

2025 NCAA Women's Lacrosse Championship

Sunday, May 25, 2025

Boston, Massachusetts, USA

Gillette Stadium

North Carolina Tar Heels

Jenny Levy

Ashley Humphrey

Chloe Humphrey

Betty Nelson

Finals Media Conference

North Carolina 12, Northwestern 8

JENNY LEVY: First of all, congratulations Northwestern on a great season, obviously, Big Ten champs. Our opponents always make us better, whether it's playing through the ACC or our non-conference games that challenges our team and our coaches to be the best that we can be. So congrats to Northwestern. You know, it's a full team effort. We started building this team last year, and obviously, like so happy for what we did. I'm kind of in shock because this has a very different feeling than '22. I'm looking at who scored, who did what. I thought Sam Flores played amazing, and the defense was incredible, shutting down what they go to and how they score. Betty played great, and the cage really anchored us. And then, obviously, Schweitzer, she's a blocker and did a great job. She had 17 saves today.

But our team has been tough all year. Nothing has fazed them. They were poised. We were a little nervous early, and settled down, and a total team effort. What Sophie did on the draw with Eliza Osburn and Harden was amazing, and just the opportunity to win a National Championship doesn't happen for everybody. For these guys, it's a lifelong experience that they will always remember, and you will always be national champs, so congrats.

Q. Chloe, you said a few days ago that it's been your dream since sixth grade to win a championship with the University of North Carolina. How do you feel right now?

CHLOE HUMPHREY: I'm still in shock. The emotions haven't hit me yet. I have so much respect for



Northwestern and the effort they gave us. But at the end of the day, this team, I couldn't imagine being surrounded by these people, winning a National Championship. I always wondered who I'd be along side because I knew the goal one day would happen.

I'm grateful that I have these people surrounded by me. I'm just feeling gravely for everything that I have.

Q. Chloe, when you were sat out last season with an injury, do you think you would be in this position today?

CHLOE HUMPHREY: Yeah, I mean --

ASHLEY HUMPHREY: Yes.

CHLOE HUMPHREY: Honestly, yes, there were people on the sideline with me that would have contributed to a National Championship. It's awesome. We got a picture a few days ago of our entire starting lineup on the sideline. It's crazy to see the impact that everyone is having, all the players contributing a lot this season, and it's just so fun to see everyone on what they went through, and now just like having fun out there and we can call ourselves national champions now.

Q. Ashley and Chloe, I talked with your dad on Friday after the win. Ashley, he said when you saw Nicole win in 2022, you said, "I want that; I need that." Kind of, what does it feel to get that? Can you walk me through that moment up until now? And also a little bit two-part, he said he was getting a tattoo if you guys won and if you knew anything about that?

ASHLEY HUMPHREY: We thought he was bluffing. I hope he is on that. Watching Nicole win in '22 and the '22 team, I was watching from the stands. I was still at Stanford at that point. And I told my dad after they made that insane comeback, not even that I wanted to win, I just wanted an opportunity to be on that stage. We didn't really have any nerves because we were so grateful to be there, and last year didn't go our way, so having the opportunity to be there was what I really wanted.



Obviously, this is just icing on the cake but I think, like, we have a one-track mind as a team and as a staff, and I think anything is really possible, and you know, when I entered the portal when I was at Stanford, I had one goal in mind, and we did it. Made it all worth it. Definitely took a lot of sacrifices and injuries and comebacks, but this is something that no one could ever take away from us.

Q. A lot of teams talk about themselves being like a family and you guys are actually are a family. What is it to win together like that?

ASHLEY HUMPHREY: Yeah, it's insane.

CHLOE HUMPHREY: It's a whole different set of emotions. We were in the stands, like, I need to be part of this. I was like, Ashley, let's do this. But it's just incredible to see the impact Nicole has had on all of us and she started the UNC dream, so much credit to her. It's so awesome being alongside my sisters and getting to live out that dream together.

ASHLEY HUMPHREY: That connection is obviously so deep, but I think this whole team, I have 30 sisters. The whole entire team, this staff, we are one big family. Even though we have some DNA in common, I think, like, everybody on this team is family and we have gotten so close, and Betty always says, this is blood, too. We're just really happy.

Q. You guys all talked about the hardships you faced last season. How much do you think learning to come over those trials, tribulations, injuries, whatever, really shaped your mindset for the season and brought you together?

