

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: Second Round - Louisville vs TCU

Saturday, March 22, 2025

Fort Worth, Texas, USA

Schollmaier Arena

TCU Horned Frogs

Coach Mark Campbell

Hailey Van Lith

Madison Connor

Media Conference

Q. Hailey, you're playing Louisville. Any extra emotions or thoughts facing your former team?

HAILEY VAN LITH: I'm actually cool. You know, I know that -- I understand the media, I understand the narrative that's being painted. Doesn't necessarily align with where I am at mentally and emotionally.

That's okay. It doesn't matter if people don't have the same perception as me. I'm in a really good spot. I'm excited to play. You know, this game a much bigger than me and what I got going on.

TCU is looking to go to the Sweet 16 for the first time ever. That's a lot bigger than whatever else the narrative is. I'm just excited to go play. It's going to be great game time. Probably going to get a primetime slot. I love it.

Q. Hailey, you broke the single-season record for assists in yesterday's game. How important was that to you, not just in being able to show your full playmaker package, but to have that record here?

HAILEY VAN LITH: Yeah, I actually didn't even know until this morning that I did that. But no, it's been awesome. I think it's destiny that it happened here at this point in my career under Coach Campbell and these girls.

Yeah, I mean, I couldn't have done it without my teammates. An assist is a two-way street. I have to pass it but they have to make the shot. She only does it sometimes. Sometimes I think she misses on purpose.

MADISON CONNOR: I'd like to see how many assists you



have from me. We'll double back. Somebody stat that.

HAILEY VAN LITH: Somebody stat that. No, it's awesome. I'm super grateful for that recognition and that title. You know, the goal is to keep racking them up. I'm not finished yet.

Q. Hailey, two-part question. When you transferred and went to LSU after Louisville and now here, what goes into that process? What are you looking for at your next stop? What are your memories of playing or Louisville for those three years?

HAILEY VAN LITH: Yeah, you mean next stop as in like the WNBA or when I was in the transfer portal.

Q. Just the transfer portal process.

HAILEY VAN LITH: Yeah, I think when I chose TCU I was really looking for a system much like our system here. Just a ton of spacing. Unique personnel that opens up the floor for me where I can be a playmaker, what I do best.

But also a system that will challenge me to open up new parts of my game, like I have with playing the one a little bit.

And I would say I have a lot -- one of my best friends plays for Louisville still. Probably going to be a bridesmaid at my wedding if I ever get married. Yeah, I mean, it's the people that I remember most.

And we did go to a Final Four. That's life changing. A lot of emotions there, so it was a positive. Like I look back on it positively. Yeah, me and Merissah, room 112. (Smiling.)

Q. Talked about obviously TCU trying to get to the Sweet 16 for the first time. You've been there. Hailey has been there. Quite a few of the other girls on the team have been there and championship games. What is it about this group that's been able to come together and kind of cohesiveness to get to this point and try to get farther?

MADISON CONNOR: Yeah, I think we all came here for



... when all is said, we're done.®

this reason. We all wanted to build a program and get to this point, obviously see how far we could take it thing. The experience we have on the roster will help us. Obviously haven't played in a Sweet 16 or that type of game together, but we've all been there in different journeys and parts of our careers.

I think that's something we kind of have, as well as other teams. Other teams have a whole bunch of transfer players that have also been there. Our group gels so well and we've been working towards this the whole season. It's going to show here in these last couple games.

Q. Madison, talked about the development of your offensive game from a last year. A lot of three point shots; yesterday look really comfortable in the mid-range. How has this part of your game developed in the positive years you've been here?

MADISON CONNOR: Yeah, that's awesome. I think it's definitely been a journey trying develop my game as whole. I came from Arizona where I was kind of just put in the corner and just tried to knock down open threes. That was my role and that's how I got playing time.

Last year Mark was trying teach me how to come off the pick and roll, which I haven't done since high school. High school is a whole different level than college. That wasn't my gift.

We spent a lot time working on that and just watching film and trying to develop that. I think with all injuries I was put in a position where I really -- I was kind of the only one that really could come off the pick and roll, and I had to figure it out and be thrown in the fire.

I feel like I'm so obviously developing that, and having great players around me that instill confidence in me and help me and show me ways I can get better at that has tremendously helped me.

