

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: Second Round - Illinois vs Vanderbilt

Sunday, March 22, 2026

Nashville, Tennessee, USA

Memorial Gymnasium

Illinois Fighting Illini

Coach Shauna Green

Destiny Jackson

Maddie Webber

Media Conference

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up with questions for Destiny Jackson and Maddie Webber.

Q. Destiny, you were one of the first major pieces of the Stay Home movement for players for the state of Illinois. Has this experience been just all you've kind of expected it to be, and give us your thoughts there?

DESTINY JACKSON: I mean, it's definitely been like a wonderful experience because, like I said, I wanted to come here to be successful and do things that haven't been done, and we've been able to accomplish things our first year.

So I'm really happy with the decision I made.

Q. Maddie, Shauna referenced yesterday maybe having a conversation with you guys after the Iowa game. Looking ahead into the NCAA Tournament, how you might have to beat a really good team on their home floor, what do you remember of that conversation and obviously kind of relevant now that you're facing a Vanderbilt team that's a No. 2 seed?

MADDIE WEBBER: Yeah, I mean, we just have to take advantage of this opportunity, and obviously it's a huge one to beat someone on their home court. That's obviously a goal of ours. And I think we're really prepared. We've played really good teams on their home court. So I think we just have to apply what we've learned.

Q. Maddie, Coach has shied away from talking about the youth of your team and more so wanting to use it for embracing, like, kind of fuel for you guys. How



have you seen the transition of the freshman group and the mindset heading into this tournament?

MADDIE WEBBER: Yeah, I mean, I've always said throughout the whole year the freshmen don't play like they're actual freshmen. Like, you would literally have no idea, just their composure and their will to do whatever it takes to win.

I mean, coming into the tournament and last game, I mean, they were putting their bodies on the line, doing whatever they could to help us win. It obviously paid off.

Q. Maddie, I know we talked about before the first round game just sort of how much you were looking forward to this chance to play in this tournament. Did it live up to your hopes to have the success that your team did and being able to get to the second round?

MADDIE WEBBER: Yeah, I was just really excited to be out there. And I think everyone kept their composure really well even when Colorado started coming back. And I feel like we just controlled the game. Even when we were having some bad lapses, we were able to gain control. Obviously we came out with the win, so yeah.

Q. Destiny, Vanderbilt, their style of defense is, like, predicated on just kind of like speed up ball handlers. As the floor general for the team, what's your mental checklist just to make sure you're staying composed out there?

DESTINY JACKSON: Honestly, just valuing positions and taking care of the ball. Because like you said, they do apply pressure, speed us up. But I feel like the Big Ten has also prepared me for that because I've seen teams like Michigan and Michigan State do similar things.

So I feel like I'm going to be prepared for it. And I'm also about to still watch a lot of film on it so I kind of predict when they might do certain things.

Q. For Destiny, when you take -- have you had a chance to look much at Vanderbilt's point guard Aubrey Galvan, also a freshman? And what's the



challenge of playing that offense that also features Mikayla Blakes and the way those two tend to team up a bit?

DESTINY JACKSON: They're a really good team. They're really good players, like you just mentioned. So honestly just going into that game, knowing they're going to be a tough matchup, also knowing we have really good guards also and that we're just ready to take on that challenge.

Q. Maddie, the atmosphere at this arena is going to be quite loud. But you guys are also used to that from playing in a lot of the Big Ten arenas. How do you feel that's set you up for this moment?

MADDIE WEBBER: Yeah, like Destiny said, I think the Big Ten has allowed us to prepare for moments like this. And for us, even though it is like home-court advantage technically, I think it's just a great opportunity just for women's basketball in general that there's going to be that many fans here. And I think it's just something we should also take advantage of and just appreciate.

Q. Destiny, what do you remember from that Iowa game in Iowa City, and what do you feel like as a team you can take away from that, especially playing a similar team, they're both No. 2 seeds, Vanderbilt on Monday night?

DESTINY JACKSON: I feel like the two biggest takeaways I can take from that is knowing that it's a big crowd there but just staying with my team, standing one with my team. And then also, like, towards the end of the game, when it is a tight game, just closing out, not having costly turnovers, and us just being able to prevail through whatever happens.