BETTY NELSON: I think, obviously, it gives you a sense of gratitude coming from a place of, I know I was injured, Chloe was injured, Ashley got injured. You show up every day and you're like, wow, in awe of what we're able to do. Every time we step on the field, we're just so grateful that we have the opportunity for another game together.

Yeah, I think the gratitude that we have gotten has offer such a great perspective on this season and going through playoffs and now a National Championship.

Q. You dealt with a face card today. So having dealt with that, seeing what Maddie had to go through on the other end of the field, how hard is it to do what Sam was able to do on that side of the field?

ASHLEY HUMPHREY: I can't say enough about Sam Flores. I would take her against any Dodger in the country. Our team has been able to prepare her so well in practice.

I know Sam and Chloe go at it in practice every single day, and I think if you can stop Chloe -- you can stop anyone. She's incredible. She works so hard and she's been through so much with injuries, and I think her comeback story is one of the greatest I've ever heard. It so awesome to see all of her work pay off.

But I think Sam is able to do what she does because she has everybody behind her and she knows that she has their support, so she's able to take those calculated risks and knowing that she has six others behind her who are waiting to have her back, obviously incredibly impressive. Madison Taylor is one of the greatest in the country.

So I think it's a testament to our defense, and Kayla Ward stepping into that role as a coach was important and pivotal for us. It pays off. The scoreboard pays off. We've seen it all season long, what they were able to do, but today was just lock down.

Q. How were you able to regroup after the first goal from Northwestern?

BETTY NELSON: You know that they are going to score. You know that they are going to come after you. So you know, one goes in, it's kind of like, you knew it was going to happen. It's just, you know, on to the next really fast. And just playing your game throughout and not being too focused on, you know, trying to analyze the last goal because, you know, first goal goes in, you've got a long game. So just moving on.

Q. Betty, continuing with that, can you talk a little bit about what your defense means to you, helping to shut down one of the top offenses in the country?

BETTY NELSON: Yeah, I mean, what I do is not without my defense. You know, my saves come from them giving me the shots that I want to see. So whatever they do on the field is pivotal for my job. So obviously, today, they came out and just absolutely terrorized Northwestern.

So it made it really easy for me to do my job. I felt really comfortable. We have a saying, that they say to me and I say to them. You know, "If you got my back, I got yours," and that's just truly what we live by. They play for me and I play for them. Today was mainly them, I think.

Q. There's a pretty historic line of UNC goalies to win national championships. So how does it feel to put yourself into that conversation?

BETTY NELSON: I mean, it feels pretty surreal. Taylor Moreno texted me this morning and was like, "Hey, hey you're built for this, you're part of this greatness." I think it's



just another opportunity to be a part of this legacy, and I'm just so grateful that I get to be a part of it?

Q. I'll ask you the same question I asked the Humphrey girls about family. Talk about what it means to win this championship with your daughter the field, scoring a goal, for that matter?

JENNY LEVY: Pretty awesome. My sons are back here and my suss is here, too. These guys have lived through a lot of seasons. This one happens to be our 30th, and they have watched a lot of championship games, seen us win and seen us lose some heartbreakers. To be on the field with Kate and watch her play and watch her teammates play is so special, and I'm so proud of her. She's tough. She's a great teammate. She works hard. I don't think it's sunk in yet, but she's a special kid and special athlete and special teammate. So proud of her and feel really lucky we could be in this position together, which is really cool.

Q. All three players up here on the podium with you ended last season injured. How did you use last year as a crucible to build up this year and start this run?

JENNY LEVY: No one wants to lose players to injury, and ours were a lot of different things that happened throughout the course of the year. But by the time we hit April, we had, like, a kid from the field hockey team helping us, a kid from the club team helps us practice. We were really down a lot on numbers and as a group, we just decided that we were going to work on fundamentals and culture and make sure we had a really good, positive experience last season regardless of what was happening on the field. We had to reset what our standards were for success because obviously our standards are ACC and National Championship.

And then we started all summer. We worked really hard and people -- like, Soph didn't play this fall and Kaley Harden didn't play this fall. We were really managing a lot of minutes all fall, so we really didn't get the core group back together until January, February. But they have been tough all year. There's not one thing that we have thrown at them that they have shied away from. Being injured, I take a lot of pictures of the team because I'm a mom.

So I look back at them like, we had a whole starting lineup last year. We got a lot of criticism from people who are fans are ours or not fans of ours of what we could have been doing better or should have been doing better. And we used that all year to fuel us because I've never seen a team with injuries like that except maybe in the NFL, maybe the Ravens once in a while.

