

# Atlantic Coast Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Saturday, March 8, 2025

Greensboro, North Carolina, USA

**Notre Dame Fighting Irish**

**Coach Niele Ivey**

**Sonia Citron**

**Liza Karlen**

Postgame Press Conference

Duke 61, Notre Dame 56

NIELE IVEY: Just real frustrated with the performance today. Didn't feel like we played our game defensively. Took us a while to get ourselves going. Something that I have to fix when we get back, get the opportunity to get back to practice.

But just defensive-wise it's something that we talked about as a team, as a unit, to be able to rely on our defense when offensively if our offense is not flowing, we always have to be able to rely on our defense, and we didn't have that today. We didn't do a great job on the boards, didn't match their physicality, so very frustrated with our defensive effort today.

Again, this type of game, my expectations are a lot higher. I feel like we played below our standard. So that's frustrating. We've got to get better, and that's on me, I need to make this team get better, and that's something when we get back on this court, we will be better for this loss.

**Q. Niele, you've talked about not playing to your standard twice, Florida State and today. How do the postgame meetings with your team -- do you find any answers? Do you figure out what's going wrong in that time?**

NIELE IVEY: Yeah, that's always the goal. I think having a lot of transparency postgame, even when things are going well, just the communication is a big piece of who we are.

So yeah, I'm always trying to see ways to connect with this group and just having transparent conversations, but I think



that's a big piece of this is finding ways to come together so we can be better as a unit.

**Q. Coach, that's three losses in the last five. You guys won 19 in a row before that. What's the biggest difference? Why have things derailed a little bit?**

NIELE IVEY: I would start with our defense. I think there's a lot of times with our defensive intensity is not where it needs to be. Our offense gets stagnant. We have to rely on our defense and focus more on our defense in order for us to get going with our pace, the things that we do well at.

I think the games that we've lost -- defensively we've been lacking, so if that's containing the ball, if that's -- we got out-rebounded today. Just having that intensity defensively today is part of the reason for the last three losses, and that's frustrating because that's something we work on every day; it's something we've been working towards the entire season.

I think offensively some of the games that we're losing, either it's too many turnovers and trying to find the mismatches, things like that, we were out of sync a little bit.

But I'm always going to go back to our defense because that's what we can control, and defensively in those three losses is where I feel like we've struggled.

**Q. For the players, Coach mentioned the stagnant offense. It seemed to be an issue today. What more can you guys do to get into a better flow, and why do you think things are kind of muddy there right now?**

SONIA CITRON: I mean, I think one thing is, again, what Coach Ivey talked about is defense. We don't want to play in the half court. I know obviously sometimes we have to, but we get our momentum and our energy from transition, and in order to be in transition, we have to get stops. So that's something that we need to be able to rely on.

Then again, just spacing and doing our jobs. We know the plays. It's just about executing, and yeah, just doing our jobs.



**Q. For the players, you guys are usually pretty calm when something doesn't go right on the floor, and it seemed like today some of the frustration broke through. Did you notice that, or was it the defense breaking down and working from there?**

LIZA KARLEN: Yeah, I think that just this last week and a half, you want to grow from every loss. I think that one thing we always talk about is we feel like we're the better team in every game we play. So a lot of our mistakes are our own and very controllable by us.

So I think the third time it happens in a short period, it's frustrating, obviously, because we're really the only ones in our way we feel. We just need to be able to turn the page on that. I'm still all in on this team, and I really believe that we can go all the way in March.

But we have to turn the page.

**Q. Coach, the offense actually came out pretty well in the first quarter but for the following three you only shot 30 percent from the field. Would you say there were any adjustments Duke made to slow you down for the rest of the game, or was it kind of personal mistakes?**

NIELE IVEY: Yeah, we played -- we just played them a month ago, so we were expecting the pressure, we were expecting the hedge. I think it was more on us, things that we ran, not attacking ball screens, not coming hot. Like small things and habits that we do within our offense, I feel like we kind of got away from that.

Trying to get downhill, trying to force miss matches and finding them, and then we had a couple really good looks, just not making those looks, but also kind of being one-and-done. We didn't do a great job of getting on the glass when we missed shots.

I think those are all fixable things that are in our control within our offense, knowing that this is something that we knew what we were about to face today.

**Q. Coach, you obviously touched on getting back to your defensive standard and then probably some rest. Is there anything else you want to work on in the 10 days, two weeks before you have more basketball to play?**

NIELE IVEY: Yeah, kind of like Liza, turning the page I think is a mental aspect of this, just managing your frustration, getting to the next play, small things for us.

We've got to come together and fix offensively, defensively,

a little bit of mindset coming in and playing the right way, things that are in our control.

**Q. Did you feel like on the defense there was technical adjustments to be made, or is it more just an effort and intensity thing, as you mentioned?**

NIELE IVEY: Yeah, I think we were getting stops. We gave offensive rebounds, so that was in the zone or man. Tried to mix it up a little bit. Stuck with the zone a little bit. Thought it was good. Unfortunately one of the stops that happened we gave up really crucial offensive rebounds at really crucial moments, and I think that's what's really hurt.

**Q. For the players, how do you work through the frustration and get that focus back, knowing that the next time something like this happens your careers are basically over?**

SONIA CITRON: I think it's exactly that. The good thing about this is we have one more chance to play. We have a lot of time to work on our game, get better. But knowing that that's it. This next time is it. If we don't give everything we have, give 100 percent of ourselves, then I don't know what we're doing here.

It's going to be our last chance. I mean, turn the page, get better, and we know we've got one more shot at it, so that's going to be what's motivating us.

**Q. Coach, Maddy Westbeld had the unfortunate circumstance of getting hit in the face again, and yet when she did come back in, it felt like she wasn't in a rhythm. How can you get her game right? Then with Olivia, what was the timing in terms of bringing her back with that bad ankle?**

NIELE IVEY: I think with Maddy, unfortunately she keeps getting hit in her face. Just trying to find ways to get her to the block so she can find mismatches. She had a couple wide-open threes. Always trying to find ways to get her going. It's been something that we've been trying to do.

Then Liv, yeah, I think she tweaked her ankle, but I wasn't aware if it was anything that was serious. She said she was fine when I pulled her out of the game, and towards the end of the game just having her manage the offense. We were trying to go on a run at the end.

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