Q. Coach mentioned last night that it was going to be a late night for her, lots of prep, lots of film to study. What is prep looking like for y'all either today or last night? What was going through your minds heading into the game tomorrow?

MADDIE WEBBER: Yeah, I mean, last night the biggest thing for us was just to get rest, and then today watching a lot of film and being really locked in on that.

You can't always do everything with your team, so it's important that we, like, by ourselves individually look at film also. And, I mean, we went over what we needed to do, and we're going to obviously get on the court and work on that. So yeah.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thank you so much for joining us. We'll open it up to questions for Coach Shauna

Green.

Q. Last night you mentioned you were going to look at film right after the game, and it was already close to midnight. Is that something that you usually do, and how does your routine compare when these games are close in March?

SHAUNA GREEN: Yeah, I mean, this is obviously a quick turnaround. And finishing that game so late, by the time I got back to the hotel, you know, ate with our team, met as a staff, and then I just went back and watched as much as I could until my eyes wouldn't stay open anymore.

So it's probably 2:00 something, pushing 3:00, slept for a couple hours, and then got back up, you know, and started watching film.

So it's a really quick turnaround, obviously. My assistant coaches do a great job. They already had it prepped. But I watch a ton of film as a head coach as well.

So that's what it's really been, just diving into that, the last how many hours. And you sleep -- this is what you live for, is March, and we'll sleep when we're done.

Q. Anything get you through those late nights like coffee, or is it just adrenaline?

SHAUNA GREEN: Just adrenaline. I mean, like I said, being that late, like when we got back, it was, you know, your adrenaline is rolling at that time. You don't need much sleep in these moments.

So it's all about just trying to do everything you can, not wasting one minute in this time, to just be as prepared as you possibly can to get your team prepared.

Q. When you're watching that tape, you played in the Big Ten, you've had the schedule you had, but when you start looking at a Mikayla Blakes, Washington, Galvan, knowing you're going to be playing them on their court with this berth on the line, is it daunting, or you just put all that out of your mind and just break it down to what you have to convey to your team?

SHAUNA GREEN: Yeah, you just break it down. In our league, we face a ton of really good players. So you just -- you look at it, you look at what they really like to do. You break down all the numbers, all the analytics, and then you go with your eyes too and your gut from watching it.

Obviously they're a very talented team and with just really some -- I mean, Blakes is an elite guard. I referenced her even with some of the things we talked about with we don't

have many that are still left from my first couple years when Caitlin Clark was in our league, but I referenced her this morning in film with Blakes just because of how and the volume they shoot at and how she'll pull up from really deep in transition and how you just can't let them -- they're going to get their shots off, but you got to try to make their life as hard as possible in that 40 minutes.

So, yeah, you really -- you have to approach it and, you know, just in preparation. And every game presents different problems, different challenges, and every team does.

Q. For the Big Ten to go 11-1 in the first round of the NCAA Tournament, what does that say about this league, and how much do you think that can prepare your team for what to expect on Monday night?

SHAUNA GREEN: Yeah, I mean, I've said this, I think the Big Ten, SEC, two best conferences in the country. And we're prepared. I think the Big Ten, one thing about it, from top to bottom, it's a ton of parity, where it's not top heavy. Anyone can really beat anyone. You saw that in our league with Wisconsin beating top teams and so on and so forth.

So it's just -- it's loaded with talent. It's loaded with different styles of play, different types of players. We've seen really everything.

So I think that's something that's really good for the NCAA Tournament is that our league does have a variety of styles. And, you know, you have some of the best bigs, some of the best guards.

So every team, again, presents its own challenges. And so that's where a team like this, with guards -- obviously they have a ton of talent, but with guards that are heavy involved in their action, we can reference some teams in our league to give our kids a little bit of familiarity with that.

Q. I've asked a few of your players if they like the added component of having to play on the road or having a home game in the NCAA Tournament. So I'm interested to hear your opinion on that or if you prefer just total neutral sites.

SHAUNA GREEN: Yeah, I think that's a hot topic on the women's side. And I hope our game can get to where it's neutral sites, personally. I know some coaches like the home courts. And it's great if you are hosting. But I also think there's something about -- I think you had referenced this, and I talked about it some last night, I think you'd see maybe some more upsets if you were playing on neutral sites.

