

# 2023 NCAA Division III Women's Basketball Championship: Transylvania vs. Christopher Newport

Saturday, April 1, 2023

Dallas, Texas, USA

American Airlines Center

## Christopher Newport Captains

## Coach Bill Broderick

## Lauren Fortescue

## Gabbi San Diego

## Sondra Fan

### Finals Postgame Media Conference

Transylvania 57, Christopher Newport 52

**BILL BRODERICK:** Just want to start off by congratulating Transylvania. They played a great game today. Really did what they needed to do down the stretch to win the National Championship. I give Coach Fulks and her staff and her players a lot of credit.

Also want to really thank the NCAA and the city of Dallas for everything. Everything has been first class. We have really, really enjoyed our experience here so far. I know we're not done yet, but just want to thank them for everything.

Also just want to say that I'm extremely proud of my group. I think we fought and competed through a lot of adversity this year, and we didn't stop fighting until the final buzzer went off.

Obviously the score didn't go the way we wanted it this time, but it doesn't make me any less proud of this group of 17 young ladies that gave me and their fans and their family and the school everything they had this year.

Just really, really proud of them. Wish we were national champs, but you know what, national runner-up, that's pretty good, too. Really, really proud of them. Really want to thank -- publicly thank our two graduates, Sondra Fan and Lauren Fortescue for all that they've done this year. They're going to be missed badly, but we know they'll be around the program. So just really appreciate them for



everything that they've done for us.

**Q. Just talk about obviously what an incredible season you had, to end it in Dallas at the National Championship. Obviously not the result you wanted but just talk about your season and the experience.**

**LAUREN FORTESCUE:** Yeah, first off, I would just like to thank Coach B for bringing me here. I'm a transfer, so I'm just really blessed for the opportunity. The girls were just so welcoming as soon as I got to the school, and the memories that we made, I'm forever grateful for that, and just this experience in general. I never really thought I'd be here, and then it's actually happening, and it was a great experience.

Obviously not the result, but I think all season we worked hard together, and I made best friends throughout this journey, and I'm really thankful for that and thankful for Coach B for letting me play here and the girls for welcoming me.

**GABBI SAN DIEGO:** Yeah, I mean, just really, really proud of our team. Every single game in the NCAA Tournament was just a battle for us, especially doing it without two senior starters who are a big part of what we do. To get to this game was something that I'm incredibly proud of them for.

And I think we've continued to show a lot of resilience, especially in that second half. I feel like we really left everything that we had out there, and unfortunately the score didn't end up in our favor.

But I am genuinely just very proud of our people. We're losing these two people up here, which is extremely tough, but we're returning everybody else, and I think that's something we should be excited about.

This experience has been unreal, and what I'm thinking about now is just how hard it is to play at this caliber, to get all the way here and win the whole thing. I know the things I've got to work on for next season and I'm excited to come back. And I'm just proud of what our group was able to pull together.



SONDRA FAN: First, just very grateful to be here. Like Gabbi said, we had to fight through adversity throughout the whole tournament, and we made it here, just not the turnout that we wanted after today's game. I'm just extremely grateful for CNU giving me this opportunity, or course, Coach B, and of course for my team for fighting throughout the whole season.

**Q. Girls, last week you were down 12 in the second half and this week down 13 in the second half. Can you talk about how you never seem to be out of a game, you never seem to be down on yourselves, and what it takes to come back from those big deficits in the second half?**

SONDRA FAN: For me, it's our floor general, Gabbi. She brings that energy and that confidence to us. And throughout the whole tournament Gabbi said, hey, we got this, and just walked us through it step by step, play by play.

For all my teammates to follow in on her and listen in.

GABBI SAN DIEGO: I'd say it's not me alone. I think we have some phenomenal leaders on this team who kind of help foster that kind of energy. I think especially watching March Madness at Division I level, no game is ever done until the last buzzer sounds. I feel like we're trying to play to a standard every single possession, and we're trying to play to our principles and have less breakdowns.

And I think when you take it one possession at a time of doing what we should be doing and closing out and rotating and playing team defense and then executing our offenses, I think that shrinks the lead down in our head to just try and take it one bucket and one stop at a time.

LAUREN FORTESCUE: Yeah, what I like about this team is we can recognize what we're not doing good. And again, Gabbi and others and Soni vocalize that, and then we go out and make those adjustments.

Tonight couldn't catch back up all the way, but we were chipping away at it. And what I really love about this team is we never give up and we motivate each other and give each other that confidence to get back into it.

**Q. It's a new arena and it's a bigger place than you're used to. How much did depth perception play a role in the shooting out there today?**

GABBI SAN DIEGO: Honestly, I think it's obviously different. I think we're a little bit lucky that our home court at home kind of has the same -- obviously not on the same

level, but a similar kind of feel to an arena. And practicing at SMU helped that a little bit, but at the end of the day, if you're a shooter, you're going to catch it and knock it down.

I don't think that was what was on my our minds. I think we were just trying to focus on catching in rhythm and shooting with confidence and shooting open shots and having good shot selection. It was definitely a different feel, but I think the experience of it was something that we're super thankful for.

**Q. With the game coming down to the wire, what did Coach B tell all of you guys to do? What was the message to you guys?**

LAUREN FORTESCUE: During halftime, like I said, Coach B just recognized what we needed to do, and we did make those adjustments. Basically just go out -- because this is me and Soni's last ride, he said, stop being scared, you've been doing this your whole lives, so just go out and give it all that you have.

GABBI SAN DIEGO: Yeah, I think late in the game, a big focus of ours was just committing to our defense. Obviously our defense is all over the court, and it doesn't really work unless you have five people bought in and flying all over the place. We went to that 2-3 zone also and were trying to scramble and get traps everywhere we could and be pests and bother them and try and force some turnovers.

All game it was really about being aggressive, being confident. We knew he had a ton of faith in each and every one of us to attack and get downhill and shoot open shots and stuff like that and to play loose.

I think we haven't really changed much that we've done. I think a part of our identity is just playing hard for 40-plus minutes, and I think we tried to embody that late in the stretch, and it just unfortunately didn't turn out our way.

**Q. Sondra and Lauren, with this being your last game as seniors, what did it mean to you to play women's basketball on a bigger platform and what do you hope for the future of collegiate women's basketball?**

SONDRA FAN: Yeah, this experience was absolutely amazing, just being able to play on the same stage as Division I and Division II and going out there and doing the same thing this weekend was incredible and something I'll remember forever. I hope in the future that other women athletes get to experience the same thing I did this weekend.

LAUREN FORTESCUE: Yeah, I agree with what Sondra

said. It was a really cool experience to meet the Division I and Division II girls. And what was really cool was we were kind of fan-girling about them. But they basically said we're college athletes just like you, so I think that made us feel really good, too.

Yeah, just this experience in general. I'm sure Gabbi and the team is going to learn from what happened tonight, and I have all the belief in the future teams of CNU, and I'm just really thankful for it.

**Q. What are some of the challenges and advantages of having two weeks between the semifinal and the final game here in Dallas?**

BILL BRODERICK: Yeah, I think some of the challenges I don't think necessarily affected us. I think the challenge would be if you're in a groove and things were going well, you want to keep playing and keep it going.

I think for us that wasn't necessarily the case. But having so many people out of our rotation and all of our injuries, we used that time to try to heal up and try to, I guess, help teach some of the people that had to fill in try to do some things. And then try to modify some things, too, try to give us some things, because we weren't able to really do kind of what we've been doing all year with the numbers and who we didn't have. So it gave us some time to try to modify some things and do that.

For us, I think it was a good thing. I don't think -- that would be the only negative I would say. And I would say this, too. I think even if we were at full strength and ready to go and all those other things, you may want to play it right away, but once you get a chance to be here and have your young ladies experience all that they've experienced since we've been here, I think that by far outweighs any time that you miss.

I would definitely recommend that we keep doing that as much as we can.