Obviously that is still a growth area for me. I mean, I can shoot the ball from different areas of the court, but to help my team usually from the three-point line. Yesterday they were giving me other things, so it was my job to hit those shots, too.

Q. You guys talked about how hard to kill you've been, especially on your home floor. Tomorrow night last time playing at Schollmaier. What does what mean to you? Chance to finish the season undefeated with the trip to the Sweet 16 on the line?

HAILEY VAN LITH: Yeah, I mean, I don't think we could ask for a better opportunity. All those things that you just

said, like chance to remain undefeated, go to a Sweet 16, the last time for -- what do we have, seven seniors?

MADISON CONNOR: Yeah.

HAILEY VAN LITH: Slash seven years, slash fifth years.

MADISON CONNOR: Slash graduates.

HAILEY VAN LITH: Yeah, it's seven of our last time to play here, so there will be an added emotional component. I think we'll have a great crowd. I think Louisville traveled pretty well, too. I think it's going to be a great combination.

I think it's going to be one of those environments that you live to play in.

MADISON CONNOR: I would say the same thing. It's a great opportunity for us. Obviously a whole bunch of emotion. It's your last game here. Most importantly you have to handle business. Going to the Sweet 16 is our goal, so...

Q. Hailey, what stands out about Louisville when you watch film?

HAILEY VAN LITH: Yeah, they were extremely active, athletic; they have very talented guards; they have unique, versatile post players, stretch fours. You know, they're untraditional in some things.

We're definitely going to have to come out and play well. It's not a team that we're taking lightly, but I'm also -- being in that program I know that they definitely are going to have a chip on their shoulder. When I was there we always had a chip about us. You know, probably why I also play like that still.

So we're going to have to come out and be intense and match their intensity. We'll see if we're up to it.

MARK CAMPBELL: If you wear those shoes you get first question.

Q. First question for you. After yesterday's game, you guys had a chance watch film. What stands out about this Louisville team?

MARK CAMPBELL: That they're really good. They do a great job. He's had incredible success there for a really, really long time. What they do well is they try to speed you up and force turnovers and make the game a little chaotic.

They've done it all year. They are so good at what they do. They're very athletic. Great in transition. Seems like

Cochran has been there forever. Just a great post player down there in the middle.

So then they got those two guards, especially Curry, who can really shoot it, and then a tremendous freshmen that's out there.

And so they're here for a reason. They've had a great year. They find ways to win.

So they pose a lot of problems and we got our hands full tomorrow.

Q. Coach, Hailey broke the single-season assist record for TCU yesterday. There had been a big narrative the whole year about how she came here and unleashed as a playmaker. How cool was that to see her break a record?

MARK CAMPBELL: I'm so proud of her and happy for her. Majority of her college career she has been a scorer, you know, a guard that -- just an attacking guard.

What's been neat is that, one, she's been willing to be coached and willing to evolve and grow, which is hard for young people. It's hard for anybody though to be open and willing to grow.

And so that was the goal, that I thought she had a passing gift and elite vision from studying her and as long as we've known her. I think our system does a great job putting kids in space, and because of our personnel and shooting ability the court is open.

One, I think Hailey needed the opportunity of the ball put in her hands; two, she is so dynamic she needs space to be able to manipulate the game and attack people.

So I'm really happy that it came to fruition. It was the plan. Hailey deserves all the credit for being in her fifth year of college. Think about what she did. Like to break the single season all-time assist record as a brand new player that is learning a new coaching staff, learning a new system, and that's a part of a brand new team, like to do that that's ridiculous.

And there is a chance she breaks a single-season scoring record on top of it of. And is just an incredible leader. And she's finishing her second Master's degree. I mean be holy cow. She's crushing life right now, crushing the season.

I couldn't be more happy for her. Nobody works harder than Hailey Van Lith on her game and nobody cares more about the game than Hailey.

Q. There has been a lot of noise about Hailey facing her former team; a lot coming from us obviously. But with her and just her approach in general, she's made it about the team. She said earlier there are bigger things to worry about, like getting to the Sweet 16 for the first time. What can you say about the way she's handled the noise this week and really just in general this season?

MARK CAMPBELL: Hailey is so mature and wise with how she manages any narratives. Obviously that kid is under the spotlight. Everything she does, good or bad, gets scrutinized, unfairly.

