

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: Second Round - Kentucky vs West Virginia

Monday, March 23, 2026

Morgantown, West Virginia, USA

Hope Coliseum

West Virginia Mountaineers

Mark Kellogg

Jordan Harrison

Sydney Shaw

Media Conference



that's not really what this one is about.

This is a hard one. I don't think we even thought about the end. I mean, we knew it could happen, but we were solely prepared to win tonight and continue on, and we understand how this works. Unfortunately, we don't, and those are some of the emotions that we'll still wrap our head around and figure out. I'm really proud to be the coach here.

I'm disappointed we didn't win because I think we all obviously wanted this win really bad. I felt like this was our best chance since we've been here just because of the home court and how good we are in here, but I thought our players stepped up, had a few moments obviously where we lost our way, but continued to battle and represent the right way. That's all you can ask for as a coach.

I think for the most part I'm pretty proud to be the coach here at West Virginia, and hopefully we're building something, and these guys have a huge hand in that.

Q. Both players, start with you, Sydney, but I know the words are probably hard, but could you express emotions as you saw it go 0:00 and know you came up short?

SYDNEY SHAW: Just kind of like a moment where like is this real? Especially having to look around at all the fans and thank them. I think that it hit me that this is my last moment in the Coliseum, so I'm just really sad, but I'm also really grateful.

Q. Jordan, same thing to you.

JORDAN HARRISON: Kind of like Shaw said, it honestly didn't feel real at first. I'm just very thankful that everybody came out and supported us. We truly did appreciate that. But it definitely didn't feel real.

Q. Sydney, you guys found yourself down multiple times tonight and also this season as well, but you guys always found a way to come back and put yourself back in play. What is it about this team and the mindset that you guys had to be able to do that?

Kentucky - 74, West Virginia - 73

THE MODERATOR: We'll begin with an opening statement from Coach Kellogg, and then we'll take questions for our student-athletes, Jordan Harrison and Sydney Shaw.

MARK KELLOGG: Thank you. These are the hardest ones of the season for a lot of reasons. So many emotions, and I'll try to get through them, I guess, as best that I can.

I guess phenomenal college basketball game, phenomenal environment. Thank you Mountaineer fans for that. I think I'm speaking for all of us that that was special. That was something we'll never forget. It was so loud in there all night long, but certainly a couple times credit to Kentucky. Very good, very, very good basketball team. Very, very well coached. So credit Kenny and his group.

They just really, I guess made one more play when it comes down to it, but I'm just so proud of our group. I've loved this season. It's been as rewarding for me honestly as any season that I've had. I probably needed them more than any team just from some of the personal stuff, but just life, and man, they were just fun. I thought they brought out the best in me. Hopefully I brought out a little bit of the best in them.

But it just worked. They're champions. They're Big 12 Tournament champions, the Greenbrier five, the environment we've created here. I'm so thankful for the seniors. Whether they gave me one, two, three years, I love them all. I think our program is in a great spot, but

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SYDNEY SHAW: I think I'm just on a team of winners. Everybody wants to win. Everybody wants to be better. Obviously we have moments where we're not playing our best basketball, and we're able to recognize that, and we just turn it up.

When everybody's on the same page, it's easier to do that.

Q. Jordan, can you just speak to the physicality that the game had, especially out on the perimeter trying to fight through screens, their players trying to fight through you guys' screens? Sometimes like moving screens. It just looked very physical out there. What was it like to play in that type of physicality for 40 minutes?

JORDAN HARRISON: They definitely let us play the way I honestly didn't have a problem with. I felt like the refs actually called the game pretty fair. It was just a physical game. You just had to be a dog to be out there and play. I have no complaints with it. It definitely took a lot of energy, but I'm okay with that.

Q. For either of you guys, what has this season been like playing with Gia? Tonight she literally left it all out on the floor. What's it been like playing with her this season?

JORDAN HARRISON: It's been great. Gia's got another year, so she's a special player, a player that has the I don't care mindset. She's going to go until she can't -- she'd literally go through a brick wall if you told her to or if you asked her to. Yeah, I love playing with her. She just brings that toughness to our team. She's just a great player. She gave all that she had today, and I'll forever be thankful for that.

Q. For the players, you all watched Gia's shot go on the rim. Can you explain what you're thinking and feeling as you watched that ball circle the bucket?

SYDNEY SHAW: I think everybody thought that ball was going in. I thought it was a great shot. I thought she did a good job creating a good shot for herself. 9 times out of 10, that shot's going in. This was the 1 out of 10.

Q. For both players, they had their best quarter scoring in the third, then you held them to their lowest quarter scoring in the fourth. Just wanted to know what changed? Was it mindset? Strategy? What kind of helped spur you guys on to have that comeback in the fourth?

JORDAN HARRISON: I think it was just our mindset, just

locking in. I felt like in that third quarter we had some lapses a little bit. So, yeah, just getting our mind shifted back to it's all or nothing. We either win or go home. I think that got us back and locked in and ready to make that run in the fourth quarter.

Q. Sydney, Tonie Morgan was just in here singing your praises. What would you say about her game?

SYDNEY SHAW: I'd say she's a really smooth player. I think she does a good job controlling the offense over there. She's very talented.

Q. Sydney, Kentucky's coach said it was so loud in the fourth they couldn't hear each other to switch onto you. How much do you think the crowd played into that fourth quarter for you guys?

SYDNEY SHAW: 100 percent. I think they had everything to do with the run we had. It's easy to get in your head sometimes when you are hearing your own thoughts, but you couldn't hear anything but how good we were doing and how proud they were of us. So it's easy to keep playing when you're playing for something other than yourself.

Q. Jordan, when you first arrived here three years ago, you were the girl from Stephen F. Austin that followed Coach. Three years later you've obviously carved out your own niche in this school and role and a name. Can you just speak to -- could you even have imagined the role that you have created for yourself when you first walked in here three years ago?

JORDAN HARRISON: It's definitely been a great ride, I would say. I'm just very thankful and blessed for the journey here. I love it here, and I wouldn't have traded it for the world. Yeah, we had to build, and I think that's what we did. We just built it up more each year.

I just want to thank Coach Kellogg for believing in me. It's definitely been a great journey, and I'm happy to have done it with my teammates.

Q. Jordan, this is kind of playing off of that question, but now to end it with the experience of this weekend and having the crowd, what are you going to take away from it, and what did it mean to you?

JORDAN HARRISON: That I would say our fans love us to death, and they support us no matter what. Our true fans support us no matter what. I hope we made them proud.

Yeah, I'm just so happy that my last game was here in a sold-out crowd, which I never would have thought I would

play in front of a sold-out crowd that was cheering for us. Yeah, shout out to them. We love them to death.

Sorry we couldn't get it done, but we hope we made you all proud this season.

Q. Mark, you went through this a little bit in your intro, but just the emotions and the finality of when it hits. You're proud of the effort but disappointed in the result, I'm sure. Explain that and expound upon it.

MARK KELLOGG: It's hard to do, to be honest. I know there's finality. I don't know if it still quite feels like there's finality to it. Because I'm going to want to wake up tomorrow and do what I've always been doing for the last six months, and I won't have that. So that's when it will probably hit a little bit more.

Yeah, it's a weird feeling because I do have an immense pride for this group. Like I'm really proud of them, and it's hard to say after a loss, and I hate that because the goal is to win the game. I want to get to a Sweet 16. I want to play it here. I want to win championships. When they brought me here three years ago, that was the plan. That was part of the vision. I'm proud of that. This is a phenomenal environment.

That's what I mean. That's what this state is. That's what I've learned about this place. Man, if you love them, they'll love them back. Yeah, but disappointed because I wanted to figure out a way to win this one that would have been the first time in our program's history to win multiple NCAA Tournament games. It's been '92 since we went to the Sweet 16, you lose by one. I'm going to replay that. How could I have helped them a little bit better? Got away from us in the third quarter, I thought, so that's disappointing. Couldn't quite get them back.

I'll replay it all. So, yeah, there's a brief bit of disappointment. I'm really proud of the year I had. I love these kids to death. They gave me everything. At the end of the day, I'm going to feel good about what we did this year for sure.

Q. Coach, just talk about that play that Gia got off the shot that essentially should have won the game for you and it just didn't go your way.

MARK KELLOGG: Got a great look. I told her after the game when she was pretty emotional, I'd do it again. Sitting here right now, I'd still tell you I'd do it again. I thought her and Shaw were going, so it was going to be one of the two of them at that point. Gia is just pretty dynamic off the dribble.

