

# 2025 NCAA Women's Volleyball Championship

Thursday, December 18, 2025

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

T-Mobile Center

**Wisconsin Badgers**

**Coach Kelly Sheffield**

**Mimi Colyer**

**Charlie Fuerbringer**

Semifinal Press Conference

Kentucky 3

Wisconsin 2

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Wisconsin.

We'll start with an opening statement by coach.

KELLY SHEFFIELD: I thought that match was a lot of, a lot of players that were playing with courage and laying everything out on the floor and bouncing back from things.

It's obviously a tough loss 15-13 in the fifth. It was those guys making some plays. They just made a little bit more. Their ability to come back after that first set was really, really impressive.

We gifted them quite a few points. What Hudson did the latter half of that match was really, really impressive, I think hitting .600 in the fourth and fifth sets is unbelievable. Carter Booth having 21 kills. You don't see that very much.

I thought we passed brilliantly for the entire match. Then about three or four points in the fifth set where we didn't. Their serving specialists put in some really, really nasty serves.

We just stayed with it and tried to find a way to get back into that fifth set, and we did, which I thought took a lot of courage, as well. We knew that was going to be the match. Both teams throwing haymakers. They were able to land the last one.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

**Q. What are the emotions after a loss like this? How**



**do you sum up how much this team has meant to you guys?**

MIMI COLYER: Yeah, it sucks. Losing's never fun, especially in a game like this.

I think there's so much love this group has for each other. There's so much connectiveness within the girls. We love each other so much. The locker room afterwards, there were some tears and lots of hugging. A couple of our little freshmen that came in, they're like, I'm sorry.

I'm like, No, you guys played your hearts out.

I said this earlier in a press conference, we want it badly for each other, more than we want it for ourselves. I think that really shows with this group with just the confidence and the courage that people came out with tonight. It was just really fun to see.

CHARLIE FUERBRINGER: Yeah, just heartbreaking for everyone. We worked so hard this year. I don't regret a thing. We gave it our all the whole time. I'm heartbroken for the seniors because I think they did just an amazing job at coming into a new program and showing us how it's done, inspiring the younger girls, even though they're new, too.

Carter just gave her all to all of us every single day, yeah.

**Q. Charlie, can you talk about Mimi's standout night tonight? What were you seeing when you were on the court?**

CHARLIE FUERBRINGER: Yeah, I think Mimi has a different confidence than a lot of different players. It helps her stand out.

I have so much trust in her. I mean, I feed her the ball a ton. She's our main girl. She knows it. We know it. We trust her at all times.

Yeah, I couldn't be more proud of Mimi. Playing with her this year has been so fun (tearing up). We could not have

**ASAP** sports . . . when all is said, we're done.®

asked for a better year.

**Q. Mimi, Kelly referenced that fifth set. You're down 6-1, 9-3. Most people are saying it's going to be a tough thing to overcome. You got it down to within a point at the end. What was going on and how did you turn it around at that point?**

MIMI COLYER: Yeah, I mean, we're at a point in the season where we literally having nothing to lose. We were fighting for our season. I think there was just a lot of courage. That's been kind of our word of the tournament, the courage we're going out with, not backing down.

In practice we're playing red zone games where every point counts. 9-3, every single point counts. How can we save this? What can we do? The courageous swings we're taking. Trinity went and took a huge rip. It's stuff like that was really setting us apart this season, why we were so successful, just the amount of courage we had. Just the no backing down.

We had so much trust in each other to pass the next ball, to set, to kill, all the things. We had so much trust in each other throughout that set. That was the main key in getting us back into it.

**Q. Earlier Kentucky coaches and players described the game as nonstop. What kind of things did y'all say to each other during the ebbs and flows? How do y'all process moving through your own adjustments?**

CHARLIE FUERBRINGER: Yeah, I think when we're up, the big key words are: Stay humble and hungry. Don't get too cocky with it. Stay aggressive. We need to stay on them at all times.

