

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Four - Washington vs Columbia

Thursday, March 20, 2025

Chapel Hill, Maryland, USA

Carmichael Arena

Washington Huskies

Tina Langley

Sayvia Sellers

Dalayah Daniels

Media Conference

Columbia - 63, Washington - 60

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Washington Head Coach Tina Langley, student-athletes Dalayah Daniels and Sayvia Sellers.

TINA LANGLEY: First of all, I just want to say congratulations to Columbia, a great team, obviously a championship team, and we wish them success going forward.

Really, really proud of this team. This is a team that came together this summer and wanted to be different. They wanted to be bonded in a different way. They wanted to work in a different way, and they did that.

You saw a huge growth from each individual and collectively when it comes to our culture, the way that we work and train and prepare. And also off the floor, the way they were bonded. So really proud of the season and the growth that we had.

Love these young women. We spent a long time with our seniors thanking them, Brenna, Tayra, Dalayah, for all their contributions. The way they have poured into this university and our team, the way they have loved our teammates and really driven this program forward.

Emotional locker room because we're going to miss them very much, and we wanted to do the best we could for them, but very, very grateful for the time that we've had with them.

Q. If you could talk a bit about the first half, I guess it



seemed like you guys had control of that first half and were able to do whatever you want. Just what were the things you liked about the first half?

DALAYAH DANIELS: I thought we were getting pretty good ball movement. I thought our tempo was up there. I thought we were trying to get transition runs. We're a good transition team, so just trying to play to our strengths.

I think we were the better team in the first half, but I don't think it carried over after halftime. So that's what I would say.

Q. To that right there, obviously the game turned in that third quarter. Just what happened during that transition there?

DALAYAH DANIELS: I think we just gave up a lot of straight line drives. We weren't helping the helper, things that we practice a lot in practice. I think we've just got to be disciplined and communicate a little bit more to our teammates.

Especially in these environments, everything has to be times ten, everything, our communication, our intensity level, and it just wasn't there in the third quarter, and that kind of changed the trajectory of the game, I think.

Q. For a team that shoots so well from the 3, was it their defense? Was it the looks that you guys were getting? Just what happened with your perimeter offense?

SAYVIA SELLERS: I don't think we got as many attempts as we usually get. I thought they guarded the 3-point line pretty well, and we also just missed some shots.

Part of it was their defense, and part of it was we just missed some shots that were wide open.

Q. Big takeaway from the season, just what are the things you're going to remember from the season?

DALAYAH DANIELS: I think obviously just like the relationships, like these are my sisters for life. We talk so



much about the journey and not just like focusing on results because, at the end of the day, like a trophy is a materialistic thing, like it's a thing. It's just going to fade. But these relationships are going to last forever.

I've learned so many valuable things in my life. Coach Langley is an amazing woman. She doesn't just teach us how to be amazing basketball players, but she wants to teach us how to run our own house one day and how to be a CEO, how to be a boss, and that's everything that she is. I think just being able to follow her these past three years, like she changed my life.

I'm grateful for Sayvia. I'm grateful for all of our underclassmen and just everyone who's put the work in and who's also just helped change this program. This is just a step in the right direction for this program. I'm really just proud of our team. I'm excited for the amazing things that they're going to be doing in the future.

Q. For you, Sayvia, Coach had sort of talked previously about your motivation at the end of last season, and I know that the loss is disappointing, but how does this game make you feel about the future of this program and moving forward into the next season?

SAYVIA SELLERS: Obviously I'm super proud of this team. I thought Coach brought in a great group of people, a great staff that's very committed to making each other better.

Obviously this loss is tough, but we still made a big jump from last year to this year. We can only get better. We still have a lot of returners that got a lot of experience, and like we did last year, we got a whole summer to put in work and get better, make each other better.

So I'm just excited for what we have to bring next year with the group that we're going to bring in and then with the returners. I'm excited, and I'm just super proud of this group this year.

Q. I know it didn't come off in the end, but after sort of Columbia had their big run, you did come back and tie the game and really make it close at the end. Could either of you just speak to your fight at the end of the game and maybe particularly those big 3-point shots from Elle?

SAYVIA SELLERS: Yeah, I thought we came from the timeout, and we were very locked in and tried to execute the play. Obviously Elle's an amazing shooter, so that's what she does. She came in and hit a 3 for us, and even the second 3 was a good look. Obviously it didn't go in, but

I just thought we came in and executed the play from the timeout that we were supposed to.

Q. Dalayah, if I can, I'd love to hear from you about what you've seen from Sayvia's growth. Just from what she did last year as a freshman to being such a spark for you guys this year. Can you just speak to what Sayvia has done this year?

DALAYAH DANIELS: I think when Sayvia came in as a freshman, like I just knew that she was different like than a lot of other point guards in our class, and she can score at every single level. There's not a lot of things that she can't do.