She's able to manage all of it. It's incredible truly what she's been able to do. This game is at the end of the day TCU versus Louisville, period. It's two really good teams that have an opportunity to advance to the Sweet 16.

I mean being obviously you guys, there will be storylines that are fun to sell and paint. But the game of basketball, it's five-on-five.

So I do know Hailey is going to show up and be laser focused because that's what she does. It doesn't matter who you're playing. Doesn't matter if it's closed exhibition game in October, Hailey takes that game as serious as tomorrow's game with a sweat 16 berth on the line.

That's her superpower. If you were to come and watch her practice, do an individual workout, workout with her dad, Hailey -- it is one gear and that thing is full tilt.

So just excited. It's two good teams. I know our team is ready for this. They're built for March with how old we are and with all the experience. They are really excited for tomorrow to get here.

Q. You kind of just caught on to what I was going to ask you about. You got players that been to the Sweet 16, to the Final Four, to the championship game. Yesterday was the first time they played in one of these together. Talk about what you saw and how that drives this team to know what is it expect on the short turnaround against good teams and try to get to the next level?

MARK CAMPBELL: Yeah, for sure. They're so mature. Halftime was an easy talk of take a deep breath, crack a few jokes with them.

You know, because of their maturity, age, understanding the magnitude of what's in front of us, how I get to coach them, how or staff gets to communicate with them, it's

almost like you're coaching a pro team in how you manage them, which is just a blast.

This group is very unique. I think they're one of a kind and they are the oldest team in the country. So really yesterday was -- I'm thankful that we had an opportunity to work out kinks. We had to earned the win.

But that two-week layoff is a long time of no games, and so I don't expect that tomorrow. Truth is you can't. You can't spot a team the rest of the tournament a quarter for you to work out kinks. I expect this group to be ready to rock and roll from the tip.

Q. (Indiscernible.)

MARK CAMPBELL: I usually make fun of their age. You know, we're old. Anyway, I can't give any specific examples. What happens in the locker room stays in the locker room. Usually it has something to do with their age.

But this group is -- you guys, I don't know if you -- from being around all season, they are loose, they're fun loving, I mean, Madison on the way out yesterday cracked a joke about someone needs to look after me. She said, don't worry, his parents are here. I mean, they're like this all the time.

But they flip the switch. It's incredible. The switch flips when it's go time, which is what makes them really unique.

Q. Coach, you talked about Hailey's leadership. You have Sedona and Madison. How has their leadership rubbed off or been an example for Donovan and Taylor Bigby, who are going to take that mantel next year.

MARK CAMPBELL: Yeah, there are so many ways leadership comes out. Sedona has the over to the house often to hang and just spend time together. She's a social butterfly so she loves doing that and the team loves going over there.

I think the example that the big three have set for future teams, those three are so talented offensively, if they wanted to complain about how many shots they get or how they're being used, they could.

And not one of them. All season. They just want to figure out how this group can maximize their gifts and talents. That's so rare and so hard to do in sports. Whether that's pro or college, high school, doesn't matter. If your three best players truly don't care about their touches, scoring and they play the game right, that's when special things happen.

I hope that's the legacy they leave behind for the kids taking the mantel. It's a trickle-down effect. It's with this year's team. Those there three are so unselfish. So is Agnes; so is Donovan; so is Bigby, Aaliyah, Una, just keep going down the line. Those three set the standard and everybody else followed.

This group is just very, very selfless.

Q. You guys are undefeated at home. Have a chance to finish your home schedule an unblemished record and go to the Sweet 16. Great crowd last night. Anticipating more tomorrow. What does it mean to have this historic opportunity here?

MARK CAMPBELL: Yeah, I mean, just building what we've built -- I would love to know the attendance from our very first game here two years ago. Of actual butts in the seat, because it wasn't many.

But as you build this program and put a product out there that's worthy, it has been neat that basketball community in DFW has come out. I expect an incredible showing tomorrow.

But we've created one of the best home-court advantages in college basketball. The energy that we play with, a lot of that comes if the amazing crowds that we have. Yesterday I think that was the fourth highest attendance in program history. Is that right?

And so let's see if we can break the all-time record tomorrow is what we need to do. And obviously how cool would that be? Never been to the Sweet 16 in men's or women's basketball. We have a golden opportunity to do that on our home court. So it's awesome. The team earn has earned those home games over the course of the three months.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports