

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - FDU vs TCU

Friday, March 21, 2025

Fort Worth, Texas, USA

Schollmaier Arena

FDU Knights

Mark Campbell

Madison Conner

Sedona Prince

Hailey Van Lith

Media Conference

TCU - 73, Fairleigh Dickinson - 51

THE MODERATOR: We'll start with a brief opening statement from Coach Campbell.

MARK CAMPBELL: Pumped to get that first one behind us. March Madness can be cruel, and you've got to find a way to survive in advance. This group did that today.

One of the things that's been tricky for our league in the Big 12, and can't speak on other leagues, you have a two-week break from where you're in a rhythm for three months straight and then all of a sudden you have a two-week window with no games. Then you're thrust in a win or go home situation.

I think really the first half, there was a lot of adrenaline and nerves, which is healthy and good, but it kind of impacted us. In the second half, I thought the group played really good. Kind of got into a rhythm on both sides of the court. I thought we were great defensively. Our biggest key against the guys were to defend the 3-point line. Because this team has the ability to really, really shoot it. They ended up going 1 for 11.

That's an area, one of the things that we've worked on down the home stretch of the season was to defend the 3-point line just more efficiently.

So really proud of this group. They're resilient. They continue to find ways to win. And at the end of the day, this group doesn't want this journey to end. I don't want



this journey to end so we live to fight another day and excited to see this next game between two great teams and Sunday's going to give us a chance to go to the Sweet 16.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes now.

Q. Sedona, Brown was giving it to you guys early on. What was the key in slowing her down? How much do you think as a defender with a match-up like that.

SEDONA PRINCE: She's a super athletic kid. We scouted her heavily. Watched a lot of film and what she can do. Not let her get anything easy. Take away her outside shot, which I struggled in the beginning. Down the stretch, putting a hand up, making shots hard for her. Giving her nothing easy in the paint down low. She had a good night. But at the end of the day, it was a team effort for us to pull this out. We just had to defend as a unit, and that's what we did.

Q. Madison, you had ten points in the second quarter to get the team rolling offensively. Just talk about your looks that you got tonight and how those generated and how important that was to kind of get rolling offensively.

MADISON CONNER: Yeah, I mean, I think I was taking what they were giving me. I forced a few shots early, and then I feel like I settled into a rhythm in the second quarter. Our team did a good job in the second quarter getting our rhythm back.

Like he said, we've been off for a while. I felt that was going on in the first quarter. The second quarter, able to settle down and get shots I could knock down.

Q. Madison, the ability for you to kind of get that thing rolling, you've done it all year long. But so much has gone to Hailey And Sedona, and they've been great. For your part in making this thing go, can you speak about that?

MADISON CONNER: Yeah. I mean, I think that's what's



so special about our team. I have two great people beside me. I don't think the egos let that affect how we play on the court. If it's Hailey's night, let her go off. If it's Sedona's night, let her go off. That's what makes us so special and why we've had a great season because we're so unselfish.

I'm not sitting back saying this is all about Sedona or all about Hailey. I live for that, and it's awesome to see them flourish and play well. When it's my time to step up and make shots or do whatever it is to help the team, I think that's my role and I'm more than Willing to do that.

Q. Hailey, question for you. You've done the NCAA Tournament thing now a lot. Does it feel any different this one than the times at LSU or Louisville?

HAILEY VAN LITH: Yeah, I mean, it's a different, a whole different group of people. But the vibe and the mindset that you have to be in is pretty similar. I've had pretty good amount of success in March Madness so I kind of know what it feels like and what a team, you know, what kind of vibe they're in when they're going to have a good run. And I think, you know, that game was really good for us because we worked it out. And I think some teams can get stunned or they start to get really nervous that the team's even in the game.

I thought we did a good job of just letting things flow out. Madison hit a ton of tough shots, and we just kept going to her, and Sedona was able to get position later in the game and we got easy points there. Defensively, I think we turned it up a notch intensity-wise.

So we did all the little things without panicking. So I was really happy with that adjustment from us.

Q. Hailey, you just mentioned the defensive intensity kind of changed. Was there something specific that you guys said to each other, or was it just getting settled down and letting the nerves kind of go away?

HAILEY VAN LITH: I think it was a little bit of both. You're excited. We had a little bit of nerves. We also maybe didn't want to get in foul trouble. We knew that if we put them at the line a lot, that wasn't going to be in our favor.

But at the end of the day, we decided to start dictating things. We didn't just let them run the actions they wanted to run. That's been a common theme for us. I think when you see us in any game we've played turn it up, we start dictating a little bit more and deciding what we're going to let them do.

So, ultimately, that's the decision that we made and it worked out for us.

