

# Atlantic Coast Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Friday, March 7, 2025

Greensboro, North Carolina, USA

**Notre Dame Fighting Irish**

**Niele Ivey**

**Hannah Hidalgo**

**Olivia Miles**

Postgame Press Conference

Notre Dame - 73, California - 64

THE MODERATOR: Joining us from Notre Dame is head coach Niele Ivey, along with student-athletes Hannah Hidalgo and Olivia Miles.

NIELE IVEY: Really pleased with this win. Really excited that we get to obviously have more life and play tomorrow. I thought we played really well. I thought this team was really resilient today. So we were very poised. This is our first game. You could tell some of our shots, our normal shots didn't really go in in the first half, but I thought we really settled in in the second half.

Our focus right now is our defense, and I thought it was just a great team effort. It was a great team win.

These two did a great job of leading us, Hannah with 25 points. Super salad helped us on that run when we were down six. Came up big with a couple baskets and the 3 in transition.

I thought Liv did an excellent job of running the team. I thought she had a fantastic second half, really got her shot going, getting downhill, executing really in the timely plays, which was amazing.

Also, I'll talk about Kate and Liza came in off the bench today. They were really great with their post defense, really changed the game defensively. We forced 28 turnovers, which was really great for this group.

This is a tough league, as you know. This conference is extremely tough. So for us to get this win and move on tomorrow, we're super excited to survive and advance.



**Q. Liv and Hannah, what flipped for both of you in the third quarter there where you're down six, they're on a run, and all of a sudden you two helped flip the game back to Notre Dame's favor?**

HANNAH HIDALGO: I think it's having the mindset it's win or go home. We don't want to lose. I think just coming together and trusting each other, we were able to get stops and we were able to run in transition.

OLIVIA MILES: I felt like I was settling a little bit early on. I worked on my 3-point shot all year, so I'm very confident in it. I sometimes forget that I can get to the rim whenever I want.

I think that really helped me spark our run and get to the rim, and then it kind of opened up things, and I was able to hit Sonia in the corner and hit Hannah a few times.

**Q. To stop Cal when only a handful of teams have done it in terms of the disruption of their offense, can you speak to that, coaches and players, what you did in particular to stop their ball movement?**

NIELE IVEY: Defensively is an area that we are really, really focused on. They have tremendous guard play and post play. Like Hannah said, we just trusted each other. We were really locked in on the scout, knew exactly what they were going to run, thought we did a really good job of following the game plan, knowing tendencies, knowing personnel, and kind of feeding off of each other defensively and trusting each other.

THE MODERATOR: Olivia or Hannah, anything to add about how you all as players were able to disrupt Cal?

OLIVIA MILES: It starts with Hannah on defense, her disruptive energy. She brings chaos for the other team. Very glad she's on our team and not the other. She causes a lot of corruption, and it's on us at the back to kind of make up for those steals, those deflections that she has.

Yeah, when you have someone that's pressuring the ball for 40 minutes, it makes it a little easier on us to be

disruptive as well.

**Q. Coach, you mentioned how the players responded when you guys were down, I think it was 45-39, but what prompted you to take that timeout, and what did you say in that timeout to kind of get them going?**

NIELE IVEY: I thought Cal was going on a run. So I was trying to cut the momentum and just kind of recenter, refocus, talk about our defense knowing we needed to get stops, and with those stops coming down on the floor and getting better shots and getting to the rim.

We talked about getting downhill. We ran a couple actions that were very successful, so kind of went back to that.

Then once we got the stops, that's when they went on a run. They pushed the ball, advanced in transition, and made some great plays. I was trying to cut the momentum and just really recenter and focus on our defense.

**Q. This is for Hannah and Liv. You both kind of being the emotional leader for your team, how are you able to stay level headed when the shots aren't falling?**

HANNAH HIDALGO: I think the biggest thing is knowing that our teammates are looking at us, and they kind of feed off of our energy. It's a lot, having that kind of pressure on us, but just knowing that our teammates need us in that moment, just to encourage them.

OLIVIA MILES: I mean, it's tough when you're missing two, three in a row, but that's the beauty of basketball. You have to have short-term memory, and our teammates are so good at -- you know, KK came over to me and was like, you can get to the rim whenever you want. That kind of flipped a switch in my brain, like oh. Sometimes you can get so far in your head.

As Hannah said, our team really relies on us, so at the end of the day, you just have to produce and go out there and do what you do best and play to your strengths.

**Q. Niele, NC State had beaten Georgia Tech in double figures on the road and today it came down to free throws at the end. You guys handled Cal pretty handily in the first meeting, had a real fight today. Is that just part of the trick of conference tournaments? Is it coming in after a team has played before you? How do you explain the tough fights today?**

NIELE IVEY: For us, we're going to get everybody's best game regardless. It's a new season, so records don't matter. Those games, those wins don't matter. You have to come in and be focused and ready for 40 minutes.

We adjusted. Cal came out, shot the ball really well, and we adjusted to the way that they were -- that they came out honestly.

I think the stakes are high. Everybody's going to get their best game, understanding that this is it. You lose, you're going home. With the pressure being higher, I think it's going to look like that, I feel like, tonight as well and tomorrow.

You have to be ready to perform for 40 minutes, and it's crazy. It's March.

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