When we're down, just next point. We can't be dwelling on the past points. When we do that, we're at our worst. We know that we have to keep moving forward. I think we did a really good job of that in the fifth set. It sucks, you go down 6-1 in a five-setter, it's hard to come back from. I'm proud of our fight in that.

I think the talk throughout that whole set was next point, keep moving forward, just knowing that we all believe in one another.

MIMI COLYER: I think a big thing for us, it's kind of a joke, but it's not really a joke, they can't win if we keep siding out. Especially in sets two, three, and four, it really was kind of back and forth. There were just two teams really going for it.

Everyone is going to have their big swings. They're going

to have theirs; we're going to have ours. But if we keep just siding out, I think we were siding out at a really high percentage. If we keep siding out they literally cannot win. Because you've got to win by two, rules of volleyball.

I think just kind of keeping that in mind. Let them have their kills; we're going to have ours. Keep trekking through it.

**Q. Mimi, you arrived in Madison as one of the five new starters on this team. You will leave it saying multiple times it's the best decision you made.**

MIMI COLYER: It was -- no, I'm fine. It was the dream team, the dream season. These girls, I've said it over and over, just the amount of love we have for each other. You won't find a group of girls that love each other more than we love each other. It's been nothing short of amazing. I could go on and on about it. It was the best decision.

When I tell my transfer story, on my call with Kelly, I'm like, this is a vibe. We chitchatted for 15 minutes. I was like, I like it. This is going to be good. That vibe turned out to be good. We're little besties. It's been nothing short of incredible. I couldn't have asked for a better way to go out.

**Q. How do you want people to remember this 2025 team?**

MIMI COLYER: I mean, we came in and there was so much doubt around us. I think no one thought we were going to be here except for us. Like, we know what we do in our gym. We know how hard we work. We know the hours we put in.

Over summer there were girls in every single day at such odd hours just getting in extra reps. There's just so much work. That's what this program is built on, the grittiness behind it. We all knew that. It was just about showing people. In this tournament we really did that. We came out, busted the brackets, we did all things. I'm so grateful this group was able to rise to the occasion so many times.

Just remember we did it and no one thought we were going to be here. Just how proud I am of this team. It's been so much fun to play with them.

CHARLIE FUERBRINGER: Yeah, we loved the doubt. Keep it coming till next year because the Badgers are coming and they're coming hard.

KELLY SHEFFIELD: I think two things can be true. That will be a match that haunts people for a long time. The courage of these guys putting on the faces, they are, is impressive. It's a match that stays with you for a long time.



But it's also something that you can be deeply proud of the journey that you've traveled individually and as a group.

I led off by talking about the fight and the bounceback ability that both teams were having the entire match. You're hearing pride from these guys; self-pride, pride of what they were able to do as the season was progressing. It was going to take a courageous team on the other side of the net to beat us, one that is playing very well.

I don't think you're going to see any of these guys hanging their heads. It doesn't mean it doesn't sting, because it stings a lot. It's probably a team that has traveled further than any team I've ever had as far as where we started. That's something I think all of us are very, very proud of.

THE MODERATOR: Mimi, Charlie, thanks for your time.

We'll continue with questions for coach.

**Q. Can you describe Mimi's lasting impact on this team.**

KELLY SHEFFIELD: I mean, that's a monster season that she just had, right? That's a pretty big match right there. It's unusual to lose a match when four of the sets you have more kills than your opponent. That just doesn't happen very much.

You know you're in a good place when your better players allow you to coach you. They lean into coaching. You can challenge 'em. It sets the tone. Players like both of these two that were up here, people like Carter, when they lean into coaching and you hold them responsible, they stand up tall and they move forward, it sends a message that reverberates to everybody.

She came in here and she was wanting to take her game to the next level, and she has. She's had a great college career. Last year was best year. Just thankful for her and very proud of her.

When you transfer with one year, there's going to be a lot of trust to get in the deep end. So many people toward the end of their career, they're preserving some things, ego, whatever. A lot of times those players will just get in the shallow end. She dove head first. Yeah.