Q. Hailey, you been to an Elite Eight four time already. You're trying to help lead this team to the Sweet 16 for the first time. Have you thought about you might be playing Louisville? I'll ask a little more directly than I did yesterday. The fact that Louisville, a place that you've had a lot of success with, a coach you've had success with, the possibility of facing them tomorrow.

HAILEY VAN LITH: Three Elite Eights, one Final Four. At the end of the day, I'm just excited to play another game, whoever that may be. I'm up for the challenge. I love to compete, and it's in God's hands, man. Whatever is going to happen is going to happen, and I'm just going to go out there and try to be the same girl that I've always been. I have a team that loves me. I have a team that has my back. So I'm in a great environment to feel supported and, you know, if that match-up does happen, let it be.

Q. Sedona, Coach Campbell yesterday talked about the 1 through 15. With the slow start you got, the 5-0 run from Donovyn, you saw DaiJa give you big minutes, Taylor Bigby gave you good minutes. How good was it to see teammates step up early in this one?

SEDONA PRINCE: We've had that happen. There were multiple games where I struggled. It's just 30 games in a season or more. It's hard to be on every single night. That's why we're such a round team. We have so many players good at coming in and doing what they need to do. They're always ready, have stayed ready all season. It's awesome, gives us a boost. It takes pressure off of us and knowing that our teammates are there to hit big shots, to get big stops in those moments we need them to. It's awesome. It's a boost, and that relief that I think is amazing that you need for a solid team to be solid all the way 1 through 15, right?

Because, you know, every night you're not going to get as lucky to be shooting as best as you usually can. So it's awesome we're so proud of them. And this is a team unit. Every single night it is for us.

Q. This is your guys' first time playing the NCAA Tournament March Madness in 15 seasons. Now to play the first two games at home with the atmosphere, the crowd, tell me the impact it makes.

MADISON CONNER: It's awesome to be able to play two games against our home crowd and be in this environment. All of us have been to the tournament so we have a lot of experience throughout our group. So I think that helps a lot. But it is our first time here together so I think it's awesome we're able to do this for TCU and be part of it.



Hailey hit on it before. We're happy to be around each other, and it will make the team so special in March. Usually teams are kind of battling some internal battles at this point. We're not at all. So I think it's just exciting to be with them up here and just be able to play in front of our fans.

HAILEY VAN LITH: We're hard to kill at home. We're undefeated. I'll take that percentage.

MARK CAMPBELL: You guys, how cool? It's a Friday at 2:30, and you almost have a sellout out there. I mean, the game time's not ideal on a workday. But Ft. Worth showed out. The basketball community in the DFW area showed out today. So that was really, really cool and excited to see what that looks like Sunday.

Q. For all three ladies, speaking on what you were talking about, having come to other programs, and back when Two Chains had come here and had the concert, bands were here, do you feel like you're starting something new to educate, like, hey, look, women's basketball here can be fun. It can be you coming out here and watching us play. I've been here 25 years. It hasn't really been this way.

HAILEY VAN LITH: I think that there's an excitement around us. I think we also have a lot of very unique personalities. Half the battle is personalities. Like we have very loveable people on this team. I think people like us. Loveable people.

At the end of the day, man, like we're not gonna sit here and beg people to come watch us play. We put on a show regardless on if anyone shows up or if the whole town shows up. I think the fact that we always perform, you know, we put a product out there that's worth being viewed. But we're also not going to play hard only if the arena's packed. And I think that's what makes us attractive.

Hopefully it keeps growing and getting better. I'm happy with the growth we've seen over this season.

THE MODERATOR: Ladies, thank you for your time. Appreciate it. We'll see you on Sunday.

MARK CAMPBELL: As you can tell, they have personality.

Q. With Sedona, what makes her so special as a game-changer on that end of the floor, outside of her being 6'7"?

MARK CAMPBELL: What happened to your shoe game today? You brought heat the other day. You got to

bounce back Sunday, okay?

So Sedona is so gifted as a post defender in regards to she can dictate and challenge shots without getting in foul trouble. I mean, you guys, I think she's the best defensive player in the country because any shot around the basket, she leads the country in blocked shots. That doesn't count all the shots that are altered because she's in the area and you got kids throwing stuff at the basket because of her presence.

So it's really hard to get easy buckets around the rim, and it kind of negates post players around the rim. And then she's smart and she can play in pick and roll and the drop coverage. Obviously, we've built our defensive scheme around her gifts and talents.

And she cleans up a lot of errors on blow-bys and poor close-outs. But it's just a combination of she's 6'7", she's long, but her mind in spacing and ability to challenge shots and stay out of foul trouble is incredible.

Q. Coach, you signed the extension so you're going to be here. Can you speak to what this win means to you and then how are recruits now, because of the way you've been winning and the fact that you've signed an extension?

MARK CAMPBELL: No doubt. Well, for the last, you know, year and a half, as we recruit, the first question I get from every parent is how do we know you'll be here? We can check that box now. The Frogs are stuck with me until 2030. As you build, especially with high school recruits, they want to know if their coach is going to be there while their daughter is trying to pick a school. That's something we've had to battle and work through on the recruiting trail so it's really nice to not have to worry about that.

As you build a program, you have to blend the portal and the high school together. You need both. To get out of the hole that we were in and the lack of talent that we inherited, you needed the portal. You had to get old. You had to get old quick to have a chance to compete in the Big 12.

We did that, but now we've really invested in the high school recruiting and have put a lot of time and energy into that. So I'm thankful for the extension.

As you build a program, it's gone from survival and build a team, and it's evolved to now build a program. And in order to build a program, you have to do that with the high school kids. So just excited to continue the journey we're on in mixing those two things together.

Did that answer it?

Oh, man, to come and, you know, I don't even know what year it was. 2010, the last time I made the NCAA Tournament. So it's been 15 years. They've never hosted an NCAA Tournament game. I don't know when the last win was. You do the math. 19 years?

I mean, it's just incredible. But there's steps along the way, and this team keeps doing, you know, this is the first time in program history that we've done this. And it's the first time of this. And the next step is, and it's a big one, you got to win in March, okay. And the next thing is you've got to make a run in March.

So this win was a huge step as we continue to break down barriers here and do stuff that the program's never done.

And so this was a big one. The very first game, you guys, these kids, they were hyped. Adrenaline was pumping. They were nervous. There were all sorts of emotions.

At the end of the day, they've been hard to kill all season and they keep finding ways to win. And so this was big for our program.

Q. Building off of that a little bit, you've talked about the challenges of program building and what you've had to do in the two years here. But with the contract extension, just what was it about this place that gave you the confidence to sign an extension like that and stay here long-term?

MARK CAMPBELL: I believe in TCU. 100 percent. When me and my family decided to come here, we just felt it aligned with us, and there's different places you go to that just fit that coach for different reasons.

TCU just really aligns with me. The kind of kids that we have the ability to attract here, I think we have attracted some of the best players from around the world. And we've done that where we've been able to do that while we're selling a vision without a product.

Now there's a product. That's one of the best products in college basketball so I'm just beyond excited to see what doors continue to open as you attract talent here to Ft. Worth.

Between TCU, the leadership here between Mike buddy and President Pullin and Chancellor Bischini is elite. Those three you'll take against anybody in the country.

And then now you guys, how cool is the fan support that's coming out. The goal is to build the best women's program

in college basketball, and there's a process to it, and there's a long journey. But what we've been able to accomplish these last two years is incredible, and this is just the beginning.

Q. (No microphone) -- Madison get an open look. She hit a 3. The crowd popped. Talk about the joy you have in Crafting plays like that because you have so many options.

MARK CAMPBELL: You guys just got to see the three up here. Our secret sauce is that locker room. It is incredibly hard in the portal era to get a group of young college athletes -- I don't care what sport it is -- to truly love each other and play for each other and find joy in each other's success.

This ride we've been on, this group doesn't want this thing to end. You hit it. And the talent level for me, there's two pieces. Obviously, we have some of the best players in the country. That makes it really fun to draw up different things for each one of them.

But to also just -- it is so fun being a part of this group. I've said it all along, I'm along for the ride on this thing. It's magical. But we're going to continue to find the right young women, and this culture this locker room that we've built, I will protect it with everything I've got to continue to add just the right pieces.

So that was fun, though. You were watching closely.

Q. You talked about enjoying this win and everything that amused you. How quickly do you have to move on because you know how important it is to make that run.

MARK CAMPBELL: I've got 90 seconds left, looks like, to enjoy it. I'm going to go right back out there and sit on the scout table. The coaching staff is assigned each of these teams. They've been working really hard. Whoever ends up winning, as soon as that game's over, we'll be right up in the office watching film and fine-tuning our game plan. Then we get one shoot-around tomorrow and a film session. Our team will come out. We'll knock out a film session this evening.

So, yeah, you had this little 30-minute window to enjoy it. Then we'll turn the page, and we're going to have an unbelievable opponent and game Sunday afternoon.

Do we know the game time yet? Don't know. Well, hey, at the end of the day, we need Ft. Worth to show out again and we'll see you guys on Sunday. Go Frogs.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for your time, Coach.
Appreciate it.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

