

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - Murray State vs Maryland

Friday, March 20, 2026

Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA

Carmichael Arena

Maryland Terrapins

Brenda Frese

Kyndal Walker

Mir McClean

Media Conference

Maryland - 99, Murray State - 67

THE MODERATOR: We are now ready to begin today's press conference. This is the press conference for the Maryland Terrapins following today's NCAA Division I Women's Basketball first round contest.

BRENDA FRESE: Just super proud to be able to get to play and coach another day with this group. They play for each other. They don't care who gets the credit. They just want to win.

I thought Mir set the tone for us early. She was ready to play aggressively all over the glass. That's a senior who doesn't want to be finished. Just did a tremendous job setting the tone.

Then our freshmen, when you talk about Kyndal and Addi, just how fearless they were, first half scoring 26 points, and overall 38 in the game for your first NCAA Tournament. I thought they met the moment and they played with a ton of confidence.

Murray State, obviously there's a reason why they're No. 5 in the country. They play really well. They're coached up. They made us play for -- make some mistakes just with how they play. Obviously Poock is a really, really impressive player, 27 points and really tried to do everything she could for her team.

Really happy to get that first game under our belt and to be moving on to Sunday.

Q. Mir, can you just talk about your mentality entering



the game? Nine O-boards for you. You were just kind of insatiable on the offensive glass. Can you talk about what you were looking to do and what you were thinking before the game?

MIR MCLEAN: The mindset was just to have fun. Not to put too much pressure on the game, knowing I am a senior and my season could end or my career could end at any night, just trying my best and trying to be the best version of myself. Coach talked about that at the beginning of the talk.

That really resonated with me, trying to be my best and be an example for the freshmen and the people who's tournament this is their first.

Q. Mir, going off that, 33 second chance points with those rebounds, can you talk about how important it was for your team to be aggressive on the boards along with your play and to carry that into your next game on Sunday?

MIR MCLEAN: That's been us all season. We shoot very well and also rebound very well, which makes our shooters more confident to shoot because we can always get the ball back. I think it just takes the breath out of other teams.

Q. You guys both scored -- (no microphone).

KYNDAL WALKER: Addi's had a lot of opportunities to go out and play, and same thing for me. It's kind of just taking it as another basketball game. Not making the moment too big, like Coach B emphasized. I think we just came out ready and played hard. Once you play hard, a lot of times you're rewarded.

Q. Mir, during the month of January, you averaged just about seven minutes a game. You weren't really getting the opportunities. Then as the season kind of ended, you started to get them. Now you had your first double double of the season, a monster game from you. What can you attribute that to, just keeping your mind on the team and performing on the biggest stage?



MIR MCLEAN: I think it's just about staying ready. My coaches have poured into me from day one. My teammates have poured into me telling me they believe in me. So just staying ready for them and trying to be the best version of myself, like I mentioned before.

Q. We talked about before you left how on any given night anyone on this team can step up. This was your guys' ninth game this season with five players in double figures. What kind of confidence does something like that instill moving forward to another big game on Sunday?

MIR MCLEAN: I think it's just a testament to our team. You mentioned that any given night it doesn't matter who it is. Coach B mentioned it earlier. We don't care who gets the ball. We don't care who scores as long as we win, that's the most important part.

When you have a team like that who's unselfish and willing to give up the ball for someone else to make a great play, it's always fun.

Q. For Kyndal, I think you're the first Maryland freshman to score 20-plus in their first NCAA Tournament since Kaila Charles, and that's been almost a decade. What was it like preparing for this game mentally, and how does it feel to have this first one under your belt knowing you can go into Sunday and feel more confident?

KYNDAL WALKER: Honestly, I was super excited. I've been watching March Madness my entire life. I've had a lot of conversations with my brother, talking smack and stuff.

It's just nice to finally be out here and be in this moment. So I was super excited, and I think it kind of just showed today. Just having the opportunity to go out there and play and just playing free and having fun.

