

# 2022 NCAA Women's Lacrosse Championship

Friday, May 27, 2022  
Baltimore, Maryland, USA  
Homewood Field



## Northwestern Wildcats Coach Kelly Amonte Hiller Ally Palermo Jill Girardi

### Media Conference

North Carolina 15, Northwestern 14

COACH AMONTE HILLER: Obviously, it's a pretty heartbreaking loss. And I'm just really proud of our team. They played fearless and obviously aggressive from the start, and just proud of our leadership and our group, our seniors and our fifth years, their Final Four.

And they've really established our dominance in the lacrosse community. It's unfortunate we couldn't pull it out today. I think everyone was kind of counting us out, thinking probably we were going to get killed by UNC. And we just attacked the moment.

So it didn't go our way at the end, but really proud of the group and what we accomplished this season.

**Q. Ally, can you speak about the philosophy on defense and what worked for that first 25 minutes versus the last five minutes?**

ALLY PALERMO: Yeah, I think what Kelly said, we just went into the game, we wanted to be fearless. We wanted to attack the moment and we played aggressive. And we weren't sliding as hard as they would have liked us to do at the beginning.

We were doing a good job stopping them one-on-one, making them take harder shots the beginning of the game. And then towards the end they were capitalizing on the one-on-one dodges and we weren't able to slide as hard.

**Q. Jill, as intimated there, Northwestern largely dictated this game the first 50 minutes. What changed in the last 10, in your view?**

JILL GIRARDI: I think we started becoming a little too timid. We had the philosophy of just going balls to the wall, and I think that's what we were doing for the first 45 minutes.

And then I think we just kind of lost it, kind of went with their game plan. We didn't play ours. And I think that just defeated us.

**Q. Both grad students, five years, seen a lot of teams over the five years here, what has this team meant to you?**

ALLY PALERMO: I'm just really proud of this group, how we responded to adversity. Obviously it was a big loss for us, and we all came together, and we were up and down during the season. This group really came together more than I've seen in the past. And we all wanted it really bad. And we put all the work and effort into ourselves and our relationships and that's what got us to this point.

JILL GIRARDI: I think looking back to old teams, I think this is the closest team that we've ever had. We're always laughing, having a great time in the locker room and just on the field and at practice.

And I think we just have from -- our connection is so much and that just builds trust. And then it just -- I think our relationships have fostered this season more than other teams in the past.

**Q. Coach, you intimated maybe you were not as aggressive as the last [inaudible] what do you think changed in the end?**

COACH AMONTE HILLER: I mean, obviously anyone can fight at this point in the season [inaudible] and UNC. And I just think that we weren't able to capitalize on some of the possessions that we did get.

They caused some turnovers, I think three in a row, and that really cost us. And obviously guys are back, stuffed up, big time down the stretch, five goals there in the end.

It's tough when it's happening. I think we only had one



timeout left. We were trying to save it and we called it and it was just I think too little too late. And so we just couldn't reclaim our composure. And that hurt us.

**Q. What can you say to these incredible four-grad students, how they've left the program better than they found?**

COACH AMONTE HILLER: Yeah, I mean, I think it hurts a lot when you put your heart and soul into something, and these four kids really did. I think we're the only team in the Final Four that doesn't have transfers.

So it's sad that we couldn't pull out that win today, just to kind of show you can do it no matter what. But ultimately the transfer beat us. So it hurts, but they had given everything, and this will hurt for a while.

**Q. They said something on the broadcast about you watched MMA footage, if you could just explain something about that story, getting the first punch, if you could explain that, your hot start and what went with that?**

COACH AMONTE HILLER: Yeah, I think we worked a lot on mindset this entire year. And I just -- I'm a big fan of fighting and wrestling and those sports. So anything that I can take from other sports to carry it into this sport, I do.

I just think that we found our fearlessness after the regular season, and we just went after it. And it's just unfortunate that it didn't play out and finish the way we wanted it to.

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