**Q. Can you talk about Sondra Fan; she hurt her foot early in the game. What happened there, and how much do you think it affected her?**

BILL BRODERICK: Yeah, Sondra sprained her ankle early in the game. I think it definitely affected her mobility there. Took her a little while going -- I think eventually by the fourth quarter, I think some adrenaline kind of kicked in. She was able to play a little bit better.

I think it definitely slowed her down, but you didn't hear her talk about it. You won't hear me talk about it. It's just part of the game. You've got to keep playing. It was her last

game, and she gave it everything she got. That's all you can do.

**Q. You guys erased big leads in both of the last two games, really had a shot to win here today. Can you talk about what the team's mentality is and how you keep them locked in even though you went down double digits? And then talk about the season as a whole and what a record-breaking year it was for Christopher Newport.**

BILL BRODERICK: Yeah, I think we know with our defense and the way we're able to turn people over and turn it into quick baskets that we feel like no lead is safe and that we can get back into any game.

I think when you get down by that much, whether it was against Rhode Island or against Transy today, it's really focusing on one basket at a time and just keep trying to build on that.

Yeah, we just kept plugging away. I think we were able to tie it up, I think, at like 47 maybe. The hard part with that is so often that it took so much energy to get us back into the game. And without having a few people in our rotation, I think we just didn't really have the legs to kind of finish pushing through.

But yeah, I'm super proud of that fight. They never quit. They know I'll never quit on them. So we go and we talk about give it everything we've got, and then whatever the score is, the score is, and we'll be okay with that.

As far as the season, I think it's still -- everything is still kind of sinking in a little bit. But yeah, just super proud. It's just been a special year with a special group. They're just such a low-maintenance group that works really, really hard. And it's fun, to have an extra two weeks with them, I like it. I don't know if they did. I know they liked being here.

**Q. I know you've talked a lot about the players. I was hoping you could talk about what this journey has meant for you. You built this team into a national title contender, now you have a national recruiting profile. What does this mean for you personally?**

BILL BRODERICK: Yeah, you know, I don't know. I think I just pull so much joy from their joy, to be honest with you. It's been a really tough year just personally for me with some family members being sick and some people on our staff being sick.

So it's been a really tough year, and I think basketball is that one love that you can always go to that kind of helps kind of take you away from those things. I think it's been a

really good escape from a lot of things that have been going on.

It's hard for me. While I'm really, really happy for the team and all the young ladies that got to perform today, my heart breaks for Anaya Simmons. It breaks for Katy Rader. Those two guys have put so much into it and have built so -- that really breaks my heart for them.

But I think I just really pull my joy from them, and seeing them excited and seeing them excited in the skybox and meeting their idols and those things, that's what brings me joy. That's what I do it for.

Everyone knows I'm very competitive when I'm on the court. I'm going to give it everything I've got. But when that game is over, the game is over, and it's not that serious, win or lose. For me, it's all about the ladies, and they're the reason that I do that.

We've got over 30, 40 alums that have traveled here, and I've got so many text messages and emails and those things. That's what means the most for me, and to be able to share that with all of them and all the people that came before them is awesome.

I haven't made a shot or grabbed a rebound or given an assist yet, so I owe everything to them. I don't ever forget that I have a job and a career because of them, so I'm grateful for that opportunity.

**Q. At 51-49 with 13 or 14 seconds left, were you surprised that they called a shooting foul, and did that work out well for you anyway because you wanted to get them to the line with so few personals? But were you surprised by that?**

BILL BRODERICK: Yeah, I mean, I don't know. I don't think anything surprises me these days. I just kind of go with whatever the call is, and if I'm not sure what it was, I'll ask for clarification. Then whatever their answer is, I just go with that, and we just keep playing.

Yeah, I mean, we knew we -- whether it was a shooting foul or not, we needed to be prepared and make the next play. I think that's all I was really thinking about and talking about with the team was just next-play mentality. All it did was just change what we were going to do.

Yeah, it kind of goes the way it goes.

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