

# NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: Regional 4 Semifinal - Oklahoma vs South Carolina

Saturday, March 28, 2026

Sacramento, California, USA

Golden 1 Center

**Oklahoma Sooners**

**Coach Jennie Baranczyk**

**Payton Verhulst**

**Raegan Beers**

Sweet 16 Postgame Media Conference

South Carolina - 94, Oklahoma - 68

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by University of Oklahoma head coach Jennie Baranczyk and student-athletes Payton Verhulst and Raegan Beers.

**Q. What were the conversations with Jennie like, both as you were walking off the floor and in the locker room after the game?**

RAEGAN BEERS: I know Jennie and I got to go to radio, so we had a little moment. Just a quick hug afterwards to say thank you for all she's done for me, all she's done for this program. Obviously she's impacted my life a lot, and this team has as well. So just pure gratitude for the place that I'm in with these people.

PAYTON VERHULST: Obviously very similar. I came to Oklahoma from Louisville and just wanted the opportunity to play basketball at whatever level it was. I'm just grateful to have been able to now raise the level of Oklahoma and where they're going to be at. So I think that's just where the gratitude and looking back on it comes from.

**Q. They seemed to get that first punch in and you couldn't really recover. Was it something that you couldn't hit shots early on, they were making things? What was the difference in the first few minutes?**

RAEGAN BEERS: Obviously a great shooting game for them. We had a lots of careless turnovers, I feel like, in that first half that we could have avoided that really just --



we kind of did that to ourselves. So that obviously needs to be avoided. That's kind of how I think they got their first punch.

And then defensively we could have adjusted a lot of things from our standpoint. Worked a lot on team defense this week. I feel like there were moments that we didn't play that, and that led to them obviously scoring or our turnovers.

**Q. Payton, the first time you guys played them, Ta'Niya Latson had a difficult game. Tonight she had probably her best game in a South Carolina uniform. Did you see something different from her today as compared to that first match-up back in January?**

PAYTON VERHULST: I mean, she's a great player. We all got to see her at Florida State. So I feel any player like that can go off at any given night. We were just trying to scout them in different ways and figuring out different ways we can stop different people.

I mean when you have lineups like them, you can't just pick one person. Obviously she's a great player. There's a bunch of great players on their team. So for us we were just trying to adjust and we just couldn't adjust fast enough.

**Q. Raegan, the battle with Okot obviously was a big one the first time around. What do you feel like she was doing, and maybe just their defense down low, how was that effective?**

RAEGAN BEERS: Okot, another phenomenal player. Another phenomenal center -- physical, tall, obviously, has some length around the basket. Can rebound really well. And I feel like she did that really well tonight.

And I thought honestly Brooklyn Stewart came in and did a great job against her and got in there and rebounded or attempted to rebound all the time, giving us a spark that we really needed.

So I'm excited to watch Brooklyn progress. And good luck to Okot in the next round.



**Q. Raegan, I know you said yesterday you're a crier, and I promise this is not meant to make you cry, but I want you to think about the journey you've been on from the two years at Oregon State and getting to the Elite Eight there to the journey you've been on with this team. When you think back on it 20, 30 years from now, just what are the memories going to be like, and how much are you proud of everything you've put on for the last four years at obviously two different places?**

RAEGAN BEERS: 20 to 30 years from now I don't think I'm going to necessarily remember who we beat, who we lost to, who we won -- maybe I will, but I don't think anybody else will. But I'm going to remember the relationships that I have made from my time at Oregon State, in my time here, the coaching staff at Oregon State, coaching staff here, the people that have just impacted my life in a really phenomenal way, making me not only a better basketball player but a better person.

And I really appreciate Oklahoma for doing that. And just helping me be the strong woman that I'm going to take into my career in the WNBA.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Coach.