I think just seeing -- the fact that she's only a sophomore, like her upside is just crazy. Just seeing where she was at the beginning of the season, hanging with the big dogs -- quote, unquote, big dogs -- and she was just doing her thing, and I'm just so proud of her. I'm proud to be a part of her journey, a small part of it.

I hope that this game and this season doesn't make her hang her head in any way because you've put so much work in and I'm so proud of you, just seeing like all the unseen hours. Like her and Elle would come in every single day, like two or three hours before practice, maybe like really early in the morning, come back and do three-a-day. Just seeing all those unseen hours pay off, I'm excited for her, and I'm excited for her future.

Q. Sayvia, Dalayah, congratulations to you both on the season that you had. This was Columbia's second chance at the tournament, and they played differently having that experience. I'm wondering for each of you what you think you can take away from this? Obviously, Dalayah, you're going to see it from afar, but what you think this team is going to take into that next opportunity to play. Sayvia, what you plan to take directly into the next chance that Washington has to play in the NCAA Tournament?

SAYVIA SELLERS: Obviously from every loss and win you learn a lot. I think from losses you learn a lot more. So obviously we're super grateful to be here and we're grateful for the opportunity. Like I said, we have a lot of returners, and we're going to learn and grow from it.

Yeah, Columbia came in, played hard. They were in this position last year, and they wanted to fight for it, which they did. But like I said, we're going to learn from every loss that we have.

Q. Coach, hearing your players talk about you, what you've meant to them, what does that mean to you?

And as a coach, so often you are judged on your wins and your losses, but it's obviously about much more than that.

TINA LANGLEY: It's hard to sit here with them because the loss is mine. This game, it's on me, but I'm so proud of them. To sit here and listen to them, to hear how they've grown, how much they love each other, how much they love being here, how much they love caring for one another.

We learn from each other. They don't just learn from me. So I thought they did a beautiful job of saying who we are and who we hope to be, the way that we're committed to one another. So it was beautiful to sit here and listen and learn from them.

I think that's what our culture is, it's becoming. We tell them all the time, they're not the only ones becoming. We're all growing. We're all trying to be better. And they did a tremendous job this year helping this program grow. In the process they grew and we grew.

I love that they talked about our staff. They did a phenomenal job this year. But genuinely I appreciate that question a lot because there's nothing more important than the impact we make on each other and people in life.

I think Dalayah said it well. You could ask me about a lot of my basketball games. I can't tell you a lot about them, but I can tell you about the people. That's what we want to do. We want to be great for people and help each other be better.

Q. In that third quarter, was there any particular momentum swing that you could sort of -- obviously the game just ended, but that you can maybe think back and say that's where things turned?

TINA LANGLEY: I thought they did a great job of straight line driving us, really going at the basket hard. We both had a similar game plan to start the game, which was you won't beat us from the 3-point line. So it was interesting to see us both adapt to that because they shoot the ball well, we shoot the ball well.

In the second half -- the first half, I thought we came out and we went inside and we attacked the rim, we were the aggressor, straight line drives. You're not going to get a lot of assists if people don't help off very much. Obviously in the second half they did that, and we did not adjust as well.

So breaking down and guarding the ball, offensively all year -- and one of the reasons we've been good all year is how well we share the ball, very unselfish team. Defense

has gotten us in several games, and it's an area -- that's why in the end this is completely on me.

We had to be better defensively than we were, and that was through the whole season. The growth that we had there was not as fast and not as strong as it was on the offensive end, and I think that showed in the third quarter.

Q. How surprising was it to you that you guys just weren't really able to get it going behind the arc?

TINA LANGLEY: Again, game plan. I thought that was a good job, in the help offense a lot. We also lost our tempo, which when we go downhill fast, even if you say you're not going to help, there's going to be some attention to the rim.

I thought their 1-2-2, their press made us slow down a little bit. Even when we broke it, we stopped and tried to run half-court offense, and we play at a faster pace than that normally. Again, needed to find our ways to pick up the tempo again, and I think that could have given us some better looks.

Q. You guys were down three, 12 seconds left. Just your thoughts on the play that you drew up and how it was executed and how did things look?

TINA LANGLEY: The first 3 that we hit was a good shot, so we tried to take the play and tweak it a little bit and see if we couldn't get another option for a 3 and not just the 2. We had two options for a 3 in the first play, knock a 3 down. Second play we ran a similar, should have been a similar play.

And I should have just rerun the same play because they knew it and it worked well the first time and there was another couple of reads in it. Probably tried too much to adjust based on if I thought they would know the play or not.

Q. Obviously this game just ended, but how do you think you'll build off of this season this run here and to like use that over the off-season and into next season?

TINA LANGLEY: Building is about people, and we've got great people. So fortunate. This group, it's a blessing to go to work every day.

Our staff said that when they were talking to the team. They bring joy to the room. We bring joy to each other. You want to be your best for each other when you have that environment.

I know who they are. I know what they did last summer. It was really remarkable. I haven't seen work like that. It's

old school. It's accountable. It's growth mindset. It's we're going to go to work.

We want to represent this university so well. This is an amazing university, amazing athletic department. We want to show up and be better for each other, for our university, for our city. Our city was incredible to us this year. They came out and supported us so beautifully, the fans filing down to the main floor and just spending time with the young people in the city.

I think just seeing that this year really inspired our young women as well and tied them to like this is bigger than basketball. I'll never forget in the Iowa game we had a young lady, we love her, sitting across from us. We got beat pretty bad by Iowa that day. She was waiting for us in the locker room with these bracelets, and she's fighting cancer, and she's 12 years old, and this is bigger than basketball.

I can't wait to see them this summer because they know that.

Q. The team had done a really good job with the press break in the first half and managed to get some easy layups out of that. In the second half it seemed to give you more trouble and just a lot more turnovers in the second half. Just what would you attribute that to, and was it something that Columbia did particularly well? Did the team maybe get too high off the strong first half? What would you say?

TINA LANGLEY: I think when they got some easy baskets, we were kind of stung by it, and I think they knew we were giving up layups, and that's a problem. Obviously they took a moment to recover.

We talk about next play speed a lot. We talk about how long does it take to you move on to the next thing? I thought our next play speed wasn't very good, and that affected our press break, so we couldn't get in it. It was a very simple press break, and then we kind of left Sayvia on an island there. That slowed us down a good bit.

I feel like it was the way we responded to adversity from the defensive end of the floor really kind of bleeding into the offensive end of the floor.

Q. I'd just like to ask you, I know we've talked about her so many times this season, but since she's played her last collegiate game, can you speak to Dalayah Daniels' impact further on this program and its culture and what it will be going forward? Because I feel like you shared the sentiment that there's a lot of excitement with this program even after a tough loss

like this.

TINA LANGLEY: What do you want more in life than to make impact? You want to impact lives. You want to impact the game. You want to impact people. And she did that. She impacted us all deeply and will always.

Dalayah is an incredible, incredible person, just tough, but also incredibly caring. You don't see that the way she displays it. It's an incredible example to our team and to our coaching staff. We all thanked her for the way she worked and showed up, her toughness that she brought. She loves her city, and she loves her university, and that's also a great example.

I appreciate her and her example very much.

Q. I have two questions, Coach. First is when you have a team that's new to the tournament and they're coming out with such success in the first half, any concern at the end of the half and in the locker room about overconfidence?

TINA LANGLEY: They've not been known for overconfidence this year. If anything, I would be more concerned that we would be nervous because sometimes we just didn't understand how good we are. I have a good friend who talked a lot about sometimes you're just a cup short of greatness. We were just right there a lot.

I think that is -- that's something I was concerned about in the locker room, so the punch that we took might have made us doubt a little bit, and it's an area that, again, I want to continue to grow as women and as leaders.

We talked about this, our theme for the year was competitive stamina. You show up every day, and you've got to go through hard things, and it doesn't matter if you get a call that a parent's dying, your child was up all night, whatever that was, you have to show up and be the best you can.

So competitive stamina is more than basketball, it's being stronger a little bit longer. So we went into that at halftime. We were just trying to give them confidence to do the same things we had done in the first half. We knew there needed to be a few adjustments, but it felt like it was going to be a somewhat similar game, and it was somewhat similar.

So just continue to respond to adversity with confidence and belief, understanding who you are and how good you are, and I'm excited for us to keep learning that.

Q. You touched a little bit on Dalayah and what she



brings to the culture, but can you touch a little bit on her performance tonight, double double going into the half? Also, what would be your pitch for Dalayah Daniels moving on to the next level? If you were talking to some WNBA GMs, what do you see for her going to the next level?

TINA LANGLEY: Good question. Dalayah's a pro. She may have finished the season at the top of the ratings for field goal percentage. She worked on her 3 this year. Look at her 3-point percentage, her field goal percentage, her defense. She can guard 1 through 5. She's an incredible leader, understands the game, studies the game, works. It's just somebody you've got to have in your locker room.

I remember when I met Dalayah, we met three times for two hours at a time when we were trying to decide if this is a good fit and that is it for her. She wanted to be a pro. She wanted to be a leader. She wanted to win at Washington. She wanted to bring Washington back. Think about that. One person, and she's like I want my university to be back where it can be, where it belongs, and she came in and helped change a program.

When you think about who you want to bring into your locker room, that's who you want to bring because it was bigger than her and it always will be for Dalayah. It will never be about her, it will always be about the program she's a part of, the people that she's living life with. So what a great example.

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