

# NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - Oregon State vs North Carolina

Friday, March 21, 2025

Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA

Carmichael Arena

## Oregon State Beavers

**Sela Heide**

**AJ Marotte**

**Kelsey Rees**

Media Conference

**Q. For any of the players, obviously in November you played teams that are like this. Why are you more equipped to play this level of team than you were in November?**

SELA HEIDE: I think we're definitely more equipped just because we've had so much time to continue to grow individually and as a group. We've learned each other so much more. And I think that our non conference and conference schedule has prepared us to kind of being ready to see anything.

Coach Scott has talked a lot about it, the WCC has teams that play every kind of offense you can imagine and every kind of defense, so I think that just every lesson that we've learned throughout every game has gotten us ready for this.

**Q. AJ, do you have anything to add?**

AJ MAROTTE: Yeah. I think each of us are a bit more comfortable as well. You know, all of us have stepped up into bigger roles, and I think we're finally comfortable in that.

Watching Kennedie step up as the one has been huge, and Ti and Cat, you know, having a huge impact as well, I think that's been big for us.

**Q. "Why not us," in the last week, that gets said a lot this time of year. What leads you to believe why not us?**

KELSEY REES: Yeah, for sure. I think we've shown



sparks throughout different games of how good we are and how capable we are. And we have a great coaching crew that know how to scout and know how to make plays in this position. If we play at our best, I think we can beat almost anyone out there. And I think that's true with a lot of things.

So as long as we're all together and all doing as well as we can, we think we have a great chance.

**Q. For Sela, why has this year come together for you? This will be your fifth year. What has happened to you that's made it come together for you this season?**

SELA HEIDE: Opportunity and growing my confidence through getting those opportunities. The last four years have really been just, like, big learning lots of learning for me, and I think this past year has just been an opportunity for me to really show what I've learned and grown in and just continue to grow on the court in the new position that I've gotten to play.

And this team especially, like, I think this we've kind of looked at ourselves as, like, a group of underdogs who have kind of come together and just push each other and work extremely hard every day. And like you said, we've said a lot of "why not us," but we've had that mentality all season. So I think just really channeling that.

**Q. What makes playing UNC challenging? And can you draw any similarities to other teams you've played. Any of you can answer.**

AJ MAROTTE: Yeah, they're a super great team. They're really talented. I mean, we're all just really excited to get the opportunity to play a Power Five team like this. We're just saying earlier that they kind of remind us of Illinois, who we played in the non conference, and that was great match up for us, and it was a really fun game. So we're excited to do it again.

**Q. Kelsey, anything to add?**

KELSEY REES: Nothing.

**Q. A lot of the country fell in love with you all last year**



**during the tournament and then may didn't expect you to get back. Why did you all stick with this program despite all of the changes, and what was it about this program that allowed you to get back to this stage so quickly?**

KELSEY REES: I think lot of our decision to stay was that trust. We had trust in Scott and the rest of the coaches that we'd get a great experience out of the year and that they'd push us to be as good as we could be, and we also had faith that they'd recruit good players to play around and good people more than anything, and throughout the year we were able to really gel together as a team and learn more and gain that trust within our group. And I think that's helped push us to where we are at the moment.

**Q. For any of you guys, this team has some legit size in the paint. I know against some of the teams in the WCC, you guys were able to use that paint play to your advantage. How do you guys see that match up going on down the**

SELA HEIDE: I think that our size is definitely one of our strengths, and that's something that we and Oregon State has done traditionally. Coach Scott has always recruited fantastic post players, and that's just kind of how he designs how we play. So I think that our size will definitely be an advantage going down.

He calls Kelsey and I the twin towers, and it's just a lot of fun to get to play with someone who's the same size. So I think it will be an advantage for sure.

**Q. Kelsey, I think you need to dive in on this one.**

KELSEY REES: I guess so.

Yeah. No, it's been great playing with Sela all year. I love that. I love being able to get her the ball and space out and then her get me the ball and her space out. So it's been a really cool thing for us to have, and a big advantage, and I think especially down the stretch we've been able to take even more advantage of it and really use it to yeah, to help us do well.

And obviously if anyone is following the numbers, Sela is shooting at such a great percentage. So if we can get her the ball, we know it's a good look for us. So just making we're doing all the right things in this game and using that to make good plays.

**Q. AJ, for you specifically, I asked this question to Scott Rueck a couple weeks ago, but I'm just wondering your opinion.**

What do you feel like you guys what you guys have been able to achieve this season, what message do you feel like you guys have sent the nation considering just everything that this program has been through over the last year? I know that yourself, over the last four years, have dealt with a lot of adversity yourself, just what do you feel like message this team has sent to the nation just with all the chaos, the transfer portal, conference realignment, and everything else within this program?

AJ MAROTTE: The message is don't doubt the Beavers.

It's been super fun to play with this team. And I think even us, at the beginning, struggled with some doubt. But it's been really fun to prove other people wrong, and ourselves included. It's just been really fun this entire season to get to where we are.

**Q. For any of you guys, obviously you talk about the mantra of "why not us." Do you feel like because Oregon State has notoriously been a bit of a higher seed. Do you guys feel like coming in, having to win that WCC Tournament, and now being a lower seed, that it makes you a little bit more dangerous because you have more to play for than some of these higher seed teams?**

KELSEY REES: We definitely believe we can be dangerous and are a tough match up, and we have faith in our ability.

Obviously we reckon this is going to be a great game with North Carolina. Obviously they're a great team, have done really well all season to get that 3 seed, but we're really excited to play against them.

And then going into the WCC Tournament, we knew to get to this stage and to get to March Madness, we would need to win that, and we were able to do that. And I think that gave us confidence in our ability to make plays down the stretch and to get things done when we need to, and we're really excited to try and build on that in this tournament and try and show the world how good we can be and, yeah, prove ourselves a little bit. So we're really excited with this great match up that we get to have.

**Q. Anything to add, AJ?**

AJ MAROTTE: Well said.

**Q. Two of your assistant coaches played for Scott in the NCAA Tournament. How has their experience have they talked about their experience this week, and have you learned anything from that?**

SELA HEIDE: Well, this morning we watched clips of Deven and Syd play at UNC when they were in the tournament. So just their guidance and their advice has always been great all season, but especially, like, in this position where we're coming in and we're underdogs, they're so invaluable to us. I mean, they bring so much light and maturity and yeah, I mean, they're just great.

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