into a new space, with new teammates, obviously we had lost to them last year so it was a little awkward at first.

But like Marta said, I think she said it perfectly, our hearts are in the right place. Coach Mark does a great job of recruiting great kids. We never had to worry about any malicious feelings or intentions. And everyone was just genuinely there to be better, get one more year, at least for the seniors, to maximize our potential and to build relationships for life.

Like she said, it's an ongoing process. I don't think there was one moment where it clicked. I will say, though, through our adversity, we grew a lot more in those moments together. But like I said, there's not one moment where it clicks.

Every day I find new ways to get close to Marta and new ways to get close to Dono and the rest of my teammates. And it's so special about this group and this culture. It allows us to make mistakes and be vulnerable in front of each other in a safe and healthy environment.

DONOVYN HUNTER: I would say for me, even from AAU to college, I've always kind of been on teams or organizations where either way the next year, there was always a lot of new people.

I think for me, in that realm, I don't necessarily get nervous when there's a new team. I think I've been able to see the benefits of being able to put together a new team from AAU days to my freshman year, sophomore year, junior year, I think it's all been a new squad for me.

It's been good. I think, again, like they said, if your head's in the right space and all of you want the right things on a basketball team, I think it's going to click together.

As we're still growing, I think it's been a really cool process to see everybody come in, especially for their last years, to have to risk that, that is a big risk. I'm glad that it all came together.

**Q. Olivia, you're no stranger to Virginia, having played them for many years in the Notre Dame days. What makes this team different than the teams you might have played the last couple of years? What makes them able to get to the Sweet 16 for the first time in so long?**

OLIVIA MILES: I think this Virginia team, in recent years has a lot more size and a lot more depth. I think they've been together for a while, so I think they're getting used to

playing with each other more and more. I think their chemistry, out of all the times I've played them, their chemistry looks nails this year.

So I think it's depth and size and also their ability to grow with chemistry with each other.

I think chemistry is one of the most important things in sports. Having that synergy with your teammates can let you beat anyone on the court.

**Q. Marta, facing adversity, going to overtime against Washington on Sunday, how do you think facing that early can help you on a potential NCAA Tournament run?**

MARTA SUAREZ: I think we love it. I think we love that we had two great games in the first and second round in terms of our first round was where everybody got touches, we moved the ball. It was a great version of ourselves. So we know we got that.

And I think the second round just gave us that, hey, we pulled it off. There's going to be ugly games. This is March. There's nothing going to be easy. Adversity happens. Teams are fighting. It's going to be ugly sometimes. And we pulled it off. And we did it in front of a great crowd. I think it was a tremendous win.

I think it gave us a lot of energy, okay, we did that and we know we've had some ugly games during the season. We pulled this one off. On to the next one. And you kind of then learn from it and keep growing, of course.

I put myself in foul trouble way too early in that game. And so little things that it happens, it's basketball and that's life. But excited we pulled it off. That speaks to our character and to our will. And we've done that so we can do that again.

**Q. Marta, I know you use art as an outlet for off-court interest or maybe a stress reliever. How do you use art and other outlets for you and your team to get through hardship this season?**

MARTA SUAREZ: Yeah, I think it's a big part. I mean, at the end of the day when you do art, you're kind of forced to just sit down and be mindful and focus, do what you do.

And I was talking to one of my teammates earlier today. You're doing art -- and she mentioned it in an interview earlier before -- you're going to mess up whether you want it or not. You're doing your makeup and you're going to mess up whether you want it or not.

But then somebody tries the process, keep going, keep painting. And it's definitely -- I gave them a little gift a couple days ago. It's also a love language.

To be able to have -- I felt so inspired this season, throughout the summer, and that's how you know I'm in a good spot because I felt so inspired to do art and to do gifts.

And these girls just made it a lot more fun. They probably don't even know it, but most of my canvasses this season, there's a piece of them in every single one. A huge part of who I am, and hopefully something that the team appreciates and gets my love from.

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