

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

Sunday, March 23, 2025

Fort Worth, Texas, USA

Schollmaier Arena

TCU Horned Frogs

Mark Campbell

Donovyn Hunter

Hailey Van Lith

Agnes Emma-Nnopu

Media Conference

TCU 85, Louisville 70

Mark CAMPBELL: I just want to start by thanking Fort Worth and the basketball community out here. That crowd was incredible. That environment was incredible. The student body was incredible. That got this team over the hump today. That environment was electric for 40 minutes and we needed all of it.

So proud of this group to accomplish something that's never been done, men or women. To make it to the Sweet 16 is really hard to do.

Somehow Hailey just seems to do it every year, so it's normal for her. Everybody else, it's not normal for.

But Louisville, they competed. They played their heart out. But this team, we can really, really shoot it, and they were trying to speed us up and make the game frantic. The flipside of it, our shooters got let loose and we got a whole bunch of good looks today. And there's a reason we're 20-0 in the Schollmaier. And so we're excited that the journey not done.

Can't wait to get to Birmingham and have an opportunity to play in the Sweet 16. This group all season just continues to do stuff that's never been done here, and this was just another one.

Q. Obviously they were putting a lot of pressure on Hailey and Madison. What did you see that led you guys to have such big nights with their defense?



DONOVYN HUNTER: All year they have seen the pressure. I mean, Hailey and Maddy are elite scorers. So there's no question why teams would appreciate them the way that they do. And I think through the season, especially for me, I've learned that I have to step up in my role to relieve the pressure off them especially when they are getting trapped on every ball screen.

So I think tonight was just a testament to the work that we put in as a team and in practice just to make Hailey's life a lot easier. So, I mean, it was finally put together. Aggy did an amazing job, too. But I think it was just what we've done in practice.

AGNES EMMA-NNOPU: Just touch on that. I think Hailey and Madison are obviously elite scorers and also elite play-makers. And when they pressuring like that, it leaves the court wide open for me and Donovan. Just feeling it tonight, so yeah.

Q. Hailey, obviously they spoke about getting the shots from passes from you. Can you speak about how they were double-teaming you, and how it took you a little bit to get scoring and how this team came along and finished them off?

HAILEY VAN LITH: They actually switched out their coverage a lot. Sometimes they trapped. Sometimes they switched. Sometimes they just hedged. They showed us a lot.

You know, at the beginning of the game, there's always a bunch of energy pent up. And I think once we rode that wave a little bit, I was able to just find my shooters. You know, I'm not going to lie. Sometimes it's hard to catch-and-shoot wide open. Like you would think it's easy, but it's actually not as easy as people think it is. Sometimes it's a mental game.

The fact that they can consistently knock those shots down, they are going to sit up here and give me the credit but like incredible. Couldn't be more proud of them. The game would have not been the same if they wouldn't have stepped up the way they did.



Teams can keep doubling me and I'm going to keep giving it to my teammates because they are putting points on the board.

Q. Your thoughts on the crowd?

HAILEY VAN LITH: The crowd was incredible. We broke a record. The students! The students were awesome. They got us through some tough moments where we were starting to turn it over a little bit, and just how loud they were it gives you a boost of energy. The home-court advantage was definitely there today, and that's one heck of a way to go out at home.

So I'm super thankful to the community.

Q. As Coach Campbell said, you've been here before in your career. What separates a Sweet 16 team from an Elite 8 or a Final Four team?

HAILEY VAN LITH: Like a team that loses in the next game? You know, I think the NCAA Tournament is structured differently than, like, a conference tournament to where if you can get hot, you play three days in a row. The NCAA Tournament isn't like that.

If you get complacent after you win these first two games, the other team's hungry in the Sweet 16. It's all about staying hungry and staying motivated. You don't want to be the team that's complacent out there next Saturday or Friday, whenever we're going to play. This couple days we get to prepare is going to be huge, and we have to be mature about it and handle it correctly.

Q. You guys had a marquis win against Notre Dame earlier. Can you talk about what that meant and what it's like to game plan a team with Miles and Hidalgo?

HAILEY VAN LITH: Yeah, that win was huge for us, and it was a way for us to prove ourselves to the basketball community. People weren't necessarily doubting us. They were just waiting for us to go do something unexpected and we pulled that off earlier in the year. They are obviously an incredible team. They have a lot of talented players, but we're very talented, as well.

So I think it's going to be a great game. It's going to be so good for women's basketball. At this point in the season, great players show up, so whoever is the toughest team is going to win. So that's going to be our job.

