

# Atlantic Coast Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 6, 2025

Greensboro, North Carolina, USA

**Cal Bears**

**Coach Charmin Smith**

**Ionna Krimili**

**Lulu Twidale**

Postgame Press Conference

Cal 75, Virginia 58

CHARMIN SMITH: First I'd just like to say I hope that Lattimore is okay. One of our players fell on her. It was an accident. But that was just -- no one wants to see anyone get hurt at this point. I hope that she's okay.

In terms of the game and our team, I was really proud of how we started the game. We came out with the intensity that we needed and were able to jump on Virginia right away, and then kind of never looked back.

A good team effort. Obviously Michelle is a huge key for us, and when she can play well, it really bodes well for our success.

Our shots started falling there at a certain part of the game, which also allows us to extend leads. I thought it was a good first -- is this second round? I thought it was a good performance for us in our first game in the ACC Tournament.

**Q. The fast start, sometimes when teams come off of rest, people say there will be rust. What specific things did you do to have your team prepared? Also, was there any sense of having anything to prove first year in the conference coming all the way across the country for this tournament?**

CHARMIN SMITH: Yeah, our preparation, it's the same that it's been all year-round. We do a good job of trying to make sure our players are hydrated, that we get the rest we need when we make this travel, and honestly, it's just a group that enjoys being around each other and wants to come out and perform.



I wasn't surprised by our start. I think we have a really motivated group.

To your second question about trying to prove something, yes, we have something to prove. This is our first year in the ACC, and not many people know a lot about us. We wanted to make a statement, and I think we did really well in our first year, and now it's about making a statement for the NCAA selection committee and trying to fight our way off of that 8 line, 8-9 line.

I think no one except us and Stanford has had the travel that we've had. I think that factors in. I think we're a really good team, and we just want to fight for a better seed.

**Q. What did you like about how you guys played defense tonight?**

CHARMIN SMITH: Johnson is tough. Clark has been really playing well, playing better as of late. She's knocking down threes in the previous games. We were really concerned about their guard play in particular.

I thought we did a good job of containing them. We did switch matchups a little bit. Johnson got going, then we'd move Jayda to Johnson and Kayla did a solid job, we'd move Jayda over to Clark.

It's really a team effort. I thought Michelle was excellent in our impacting the ball defense on those ball screens with Johnson to take away some easy looks that she's used to.

But we have a lot of respect for their players, and I'm proud of how we defended.

IOANNA KRIMILI: Yeah, I was going to say that our coaches do a really good job of preparing us, and I thought the scout was to the point, and we knew exactly what we were doing, and I think we did a good job executing.

**Q. Coach talked about this a little, but I know you've played in other conference tournaments, but this being your first ACC Tournament, was there any sense of newness, anything unique? Was it about what you**



**expected being here, the site?**

LULU TWIDALE: Yeah, I mean, I've only played in one Pac-12, and this is my second tournament, but I think it's pretty much the same. We prepared the same. Our coaches do a good job. Again, from what Ioanna said, they do a good job preparing us, preparing our bodies, preparing our minds before the game.

I don't think there was much newness. I think it was just a readiness that we knew we had to have when we came out tonight.

IOANNA KRIMILI: The only thing I would say, the ACC, I'm not surprised with anything. I know everything can come every night and beat whoever, so just so don't be surprised with anything, I guess.

**Q. You guys shot pretty well for the first three quarters. Was there anything you were able to take advantage of with their defense to make it a good shooting day?**

CHARMIN SMITH: I think we moved the ball really well, and when Michelle touches it, she's been playing well, that she commanded a little bit more attention, and then we were able to get it out to our shooters for open looks.

I think those were the best plays we had on offense. That, and then when we can get stops and run in transition for easy baskets. I think Marta hit Jayda up for a wide open lay-up at some point.

And we like those easy baskets, we like assisted baskets, and we were able to find a flow because we were patient, we were selfless, and we moved the ball.

**Q. Coach, you mentioned the travel that you've had all year. How have you dealt with that? And for the players in particular, any tips or tricks that you've learned and accommodated to get on the schedule?**

CHARMIN SMITH: Well, we can't give away our secrets, but we have worked with a sleep specialist to give us advice on -- we've regimented bedtime, naps, when they eat, hydration, and we tell them, if you want to win, you'll follow this formula.

I know these two are really committed to winning, so we've done the best that we can. But if you look at wins and losses, the travel, it impacts us. It impacts us. We lost one game at home, and that was against North Carolina and a really close game. We were able to beat NC State at home. We were able to beat Florida State at home.

But when you put us on a four, five-hour plane ride when we have three- and four-hour delays and we have to do it four times -- us and Stanford, we have to do that four times. Louisville didn't do it at all this year. The teams that we played away, they didn't have to do it at all this year.

Then next year they'll have to do it once.

It's a serious disadvantage, but we didn't make any excuses all year long. We just showed up and we played.

I will say I'm still really happy to be in the ACC. I'm happy that our chancellor and our AD and everyone who was a part of making this happen for us, it's a really good situation. But if you had to ask for the one down side, the travel is definitely an issue.

LULU TWIDALE: I think, like Charmin said, they really do give us the tools of what we need to do so we can come out and perform at our best. I think we all have a lot of trust in our coaches and what they tell us to do, and we kind of follow that as closely as possible to make sure we're ready to come out and perform.

**Q. For the players, you all have such a well-balanced team. How much of an advantage is that, especially headed into tournament time when you can have anyone step up on any given night?**

IOANNA KRIMILI: I mean, it's so much easier. It's so much fun. You never know who's going to step up, and we trust so much each other that we know when we take the right shots and when we pass the ball, when we share the ball, something good is going to come out.

And I think that has come from the things that our coaches have been saying. They trust everybody on the floor that they will run the play, they will do the right thing. It has been really, really fun playing with them.

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