They went big. They had big bodies everywhere. We were trying to pick on certain players, but you only had seven seconds or whatever we had, eight. So you're a little limited there. It's a play we practiced. It's a sight out of bounds. Honestly, we practiced it all year, and I don't think we'd ever run it one time. It was something we practiced throughout the entire season for these moments. They haven't really seen it, but I know it hit a bunch and hung on that front rim and kind of came off. That's basketball.

Q. Coach, despite all the emotions, your team did fight back multiple times there from double digits. 14 at one point, 12 going into the fourth. What's your biggest takeaway with your team's overall fight, not only in this game, but throughout overall season?

MARK KELLOGG: Just that. This group has been resilient. It's the grittiness we have. If you go all the way back to probably Greenbrier, where everybody wants to start that journey probably, there's a toughness. We're probably not fun to play against. We're going to stay at you. The way we play allows us to get back into games a little bit. We fed off the crowd for sure.

I thought we gave ourselves a chance to win. If you would have told me we'd have the ball. Before the game started with an elbow jumper to win the game, to go to the Sweet 16, I would have taken that. But just so proud, yeah. It could have gone the other way. Some teams it does go the other way. This group's shown me all year, but that's just not going to be the case. We dug ourselves a little bit of a bigger hole than I would have preferred.

Q. You've coached Jordan Harrison her entire four-year collegiate career. Just break down the moment she stepped on campus at Stephen F. Austin, to following you to West Virginia, to where she's at now, just with the legacy she's built at this program.

MARK KELLOGG: That's what I told her too when I was hugging her afterward in the locker room, yeah, that's what she's left. She left an amazing legacy. I told her, when they announced her in the starting lineup the last two days, I hope she took that in. It gave me some goosebumps a little bit just to kind of see the little -- when I knew her she was 16 probably when we started that journey together, to see her grow into the player and person she is. I've said it many times, coaches do have favorites. She is one of mine, and I don't hesitate to say that.

She's a phenomenal kid, great character, raised the right way, works her ass off, has talent, defends, does everything that you would want. I have immense pride in knowing that Jordan Harrison gave me everything, the

loyalty that she showed. I hope I've reciprocated back to that kid, but if she's not at the top, she's right up there close.

Q. Mimi had a bunch of big, tough baskets at the start of the game, kind of keep you guys there in the first half. Can you just talk about her toughness and the challenge she was presented tonight facing Kentucky's big forwards?

MARK KELLOGG: Yeah, and she's had it, and that was Mimi. That's what she's done all year. Honestly, when we recruited her, that's what we wanted, that's what we expected was some paint toughness, some rebounding, defensive rebounding, which she's been great at all year.

She has an ability to score over size. She gets to the other side of the rim, which you saw a couple times. Got called for a couple of offensive fouls, but just trying to make plays. We feed off that toughness and give me the ball, and then the emotion that she plays with.

We didn't get her long, eight or nine months, I guess, is as long as she's been here, but man, I'm really, really proud of that kid and certainly happy she chose us.

Q. Did you feel like there, after the ball went out on Kentucky and you challenged it, did you feel there may have been a few extra tenths of a second on? Did the play change because you were preparing for some extra time?

MARK KELLOGG: Yeah, well, .3 changes the whole play. So you got to tip it under .3. We thought there was supposed to be .5. We had heard that. I don't know how. I haven't seen it back to know, but it changes. There was two different play calls, one for anything above .3 and one for anything above .3. It's hard, and they have length. So we knew that was going to be difficult.

Again, that's another play we had in the back pocket that we hadn't had to run, but always have it there in case we need it.

Q. When you first got here, you said the goal was to have one of these games in Morgantown. Now that you've had two of them and you can kind of look back on it, what did it mean to the program, what was it like, and what will you take away from it?

MARK KELLOGG: Great question. It means the world. It's the dream. It's what we wanted. I thought I knew it even coming in. Then when you play the lowas and the North Carolinas, and as I've always said, if that's the rules, then let's play by them and let's figure out how to get them

here because I thought that this state, the community, our fans would rally around us just because of the way we play, how we represent ourselves.

I would like to think we do it the right way with really good kids that have high character, and I think this is the reward when you do those things, but you've got to figure out how to win them. So that's the next step.

We're taking steps. We're better today than we were a year ago at this time or two years ago, I think. Obviously we won a title. We played at home. We haven't done that in obviously quite some time. Hopefully from a recruiting standpoint, that should be a selling point, like we're playing in front of 13,000 people plus the last couple nights. I think there would be a lot of kids that want to come join us.

Q. Is there any chance for nonconference for West Virginia and Kentucky to play going forward?

MARK KELLOGG: I haven't given that one thought. I don't know. I have no idea.

Q. Mark, you've talked about how special this weekend was, and the fans obviously kind of recognized that. How do you -- what's the next step to make it not like special, just it's the norm really? Hosting is normal, and making a Sweet 16 is normal for this program.

MARK KELLOGG: I don't know how we get to normal yet since we've never had it. If it was happening every year, I guess that would become normal. You've got to start somewhere, I guess, would be my answer to your question. Now if this becomes a trend, then it maybe becomes normal.

There's only 16, and we've got 362 or whatever we've got Division I teams, and only 16 of them get to play at home. So it's really, really hard to do, but I think that's where our program is. We got it to where we were ranked 11th in the country and won a tournament title.

So I think we're in a great spot, but yeah, I don't want this to be it. I want to continue to grow it. I didn't want it to be about, oh, yeah, we played Iowa close a couple of years ago, and that's what we were known for, like I don't want that either. I want to be a program that hosts year after year, but that takes a lot of work and commitment and those types of things from a lot of people.

But we're fortunate, and I think we showed this weekend how special this place is and how rewarded you'll feel if you do the right things and buy in and have a great program.

Q. You were talking about it's difficult to play against that length. Clara Strack had a pretty solid third quarter. Can you just talk about the difficulties guarding her, playing against her, and her having a performance like that?

MARK KELLOGG: We knew that their length was probably going to cause some issues at times. We have learned through the year how to play through that and figure out ways to attack it. I thought in the second quarter we did a good job kind of getting downhill and attacking and getting to the free-throw line a little bit. She did get going in that third quarter, and that was probably my biggest disappointment is we just couldn't squash that run because I think it was like 7-0 and a minute and a half or something along those lines. I thought we just didn't quite have the juice I wanted us to have.

She's an All-American for a reason. She's a matchup problem. But she has been all year. Like it wasn't relative to West Virginia, she's a problem for everyone in the SEC that she plays.

To her credit, coaching staff, she's put in a lot of time, you can tell, to see where she's come from when she was a freshman to now and all the ability that she has to shoot it and stretch it. She's got the little Dirk off the one leg that's just really, really hard to defend. So she's perfected her craft for sure and will continue to get better, but she's a really good player.

Q. On the topic of moving forward and you said recruiting off this momentum, you get to do that relatively soon, and you have some important players. I'm curious if you have a template for your success that -- maybe you can't find Jordan Harrison, but someone who fits her specs. And maybe recency bias, if you found more height, maybe days like this would have been more even, but maybe not as fast if you were bigger. Where do you figure out where to go when you have such good experience with this group and you have important players to replace?

MARK KELLOGG: There's a lot of coaches in that situation. Once you get beat, that does come next for us. I'm trying to at least tonight maybe not have to process that, but I'll wake up tomorrow and have to process that.

Yeah, we have a plan. We do need some kids out of the transfer portal to come in and play and play right away. If there's a Jordan Harrison clone out there, I would be happy to take that phone call when the time is right, and a few other players, some Sydney Shaws and Mimis. Yeah, if we can continue to find height, that's great, but if height

doesn't produce, then I'm not overly interested in that either.

So it's just finding the right kids that fit that want to be here, that like what we're doing, the direction the program is going, understand how special this state is and how you get treated here.

Yeah, we have a plan. We always have a plan. We'll see how it comes to fruition over the next few weeks, but we've got a couple weeks before the portal officially opens, but we do need to make some noise in the portal, and we'll continue do that.

I appreciate everybody too. I just want to say to all the media you guys have been fantastic all year. We started this journey. We do these press conferences quite a bit, monthly, sometimes weekly, and we couldn't do it without you. You help tell our story. We want to continue to tell our story and kind of open eyes if we can. Certainly very, very appreciative of everybody. So thank you guys. Appreciate it.

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