

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - South Dakota State vs Washington

Friday, March 20, 2026

Fort Worth, Texas, USA

Schollmaier Arena

Washington Huskies Coach Tina Langley Brynn McGaughy Avery Howell Sayvia Sellers

Media Conference

Washington 72, South Dakota 54

THE MODERATOR: On the podium now we have head coach for Washington Tina Langley and student-athletes, Brynn McGaughy, Avery Howell, and Sayvia Sellers.

We'll begin with an opening statement about the game from Coach then open the floor to questions of student-athletes.

TINA LANGLEY: Yeah, first of all, South Dakota State is a great team and scouting them, it was really impressive to watch how they play and so I just want to credit Aaron and his team for a tremendous season. I thought they played really well today. Just a lot of respect for that program.

Really excited for our young women. They've been working incredibly hard all season. This is a great group of young women. I know as you see them play, you see their connectedness. You see their selflessness. You see their joy. Gosh, it's a blessing to be part of their lives and to do hard things with them and it was fun to see them compete at a high level today.

Q. Avery, you guys were down 10 like in the first eight minutes there. I think there was a time-out. What was said during that time-out and how did you guys get back in this game? I think it was a 12-2 run after that.

AVERY HOWELL: Yeah, I think that's obviously not the start that we wanted but we knew if we dug in on the things



we needed to focus on, the scout, just going back to the scout and preparation that we have done all, since we have known who we were playing, just going back into that.

Then coming together, playing and executing on the court and I think a lot of that started be our defense and just having that flow into our offense to help us be successful in that next run.

Q. For Sayvia, how much did you lean on last year's experience? Like at halftime, you guys were up 13. I think last year you guys were up 14. It felt very similar to someone who is just watching it, did it feel similar at all for you? Were there any messages like, hey, we've been here before, let's do not do what we've done last year?

SAYVIA SELLERS: Yeah, going into the locker room, it was definitely in the back of my mind but I didn't feel the need to express that to everyone. (Laughter) I think everyone was in the mindset of, yeah, we played a good first half but we have to continue and so I think everyone came out of the locker room with a good mindset of having to play 40 minutes like we did the first half. I thought we did that pretty well.

Q. For Brynn, the game is over now and so I don't think you're giving away any secrets. What was the game plan against Meyer? It felt like you guys were trying to throw a lot at her. You were fronting her at times, getting behind her at times. What were you trying to do against her?

BRYNN MCGAUGHY: Well, we definitely weren't supposed to be behind her, so if you saw that, that was not the scouting report. (Laughter) But, no, just be physical, don't foul, which, you know, it happens, but keeping high hands and just she's experienced. I give her a lot of respect. She's a really good player, so just not fouling and being strong.

Q. For Sayvia, you have seen Avery have some big nights before, just your thoughts on the things she did today on the glass and also offensively.

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SAYVIA SELLERS: Yeah, she did pretty good today. No, I'm just playing. Avery's a player. She just plays hard. I think I'm not going to lie, I kind of expect that out of her, to just be on the glass game because she's just who she is and obviously offensively, she puts in the work to shoot like that. I think it's very rewarding and it's fun to see all the hard work she puts in every day shows up in big moments like this. I was really happy she had a great game tonight.

THE MODERATOR: Any other questions for the student-athletes? I'll open the floor for questions to Coach.

Q. Same question that I had for Avery. Like, you're down 10, probably in the way that you wanted to start this game. What was the message to the team at that point?

TINA LANGLEY: I think we just knew how we have been practicing. We knew we were capable of playing the specific style of defense that we wanted to play today, so it was just reminding them. She really said it perfectly. Reminding them of the scout. Reminding them of the way we wanted to play. We knew that would lead us to our transition offense.

I think Brynn had our first break after that and went coast-to-coast, so you saw the tempo change a little bit.

Q. You had a really good view of what Avery did today. Just your thoughts on her performance.

TINA LANGLEY: Yeah, I thought Sayvia did a beautiful job of just saying the way she works. You do expect these things from Avery. She's every day the same, comes in and competes and her skill set continues to grow, genuinely, each practice. So just really proud of the work that she does and who she is I think culturally. The way she pushes us but does it with great servant leadership, so love to see how hard she's working.

Q. At halftime for you, was it a bit of déjà vu at all? Did you think of last year?

TINA LANGLEY: Of course you do know that as a coach. You know where teams have been but I knew we were a different team. I think it's a fleeting thought, it's one that passes. I'm so glad we're a different team, so it didn't stay long and knew that. We were able to talk even in the time-out of this is when we extend a lead, so love to see that growth.

Q. To go back to that 12-2 run that felt like that was the shifter. What happened during that run? What were the things that you saw?

TINA LANGLEY: Yeah, just getting back to the scout-specific defense. We did a really good job of putting some ball pressure on. We forced a good bit of turnovers. This is a team that really doesn't beat themselves and so to make them turn the ball over is a credit to the way these young women were defending tonight. I really loved the way that we came out there.

That led us to the transition and pushed tempo and they ran the floor. We kept a certain level of energy on the floor, which we wanted to see.

Q. I know that you don't want to be finished, but what does it mean to get this NCAA Tournament win? You haven't had one in a while.

TINA LANGLEY: Yeah, just real competing because this program has a lot of great history, a lot of great alumni. So many people that have poured into this university and this women's basketball program. We just want to honor the university and honor the people that came before us and how we work and how we improve each day.

Honestly, these young women. They've come in here and they've done something really hard. I think it says a lot about who they are and so just want to continue to celebrate the way they've worked and celebrate the people who came before us. Excited for that.

Q. Avery, you were part of a run last year with another team. What did that experience do for you? What did it mean for you to have that kind of -- you tied the game at the end of the first period. You put your guys ahead the start of the second quarter to stay, but just what did your experience do to help?

AVERY HOWELL: Yeah, last year with USC we had a pretty good run in the tournament. I just think that allowed me to have some experience and feel really comfortable in these type of high-pressure situations.

March is a lot of pressure, and it's everyone playing their best basketball so every night you have to show up, but I think that just allows me to hopefully be a calming presence on the court and just be there for my teammates and my coaches in any way that I can. That's just what I'm trying to do every single night.

I hope that my experiences last year later into the tournament helped me this year and just any game that is we have.

Q. Hi, Coach. I just wanted to ask Devin and Lullia have given you great minutes off the bench throughout the course of the year. They do that again today.



What did you see from lullia and Devin today in this game?

TINA LANGLEY: Yeah, great question. They were tremendous. Really the weeks that they've had have been tremendous. You can see Devin did so many things from her rebounding to the way she defended, the way she took care of the ball. It was beautiful to see her on the floor. She's been practicing at such a high level.

lullia as well. There's a senior that has worked so hard and she did a great job defensively but also slowing down and finishing inside today. I'm really pleased with how they're continuing to work and improve.

THE MODERATOR: Anymore questions? Thank you, guys.

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