But I think overall, we used it to fuel this season, and this

team has been super humble all year. Not one time that they walked on the field and haven't respected the opponent.

Q. What is the 24 hours of preparation like leading up to the National Championship game, and how has your experience changed from your first one back in, I believe, 2013 to your fourth one this year?

JENNY LEVY: Well, they don't change. You can't look past your Friday game, so you really don't know. You just have to focus on Friday. There's no other explanation. You cannot take another step forward until you win on Friday. I think one of our coaches, I saw Coach Tillman in the lobby yesterday, getting as much Keurig as he could because he's about to pull an all-nighter preparing for Cornell. You don't sleep. You get back late. You watch the game live and then you start working on the things that you know. Luckily for us, the schedule that we play, it prepares us for this moment. We've played them before and that was in March and both teams have made adjustments and gotten better in different areas.

Ultimately, it's really about us. It's about us, we have a gentleman who follows our team, who is in a wheelchair, and I saw him literally right before I got into my car to go on the bus to go to the airport, and he was like, "Coach, just remember who you are." And I was like, "Thanks. That's all we need."

Obviously, tactically, you have to know what we're doing, and we try to prepare all season so we can make the small adjustments that we need to make today and it's not a shock to our players. I think my staff did an unbelievable job all year. Marie McCool, Kayla Wood, who both played for me, and then Maiah Bartlett who is new, and she was at Denison on the men's side last year. I thought we had a good plan starting in January that would set up our team up for this moment and started with ACCs, playing Wednesday, Friday, Sunday. You don't get a lot of sleep, but you know in 48 hours it's going to be over one way or the other. Just so privileged to be in that position.

Q. It seemed like every time they showed Ashley on the big screen, she was yelling or saying something. Can you talk about her leadership and vision on the field and how much does that help in a season like this?

JENNY LEVY: Yeah, she's a point guard for us back there. She has a really good command of the game. She watches a ton of film, and she's prepared in her mind for what tactical adjustments need to be made and things are not going right. She understands that. Even in a face guard situation, she's leading. The first time we had a face



guard this season was at Northwestern.

We've gotten better at it since, and that's why you play your season. But she's a leader. She tells people what they need to know. Sometimes she's in the heat of the moment. It's not as friendly as it needs to be. But that's what leaders do. They tell people real truths when they need to hear them.

Q. After the game, your hug with Kate, is it a normal mother/daughter hug or does it have more meaning because what you guys just accomplished?

JENNY LEVY: Yeah, I think it's pretty cool hug your daughter after a National Championship. I like to hug anyway, and I like to hug every single one of my players, but to hug your daughter as a player is pretty awesome.

Q. What type of discipline goes into the way Sam Forrest goes into preparing for a face guard and what type of mentality do you have to have when you go into every game knowing you're going to have that type of assignment?

JENNY LEVY: Actually, we weren't in a face guard. We were extending -- we've laid like that all year and we wanted to use our athleticism and get up and out and make people uncomfortable. So it is not a face guard, but it is a sliding defense that helps each other so she knows it's not just on her. The kids, the game today is so -- the kids are so talented.

It's hard to play straight up one-on-one defense against someone like Madison Taylor. You can't. She's too good, too powerful. She's such a great athlete and finisher, and you can't leave any of your teammates out to dry when she has the ball. Sam had help today. It wasn't a face guard but it's a sliding defense that helps protect those situations.

Q. You talked about how you haven't seen that happen to a team before last season, but I also haven't seen what you did to turn it on a dime. Like, to do that within a year, to be within such injury trouble the year before and to be in the spot where you are now, what do you really do and hone in on to flip that on a dime?

JENNY LEVY: We were very focused on keeping things simple and playing to our strengths. We started building that last season. We knew what we wanted to do going into the fall. We worked on a couple of things that was a style change for us on the defense side and on the midfield and knowing our personnel and what they naturally wanted to do. So we highlighted that.

Honestly, we went in the first game against JMU this

season and I had no idea if it was going to work. I didn't know how we would respond to stress. I didn't know how we would respond to anything because we had not competed yet in the season, and that had been my curiosity; how are you going to respond in that moment, and even today and none of them had been in that situation together.

At the end of the day, they are all really competitive kids and they have all been in big games through the their life and there have always been margins of victory in high school and the teams they are playing on. We flipped it. We kept it simple. We were very positive and encouraging for them to learn to play together, play hard, be fearless.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports ...