Q. If you look around the arena today, you see people of all ages and genders wearing your number, your face and you're becoming one of those faces that's

growing women's basketball as a whole. Can you talk about that?

HAILEY VAN LITH: Yeah, I mean, it's a blessing. But I really -- I'm really standing on God's shoulders right now, you guys (tearing up) He's delivered me from so much, man, and so much pain and suffering and confusion. I just -- it's all glory to God, truly. I would be nothing without Him. In the darkest moments of my life, He never turned his face from me and I just couldn't be more grateful to experience His love in this moment.

All those people are wearing my jersey out there but it's for a greater purpose. It's God working, man. That's all I have to say.

Q. There's been a lot of firsts, a lot of records for you all as part of this team this season. What does it mean to punch a ticket for the program's first Sweet 16?

DONOVYN HUNTER: I think it's cool to come into a program and see the beginnings point of it, talking to Mark and seeing the vision he had for the team and all of us transfers that came in and trusted his process and the plan that he had for us. I think he took a huge risk on us, and we took a risk on this program, not necessarily knowing what was going to come out of it.

It's really cool to sit back and watch it, and to be lucky enough to be a part of it. But I'm not surprised at all that we're breaking all these record points in history. It's all a testament to, really, just the team.

AGNES EMMA-NNOPU: A hundred percent. And also it's obviously the last March Madness for a lot of us, and it's really special for us to have the season that we're having. I think that this is just the beginning of TCU as a program, and I think it's going to be one of those big names in women's basketball, you know in the future.

Q. This isn't the first time you've had a big-scoring game at TCU. Last year you had quite a few of them, actually. How did your role last year as being one of those scorers, how much did that build your confidence and prepare you for an opportunity like today?

AGNES EMMA-NNOPU: Yeah, a hundred percent. I think the coaches kept pouring into me, like some days I'm not hitting and I have to contribute in other ways but I think continuously they are telling me, if you have your feet set, have that thing fly like you shoot numbers in practice. Just continuing to believe in myself, that's been something huge that I've been working on.



Q. A lot of the talk before this game was about you and Louisville. Was it at all weird to play your old team, a place where you spent three years, and in any way, even though there's been time, do you still feel some connectivity to that community at all?

HAILEY VAN LITH: Yeah, I mean, I wouldn't describe it as "weird." I would describe it as nostalgic a little bit. I was there for three years. A lot of people, I don't think a lot of people -- I almost completed my entire college career there. Me and Olivia Cochrane and Melissa Russell roomed together for about two and a half years.

So I grew up with those girls, man. We made stupid, young, kid mistakes together. So of course, it was definitely nostalgic. I wouldn't say it was weird.

And a hundred percent feel connected to that community. I'm still heavily involved with some charities there. All the managers are the same managers I had that just rebounded for me at 10:00 PM at night if I needed them; the doctors were there when I was having issues. I'm so connected to them. I have love for them. At the end of the day, it's a sport. We have to compete a hundred percent, and it's my job to go out there and win.

But definitely feel connected to the community, and I have positive memories there.

MARK CAMPBELL:

Q. What can you say about the performances of Agnes and Donovyn tonight?

MARK CAMPBELL: They delivered on the biggest game in our program history. But they have been delivering all year, and one of the things we have is serious firepower, and it's kind of a pick-your-poison. We have seen so many different defensive schemes over the course of a season.

Louisville, this is what they do. It's not like they changed. They play a frantic system. They scramble. They trap. They press. They try to speed you up. And the danger of that, you can either try to pull it out and run a set against it, or you can say, let's go. And our game plan today was, let's go and attack it and see what shots we can get from that.

The dangerous part of doing that with us is you're going to let us shoot a lot of threes, and you're going to let our shooters get a lot of good looks. Our system and our personnel is based on -- the whole thing, our whole operation, is attracting elite-level shooters and play-makers.

Today on our home court in front of that crowd and that energy, that was a dangerous way to play us. And by the way, Donovan and Agnes, all these kids, they work so hard to get their reps in every single day in that practice facility. Those two kids live in it. Not just them but we have a roster full of it.

It's just neat when you see young people work really hard at their craft, and then for it to be rewarded in a game like this on a stage like this, it's awesome.

Q. You've talked all season about building this program up and the trust that all these transfers have had, with winning the Sweet 16, something the program has never done, what does that do for this program and for you and just kind of the future for this program?

