

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - Mississippi State vs California

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Los Angeles, California, USA

Galen Center

Cal Bears

Lulu Twidale

Marta Suarez

Media Conference



MARTA SUAREZ: Definitely has a different feeling. I didn't think we were aware of it until we got here, until we got picked to come to the NAAs. But, yeah, there's something in the air different. I think we have a very good feeling. There's a very good vibe within the team. We're very excited about this opportunity. For most of us, it's the first tournament game. It's something that it's always as a basketball player it's always something that you look up to. March is a very fun month. I think we're excited to be a part of it this year.

Q. As you know, Kayla Williams used to play here at USC. Has she spoken about how it feels for her to come back to play on the USC floor at all?

MARTA SUAREZ: I mean, I think that's something that obviously we have in mind. Also the fact that Lindsay was a coach at Cal. There's a lot of connections there. We talk about it. It's not something that we have pressing towards the game. I think we're just trying to be in the moment and what our team does, but I think it adds a certain point of like hunger and excitement for the game that I think it plays in our favor. I think we're ready for it.

Q. As a senior lead on the team what does it mean for this journey you get to play a little longer together? How have you been trying to, I'm going to say, leverage this moment, for Lulu especially, as you go forward with your college career after this game and this weekend?

LULU TWIDALE: For me, I think like you said, we have a lot of seniors on the team. I just feel really appreciative that I get the opportunity to play more basketball with them. I'm obviously going to miss them they've been with me since my freshman year. I'm grateful I get the opportunity to play with them more.

Q. You mentioned you had success against SEC teams, Alabama and Auburn, what did you learn from that conference the style of play in those games?

MARTA SUAREZ: We're also, of course, a lot of basketball fans on our team, we watch good basketball. The SEC has good competitive basketball. We know

Q. After having the conference schedule that you guys had this year going all over the country, what was the reaction on Selection Sunday when you guys got to stay in California?

MARTA SUAREZ: Very excited. We knew especially keeping the same time change, just a short flight, right here, we have a lot of people from So Cal, too, so we know that will come to the game, we'll have a lot of support. At least a little bit more than in Greensboro, you know?

Q. I'm curious what are you think about the match-up with Mississippi State. How do you feel you match up with them?

LULU TWIDALE: They're obviously a really good team, but I think we know if we come tomorrow with our best selves we're going to be fine. I think we trust in the work we've done. We've been going through the scout. Heidi has done a really good job of a good scout of what we need to do. We're confident in what we need to do tomorrow. If we come out tomorrow as our best selves I think we'll do great.

MARTA SUAREZ: We've had a couple of SEC match-ups this year that has gotten us ready for that. Definitely, like she said, the work of the coaches to have a good scout, to have a good game plan for it, but then it's just going to come down to us playing our game and see what the match-up looks like.

Q. Marta, you and emphasized enjoying the moment and soaking up the experience. I was curious to this point how you've actually enjoyed the experience to this point, understandably haven't played a game yet?



they're physical. We know the ACC maybe a little bit more finesse shooters. We know it's going to be a physical and fast game. It's going to come to boxing out. They have a very big body in the paint that we're preparing for. But I think it matches up well against us. I think we can run. We can space the floor. We can find our shooters, create some space in the paint for us to attack.

So a lot of respect, but definitely a lot of confidence, too.

Q. You've played against Mississippi State, too, before in your previous lifetime?

MARTA SUAREZ: Yes, exactly. My previous lifetime. That's a very good way to put it. Yeah, I always talk about that when it comes to media. I feel very fortunate to have experienced SEC, Pac-12 and now ACC. It's been very cool to see the change and the differences among conferences, but I must say I think as the years go by, I think we're all trending towards a more similar type of basketball where because simply there's just a lot more new skilled, very good players. I think every year there's more shooters and stretch 4s, I think it's tending towards a similar way of playing. I did think my freshman year the SEC was way more physical, big body, strong, fast, more athletic, versus Pac-12, for example. To me it seemed a lot more shooters, a lot more like European basketball like that. I think right now every conference is starting to look a lot more similar where there's a very good balance of it all and it comes to match-ups and hey who is the better team when we step on the court on that day.

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