Q. The offense as a whole today, 99 points, definitely one of your better games. What did you like the most about what was going on?

BRENDA FRESE: I thought our ball movement was key, just being patient, being able to see what the defense was going to be able to give to us.

Then the paint points. When you look at 52-38, being able to get downhill, whether it was inside-out with the pass or the dribble penetration. But paint points and ball reversals were really important to just an elite level shot selection.

Q. Beginning of the fourth quarter, as much as you all have dominated this game, they were still in this game

down only 14 and had a chance to go down 11. What were you telling them at the beginning of the fourth quarter, before you all went on that 16-2 run?

BRENDA FRESE: That was a pretty intense moment. We had to dial back. Then we got beat in that quarter. Credit, we knew Murray State wasn't going to quit fighting. They were going to be really aggressive. We really needed -- I thought we got in some foul trouble, some uncharacteristic plays, but we needed to dial ourselves back into elite level shot selection as well as being able to guard on the defensive end without fouling.

Q. As you know, many people miss University of Maryland in the ACC. What type of feelings did you have knowing that you would be here at this site and playing today?

BRENDA FRESE: I was really excited. For me, coaching here, it's a place that I know. I'm very familiar. You've been here numerous times. We've been able to get a lot of wins here. For me, it was really comfortable for our team.

I knew, besides Oluchi and not anyone else had played here before. Excited to be able to go down, find my favorite restaurant at Firebirds and find those special spots to be able to go eat at.

Q. You were plus 30 on the rebounding today, and you had more offensive rebounds than they had rebounds total. How do you build on that going into Sunday? Can you explain how that happened today?

BRENDA FRESE: Clearly we had a lot more size on them. I think it begins there. It also just comes down to will and a want and a desire, and I thought you saw that with our possessions on the glass, being able to go get extra opportunities when we would miss shots, holding them to one-and-done.

Then just understanding that it was going to be a mentality. I thought we got on the floor for a lot of loose balls, 50-50 balls. Just who wants it more and who wants to advance. That's what it comes down to.

Q. I saw Addi leading the huddle so many times today, just getting the girls on her back and just rallying the troops. What can you say about her growth as a true freshman this season, and what have you seen?

BRENDA FRESE: I love to hear that. We're brainstorming over there, so I'm not aware of that. That's what it is, you're not a freshman anymore. Yes, it's your first NCAA Tournament, but for these guys, for Kyndal and for Addi and our freshmen, you've had a year under your belt, same

thing for Kyndal in year two.

That's who they are, they're floor generals and have that ability to be able to take some of that pressure off of others and be able to kind of use that youthful bliss and that energy within the timeouts is really important.

Q. You guys are only a five hour drive away away but there's a lot of red in the stands. Men's basketball coach Buzz Williams is here. To have that support coming down and to have the support from Coach Williams, who wasn't even here this time last year, what's it like to see so much red in a neutral site location?

BRENDA FRESE: It's awesome. The fact of the support and to be able to have your head men's coach, your entire administration, your athletic director, Debbie Yow, who had hired me, was in the stands. We had two of our alums that won a National Championship with Malina Howard and Jade Perry. So it absolutely makes a difference.

Then you talk about the sea of red with our fans who made the time and wanted to come and support this team.

I hope more will be able to come on Sunday. I hope it's a really friendly game time, and we'll be able to get more down here.

Q. We talked to you before you left, and you said that March comes down to relying on your seniors and your experience, but also hoping that your freshmen are ready for the moment. You have 45 points from your freshmen, Mir scores 19. How refreshing is it to have that blend so up so early in the tournament?

BRENDA FRESE: It's huge. That's who we have to be. It offsets. It doesn't put as much pressure on your seniors when they're a little slow, you saw for us. For Oluchi only to play 14 minutes tonight and get in that kind of foul trouble and have other players step up. Then I thought we were able to go to our bench and make some great plays.

Isi goes 3 for 3, Rainey's ability to come in the game. Just being able to extend that to the bench was really important to be able to have for the next game.

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