**Q. What do you want a player like Aaliyah Chavez to take away from playing her freshman season with great players like Raegan and Payton?**

JENNIE BARANCZYK: You know, as we're in the locker room and we have those moments when she says things about how much she's grown as a person, I think she's grown as a basketball player and she's more than just what's on the court. She plays hard. She makes mistakes. She does really good things. She's learned a lot. She gives everything that she has every time she's out there.

And I think what this team has really taught her and what you want her to take away is how amazing of a person she really is, where she's independent and strong. She's learning to be a leader. She's learning just to have a really cool friend group that's your team that is people that tell you the truth, that people challenge you, that people love you and care about you.

That's what I want her to take away. I want her to take away the hurt, the good, the positive, the bad, the learning opportunities.

I want her to just continue to become a holistic person, because she's really, really special, and she's only going to get better at basketball, and she's only going to become this more charismatic person that you're going to be able to

see.

I've seen her growth a ton. I want her to take that away. But there will be an edge there too. I want her to take that hunger, too.

**Q. When you think back to the first time you guys played them, your guys' offense seemed to flow pretty easily, and today they just turned the spigot off pretty early and it was hard to get past that. I was just wondering the defensive pressure that Latson and Johnson and their guards put on you guys, how do you feel like that stymied your offense today?**

JENNIE BARANCZYK: Well, I think, obviously -- kind of goes to your question a second ago -- I feel like they're very, very good defensively, and again, that margin of error is small. I thought we got some good looks. At the very, very beginning it didn't go in the basket, and I think that's what really stifled us, too.

At this level, and great teams, those can't bother you so much. And I think they bothered us a little bit too much, partially because they are very good and they do have a lot of size in there. And at the same time, we didn't necessarily share the ball the way that we normally share the ball either.

I think we took some -- we wanted to get it back right away and then we kind of didn't work together, and then there were moments that we just have to finish a little bit better, too.

No, I mean, they're a good team, and we'll take that away. But we also needed to make sure that we finished some of those and took care of the ball a little better in some of those other areas.

**Q. Is their defense a little bit underrated in some ways, everyone's talked about their offense, how they're scoring so many points in this tournament lately, but their defense has been pretty good too. As you said, took your offense a little bit.**

JENNIE BARANCZYK: Yeah, I mean, I don't know if people are talking about their underrated defense. I don't know if people are saying that. I have not heard that. Nor do I think that. But I do think when you shoot the ball like that, your defense is pretty damn good too. And there's an element that -- I mean 10-for-14 from 3, when that's not something that -- I mean, you have to plan for their interior play. They're so strong and tall and they finish well. And they are still crafty. They can face. They can have their back to the basket. They rebound. You have to take care of that. So for them to do that, that puts a lot of pressure

on that end, too.

Defensively, I think, again, they do a great job of -- it's the experience of understanding what it takes and being connected and reading each other.

A lot of them have played together for a long time, or at least a couple of years. And so they can read that. They can understand that. And there's a standard there.

So I wouldn't say that they're underrated, but I would say they're pretty dang good.

**Q. If you had a chance to stand in front of a WNBA GM and explain to them what makes Raegan so special and why she deserves a chance at the next level, what would you tell them about her?**

JENNIE BARANCZYK: Well, I think -- and the fortunate part is I've had a lot of these conversations. And Raegan is addicted to growing. She likes to get better. She has worked really, really hard. She doesn't take off days. She sees goodness in everybody around her.

She has another level in her that's not been tapped into yet and that's going to be at that next level, for her to be able to play in a physical game, for her to be able to -- she can stretch it a little bit.

There's still some areas, obviously, she can improve upon, and that's the exciting part. But you get literally the best person and best teammate and somebody that sees greatness in everybody around her.

Not that we don't have a team of that or there aren't people like that everywhere, but not like Raegan. I mean, Raegan, she's unique and she's very, very special in that.

So I think her best basketball is, honestly, ahead of her. I think she will thrive. And even if it takes a second, she's not going to stop working.

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