**Q. Kristen looked like she took a pretty hard dive. What did you see from her, the fight and determination to stick with it and fight through that pain she was dealing with?**

KELLY SHEFFIELD: Yeah, I mean, she was in a lot of

pain. She was in a lot of pain. So you're talking with the trainer. She said, yeah, it hurts, but she can keep going.

Kristen is looking at me saying, I don't know why you're looking at me. This is what we do.

They're opposite had a nasty spill, as well. It was a heavyweight fight, right? Either team that loses that match, you're going to go back and find a dozen or more things you wish you would have done different. That's I guess natural to look at the things that you wish you had.

That would be missing the gems of that match. There was so much good, courage, that both teams and the players were playing with. I'm proud of Craig, being able to get his team in that kind of moment to leave that first set in the past and get back. It shows that entire staff.

**Q. Pretty unusual to lose despite having higher hitting percentage, et cetera. How do you sum up what was going right for you in the first set?**

KELLY SHEFFIELD: About everything was going right in the first set, right? I thought we flushed that. We had six service errors. That was a lot. It wasn't just -- they were all bunched together, right, in that set.

The rest of our game, we're just playing, right? That's one of the things we talked about, is just keep having courage over there, keep siding out and keep going.

We passed great the entire match, except for three minutes in the fifth, right? Everything was going right in the first set. We continued to pass, we hit for a high percentage, we had more kills in four of the five sets.

Hudson stepped out of the phone booth with her cape on. We knew where it was going. It didn't matter.

**Q. Carter had a career night. She's been a de facto leader for this team throughout the season. How can you sum up how the team fed off her energy?**

KELLY SHEFFIELD: I think everybody saw that she was a player that was on a mission. She was going to do everything and anything to help this team get across the finish line.

The competitiveness, the fight, the fearlessness, the bringing others, looking to elevate each other. This team did a better job of elevating each other than any team I've ever had.

It's how you want your career to go at the end. You hope that players can tap into that earlier. I'm not speaking of



her. It's what you want for every player. She was in beast mode. It wasn't just tonight. She's been like that for a little bit.

She's hurting right now. She's hurting right now. In due time she'll be really, really proud of herself.

**Q. Carter has been absolutely huge for this program. What has she meant to this program and this culture throughout her three years?**

KELLY SHEFFIELD: Man, when you get into this profession, you're teachers. You're coaching, but you're teaching. When you see people, their growth. I mean, the loss really hurts, right? The loss hurts. But there's just so much pride. You can have both of those things.

I'm so proud of her, so proud of the journey that she has done, the leadership, her ability to communicate, how she leads others.

I'd say early on her and I were at each other quite a bit. Probably me more than her. I was on her a lot. She didn't give up on me or herself. She leaned in hard. Just the growth she has done, just the effectiveness of her as a leader was just through the roof there at the end.

One thing we say is it's not about being right, it's about being effective. She became one of the most effective leaders that we've ever had here this last year.

**Q. You've been here six times. All but one of them you end with this kind of result. What is the key in terms of processing it, taking things away from it?**

KELLY SHEFFIELD: Yeah, I mean, it's what we do. At some point we will dive into this very, very deeply. Man, we lost a lot of players last year. We brought in a lot of new ones, either freshmen that were coming in or people that transferred in. You had other people that stepped up. Charlie is a different level of leader. Certainly Carter is a different level of leader. You just build a team. You build, build, build, go through that entire process.

I do not look at this as a failure. This is one of the most successful seasons that I've ever been a part of. Yeah, you can hurt but also be proud. Both of those things are together.

Yeah, us losing 15-13 in the fifth is not what do you got to do to get over the hump. That is just nowhere near where my mind is.

Could we have gotten a couple more points? Absolutely. This team came pretty darn close to maxing out. At the

end of the day that's what you're looking for. You want your team, you want your players to max out. Our seniors had a heck of a match. Our younger kids played with courage. They learned what courage was.

This team came together and grew. I couldn't be more proud of them.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

