

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - Michigan vs Kansas

Friday, March 22, 2024

Los Angeles, California, USA

Galen Center

Michigan Wolverines

Laila Phelia

Jordan Hobbs

Media Conference



to Michigan winning in 2017. What do you see the similarities between the two programs, them trying to establish themselves?

JORDAN HOBBS: Yeah, I think they are coming in, and they are a very tough team, too. So it's just going to be a very physical game from start to finish. I think it's going to be a fun one but yeah, they have a great program and I just think it's going to be an exciting game.

Q. And Laila, you seemed to have something click in the Big Ten Tournament. You went off there, and this year has been definitely a strong year for you. Has there been some things you've adjusted not only throughout this year but between years and what have you seen come alive within the last couple games?

LAILA PHELIA: Definitely just continuing to be aggressive but then also being able to look for my teammates a lot. So we can just be able to open the floor, spread the floor more.

So I feel like that's probably I would say the biggest thing for us, yeah, and of course, defense, always staying strong on the defensive end.

Q. What would it mean to mover to the second round, play USC and potentially go on from there -- either team, moving on to the second round?

JORDAN HOBBS: It would be really cool. Just cementing kind of a second round for all three years, like you mentioned before, but just playing in this tournament is a dream come true, and you dream about it. And think about playing in it from when you're getting recruited, and even watching it when you're growing up, just the women that play in this tournament and how great they are. I think there's some phenomenal women playing this year, and I think the viewership is going to exceed anything we've ever seen. So I'm just really excited to be a part of it and I think our whole team is.

But yeah, we are just ready to play whoever comes front of us, and we are really excited. Left let one game at a time.

Q. What are you guys looking to accomplish in this first round and what are some things that you know about this Kansas team and what are you looking to do?

JORDAN HOBBS: I mean, obviously looking to come out of here with a win. We're really excited to play, and by the video son social media, you could tell we are super excited to get into the opportunity and just have this opportunity. This Kansas team is really good and we know that coming into it. They have a lot of solid players. Their post is 6-6, 6-5, so taking that away is going to be huge.

I just think coming out with a bunch of toughness and just priding ourselves on what we have done this whole year, and I think that's going to be the biggest thing is just staying true to who we are and just having that Michigan grit.

Q. What does it say about your program now to make the tournament every year since 2018, and for you guys, this could be your 30 straight year making the second round, what would it mean to establish yourself as a consistent contender within the NCAA Tournament?

LAILA PHELIA: I feel like it definitely says a lot about our program. And I feel like Coach has done a great job but just everyone that she brings into this program and being able to, like, be able to pride ourselves on like the little things, defense, and just playing Michigan Basketball.

Q. This Kansas team is looking to cement themselves in the WNIT Tournament, and like last year and similar



Q. First question for you. The University of Michigan alumni, fans, they are known for showing up and showing out. What does it mean when you guys look out into the stands, especially all the way across the country in California and you see that representation from the Michigan faithful?

LAILA PHELIA: Definitely means a lot to our program. I feel like the biggest thing for us just going out there tomorrow and being able to see our fans coming from all over just gives a sense of that Black M and seeing how far it takes, and just being able to realize the support that we do have, going out there and not only fighting for each other out there but the people who came before us.

Q. When it comes to the bond that this team has, are there any traditions or anything that happens off the court that you guys can look to as a fun element that's helped bring you together this season or something that you guys have been continuously doing to help make the bond within this team stronger than ever?

JORDAN HOBBS: I don't think there's anything like very specific that we can point to but our team does have just a great chemistry, and I just think that we spend so much time with each other off the court that we just know each other in and out and we just love being around each other.

We love working so hard. I guess I will say, on game days, we do these like little skits that kind of help us get in the right mood and just put a little fun into it. So those are always a good time, and bring our creative side out, definitely.

Q. Can you elaborate more on these skits? Do they happen in the locker room or the hotel? Where does this happen and what's involved in these?

JORDAN HOBBS: It's right before our shoot around. I don't even know how to describe them really.

LAILA PHELIA: Like we'll put together a skit that points out the keys to the game and what we need to do to come out with the win. Just come up with some crazy --

JORDAN HOBBS: One time we referenced The Bachelor, and like, I played The Bachelor, but the people in front of me, like the contestants, were like keys to the game. So I would be like, what are you bringing to the table, and if they gave me a good thing, like rebounding, I would give them a rose, and that was an example.

Q. Do you know what the skit for tomorrow will be? Any clues?

MEGAN DUFFY: We will be figuring that out tonight but it's going to be a good one. We have to bring our A Game tomorrow.

LAILA PHELIA: We have to.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports