

# NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - High Point vs Vanderbilt

Saturday, March 21, 2026

Nashville, Tennessee, USA

Memorial Gymnasium

**High Point Panthers**  
**Chelsea Banbury**

**Nevaeh Zavala**

**Macy Spencer**

Media Conference



how you guys matched up together.

MACY SPENCER: Yeah, she's a very tough player, very hard to guard. It was really fun playing against them. I think I learned a lot about myself this game.

And yeah, like Coach said, it doesn't really -- don't let it take away from what we've done this season, and yeah, I think it was fun to play in.

**Q. Going forward, what does this season mean going forward?**

CHELSEA BANBURY: You know, we talked about it. We were happy with this season. This group was able to do things that has never been done at HPU and they should be proud of that and that's something that no one can ever take away from them.

And kind of my message to the returners is this is the building block. We want to build upon it. We are not happy with just getting here. We want to put the work in in the off-season and nonconference to eventually move up our seeding and not have to take on the big dogs right off the bat.

But I'm very proud of what our seniors were able to accomplish and this team, and Nevaeh and Anna were here for four years, and that doesn't happen often. They won three regular season championships and two tournament championships, and no one has done that at our school and that's something that no one can ever take away from them.

But I said, You guys have built us a great foundation for what we want to do with this program, and you should be proud of that. And everybody else, be ready to work and build on it.

**Q. What's a major takeaway you'll take away from the season?**

NEVAEH ZAVALA: For the season? Just give it your all. We went into this being the underdogs, so I was trying to tell my team: Play like you have nothing to lose. We play

Vanderbilt 102, High Point 61

CHELSEA BANBURY: Man, we definitely played a really good team tonight. You know, Vandy is a tough group to defend, and you know, we had a pretty good game plan coming into it but they knocked down a lot of tough shot. They were able to separate early. I'm really proud of our girls. I think we competed for 40 minutes.

And we talked in the locker room that don't let this overshadow what we were able to accomplish this season. We still had a really good year. They are a fun group to coach. You know, it's definitely not the result that we wanted nor by the margin that we wanted but I am still very proud of this group and what we were able to do this year.

**Q. I believe this is your senior year.**

NEVAEH ZAVALA: Yes, ma'am.

**Q. Is there anything you want to say about your entire collegiate experience playing basketball?**

NEVAEH ZAVALA: I would just say that it was a big learning process, I guess. I feel like I came in to college sports with like a different mindset than I do now. I feel like I've grown so much as a woman, as a leader and as a teammate, and I can't wait to use those skills to help me go further in life after college.

**Q. You went toe-to-toe with Blakes in the first half, almost having pretty close to the same point totals. What was that like for you with it being your first taste of March Madness, and talk about your first half and**



our best ball when we're playing together. That's something I will definitely use.

**MACY SPENCER:** For me, it's being a better leader, when things are going our way, when things aren't going our way and just being there for my team whether things are going good for me or they are not. I think today that opened my eyes to what I need to be better at next season.

**Q. What can you say about each other? How have you seen each other grow, and just describe how proud of each other you are?**

**NEVAEH ZAVALA:** I would say I'm very proud of Macy. Sometimes she gets in her head but I always try to be there to cheer her on, like she missed a lot and I'm like, let's get it back on defense. I'm really proud of the season she's had coming in as a transfer and having to learn our entire system, all of our plays and how we run things. And I feel like she did a really good job of being able to fit, I guess, like a perfect piece, and I'm very proud of Macy.

**MACY SPENCER:** I'm also very proud of Nevaeh. She is a great leader on and off the court. When she was out for a little bit, we had a tough time. She is, like, our voice. She talks --

**NEVAEH ZAVALA:** A lot. I always talk a lot.

**MACY SPENCER:** She does talk a lot, but her voice does carry. I am so glad I got to play this season with her. She brought us together as a team, and sad to see her go.

**Q. It was really obvious that your team scouted Vanderbilt very well. Like every time Vanderbilt ran a play, they knew exactly what was coming. So what do you say to them, knowing that they did what they needed to do, and you have this loss, and this is the end of the season?**

**CHELSEA BANBURY:** Yeah, you know, something that I've given this team a lot of credit for is knowing games, and buying into them and that's what I said to them, and how we can build on it is they did buy into the game plan that we gave. Vanderbilt has a lot of good players. They are tough to defend but they bought in and they learned them and they learned what they wanted to do.

So that was the message. I said, this season was a lot of fun and this game didn't turn out how we wanted it to. We had some breakdowns, but you guys bought into the game plan and what we wanted to do. And that's why this year has been so special because I've done that, and you believed in me and our staff. So we did. It's tough when you meet the big dogs. They have got a lot of good

players, but I'm really proud of -- we came in and we bought into what we wanted to do out there.

**Q. You spoke a lot throughout the season that you really enjoy coaching this group, so what are some things you're going to miss about coaching this group? Looks like you've had a lot of personalities on the team throughout the year.**

**CHELSEA BANBURY:** The personalities, right. You spend so much time with the team and the players and you get to know them and they become your family and you love them and you see them through your ups and downs, I'm going to miss the individual.

I love coaching this team. They are a lot of fun. We had a lot of success. They are able to do it. They had fun playing, and when why you are team is having fun playing and playing at a high level, it's fun to coach. They were great in that.

The biggest thing is I'm going to miss the people. They talked a lot about Nevaeh, her growth. It's amazing to see the growth that she made from the four years she was here come in as a freshman and she's a young, confident woman and that's awesome to see. I'll miss seeing them on the floor.

Obviously we're losing three very good players to graduation but I think more than me missing them on the court, I'm going to miss them as people.

**Q. Aaliyah Collins, how much does she mean to this team?**

**CHELSEA BANBURY:** A ton. She's quick. Able to get to the basket. Disrupts a lot of things on defense. She had a tall task today guarding Blakes. She came in, three years, two and a half years, she made an impact and she made a name for herself.

We'll definitely miss her because I do think she's the best on-ball defender I've had, and just about as fast as anybody that I've ever coached.

I'm really proud, again, of who she has developed into, and the maturity that she's shown, especially this year, compared to years past. Yeah, I'll miss her. We'll miss her out there for sure.

**Q. Any individuals that come to mind, their journeys this year or long-term over many years, who sticks out and how much they have grown and how much this team has grown together this season?**

CHELSEA BANBURY: Yeah, someone that definitely sticks out is Anna. Obviously she was here for four years. She came over from Sweden and hardly said anything. She came as a freshman, visited our school with her team before they were to play in an AU tournament. So she didn't even come on a visit with her family and get to know us as a coaching staff. It was all by Zoom.

She's an 18-year-old kid coming over to a foreign country. I can't give her enough credit to do that. I don't know that I could have done that when I was 18 years old. To see the growth that she had over four years, coming out of her shell, it's amazing to see.

Just like Bray, she is a confident young woman now and I'm excited see what she's going to be able to do.

Having players for four years is a special thing, especially now and you get to see that growth. You get them as kids. Think of us as 18. You get them as kids and they leave as young women. If you can instill confidence or whatever you can, it's a special thing. Same with Aaliyah, and Macy has grown a ton on the floor and understanding what we want to do and her confidence has exploded since we've been here.

I could go through a list of everybody but over the course of a year or four years, it's amazing this transformation that we see within individuals.

**Q. What can you say about your coaching staff?**

CHELSEA BANBURY: Our staff puts in a lot of time. This group was a bunch of individuals that wanted to be in the gym constantly, and the saints were always wanting and willing to do work outs with them, before practice, after practice, later after class in the afternoons. You don't win games just as a single coach, all the games. You have to have a staff and I've been fortunate that we've been able to maintain a staff.

We haven't had a lot of turnover. Brittany Brown has been with me all seven years, and Brendan has been with me quite a few, too. That helps. If you're able to maintain a half staff and be constant in that, you're able to build on what you've been able to do in the past.

I love my staff. I'm grateful that I've been able to keep them. But they put in a lot of work to get here.

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