And I think as the game grows and more fans will come out, if it is a neutral site, I think that, you know, it'd probably be a little bit more excitement in the tournament because I think you would get some.

You saw it at the Iowa-FDU game yesterday. I think Jan even said that after the game, made a comment of that, that they might have gotten them if it was on a neutral site. And that's coming from a head coach that was hosting.

So, you know, I might feel different if we're hosting, but I do think that that neutral site -- I think you might see a few more upsets.

Q. Destiny has shown a lot of poise this season. Wanted to get your thoughts just on this Vanderbilt defense and their style of play. What have you discussed with her to help her prepare for this matchup?

SHAUNA GREEN: Yeah, we'll get into more discussions in our individual film sessions and stuff today. But, you know, again, you don't -- they're really good, right? They're long. They switch everything. They really try to make it hard for you. They want to create some chaos and score 25 points off turnovers. So we got to really, really take care of possessions and value those possessions at a high level.

And with the freshmen too -- we're going to show it to her like we always do. I don't want to make anything bigger than what it is. We've seen a lot of pressure. We've seen a lot of different types of pressure. We saw pressure last night with great length.

So we'll show her those things. She already watched film with Coach Mac, her position coach, from last night and specific things leading into Vandy.

So she'll be prepared. And, again, you don't -- I don't want her to overthink it either. She's been doing a pretty good job this year of being solid and taking care of the ball. I don't want her to -- I don't want to do anything different now.

Q. The big story line of the team is that they're one of the younger teams in the tournament. But you are not allowing your team to fall into that crutch. What have you seen from some of the veterans on the team to reinforce that message that you've kind of laid down?

SHAUNA GREEN: Yeah, you know, the other day we were in a team meeting, a few days ago, and Jas spoke up and talked to, you know, our younger guys and just gave some advice about, you know, what it's like and not to -- it's

another game, and gave really good advice to that. Berry spoke up in that meeting as well. So they're really doing a good job of trying to set the tone.

And then our other guys are just so happy and excited to be here that they're just going out there and balling. It's basketball, right? And that's why I said with your youth, sometimes they don't know what they don't know. So they just go out there and play basketball and maybe not overthink a moment or make a moment -- put so much pressure on themselves because it is a NCAA Tournament.

As a freshman, you think you got a million more years left in you, and then as a senior you're like, oh, my gosh, it's over, you know, I got to do this in this moment. And when you start saying the got tos and the have tos, the pressure mounts.

And I just thought you saw last night with Jas, I thought her leadership -- she didn't score I don't think a point, maybe shot two shots, and her leadership and the impact she has on our team and on the game, it's a great, great, really, story and for kids to understand that if you lead, you work hard and you defend and you play the game the right way, you don't have to score points.

Everyone wants to score points and do all the fancy things and all the, like -- I tell our guys all the time, if you defend and you rebound and you play really, really hard, you're going to play for my team.

I'm trying to teach that to my 11-year-old son, who all he wants to do is score baskets and do all this fancy crap. But just defend and rebound and understand the game. Play the game the right way, you're going to probably play a lot of minutes.

And I think that's what Jas does just with her -- the impact that she has on this team is just -- it's so, so big.

Q. I was going to ask you about Jas too. She referenced how her leadership, how much she's grown from last year to this year. What's the process look like? Has it been you kind of leading her along, or has it come natural for her?

SHAUNA GREEN: I think the mixture of everything, as she continues to grow, as she continues to feel more comfortable and confident in that leadership role, where she continues to get more ownership in this program after now being here two years.

We knew she was one of our most veteran players. Obviously, only being here one year, that's how young we

are, she was one of our most veteran players. So a lot of conversations.

And it's been some ups and downs in that too. We've had a few really kind of deep talks about the leadership stuff multiple times. And I thought the last one, probably about a month ago, we talked for about an hour just about what I need as a head coach and as a leader what I need from her, what we need from her, what I know she's capable of doing, the value she has.

And from that was really she's just been at a whole 'nother level since that last meeting. And I'm just so proud of her. Like I said, you talk about all the intangibles, all the things that really don't even go into a box score is what Jas does. And we need her. We need her on the floor because she really -- I talk all the time about impacting winning. She impacts winning.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thank you so much, Coach Green.

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