MARK CAMPBELL: Yeah, I mean, it's just so cool. The main group that played today, I can't touch on every single kid, but we have such -- I mean, there's so many examples. But like Taylor Bigby, Aaliyah Roberson had a small role today. They are so selfless. This group is so selfless. Una, who had a huge role a year ago, is all in on trying to help the team.

So the locker room, the culture, this group of people that we have is rare and special. In order to do this -- half the team's new. It's magical what they have done. But it's because they are just an amazing group of young women. These wins, they alter a program's trajectory. It impacts recruiting on the highest level. The dang portal opens Tuesday, and there's going to be an incredible amount of talent that's going to be floating around.

I think TCU, we have established ourselves as one of the best teams in college basketball. I think our brand and system and style of play is really fun to watch, and kids want to play in it. Obviously I think we're going to have three draft picks between Sedona and Hailey and Madison. We are at the forefront of our stride, and this ride, they just keep doing stuff. Hopefully we can get the next one.

Q. You guys beat Notre Dame earlier in the year. What advantage is there to playing a team, even though it was all the way back in February?

MARK CAMPBELL: There's many. Especially for us, Notre Dame was been one of the elite women's basketball teams in our country for a long time. For us that first win galvanized the group. Gives you belief that we are really good, and you need some of those wins early on as a brand new group is trying to figure each other out. When you go back into that environment, you play a South Carolina and Notre Dame and N.C. State was a Final Four

team.

And now that you're going to go back to a Sweet 16, play a team that you've already played, win or lose, you're comfortable. You're not -- these kids, I tell you what, they are not scared of anybody of any team of any moment. They live for it.

I do think there's just an advantage of, all right, we have already laced it up against these guys, and we understand their personnel. And how that game unfolded, you know, we had a monster fourth quarter. We hung 30-plus in the fourth quarter to come back and get that win, and so Notre Dame is great, elite, some of the best players in college basketball. Their backcourt is special but those three kids are as good as anybody in the country.

So there's a lot of star power. There's a lot of firepower in that game, and that's -- when you get to the Sweet 16, all those teams are loaded. So it's going to be really fun.

Q. This is a team made up of athlete from all over the country who come specifically to play for you, and there's a purpose for that, and you won head coach of the year this season. Can you talk about how these girls and this team has impacted who you are?

MARK CAMPBELL: Yeah, for sure. Hailey touched on it a little bit over the course of the season, but I'm a huge person of faith. You know, you work really, really hard at your job and work really hard at your cast and it's just been incredible how each one of these young women have ended up in Fort Worth. The Lord's fingerprints are all over it, and it's been magical.

So I'm thankful for you guys for them to come to this program, a year ago that was holding open tryouts, for getting games and a year removed from a 1-17 season and to have this level of talent -- and talent, I mean on and off the court. These young people are just incredible, and so it's humbling.

At the same time, a huge part of it is TCU. TCU is an incredible university, and Fort Worth is an incredible city. I think it's the whole package. When you put all of that together, it's why we have this roster, and you guys, there will be more talent coming here. This program, it's just going to continue to build and escalate. It's our staff's job to vet and find the right pieces.

Q. Donovan Hunter is a taller guard, and she's asked to do a lot of things. She has to handle the ball, guard one through four and knock down the open three. What makes her so effective at her role?

MARK CAMPBELL: Ultimate winner. Incredibly selfless. She literally doesn't care what her role is. She works so hard. She doesn't care if she takes two shots or 15 shots. She doesn't care if I told her to guard the centre we need you to front, if I need you guard the point guard.

Donovyn Hunter is the most selfless, elite-level winner that you could ask for, and think about her story. Starting point guard as a true freshman at Oregon State and led them a game away from the Final Four last year. Comes and learns another brand new system in a brand new program, and leads her team to a Sweet 16.

Our team has kind of taken off as Donovan has continued to grow and blossom throughout the season. But that young lady, is a freaking warrior, at the same time is the most humble, selfless kids.

Q. You've been asked this question all year. Who I'd like you to watch I'd like you to watch a little bit about your staff. Who had the scout tonight?

MARK CAMPBELL: Hey, I love that, and if we need more questions, this is such a special moment in our program's history, I'm okay with it.

Xavi had the scout, shocker. Somehow he gets all the big ones, and so Xavi poured into this, and does just a phenomenal job. Just because we have been together for so long, his ability to navigate and understand our system, our players, what we need to do to put our kids in a position to realistically execute a game plan, he's amazing at it.

So Xavi get the W for this one.

Great question. That's the best question of the day. Steve's and Jay's are ridiculous. You brought the Heat today. I like it.

Thanks for everything all year. Go Frogs.

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