



2014 NCAA DIVISION I WOMEN'S BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

Semifinals · Practice Day · Baylor vs. Kentucky
Purcell Pavilion at the Joyce Center · Notre Dame, Ind.
Friday, March 28

SEMIFINAL PRACTICE DAY QUOTES – Baylor

Kim Mulkey – Head Coach

On recollections of the four overtime game versus Kentucky...

“Well, now, you’re assuming I looked at the tape— who wants to look at a loss? My recollection is that is was horrible weather, very few Baylor fans there because of the sleet and snow, I never thought the game would end and I was concerned I wouldn’t have enough players to even finish the game. Really I didn’t look at that tape. I spent time on the current month and just looked at a lot of things that Kentucky has changed since that game and one of the things is a zone defense. Just know that they’re good. They play a lot of players, we play a lot of players. Both teams have had successful seasons and really I don’t know how much you get from that game, it was so long ago anyways.”

On the team’s success this season...

“Well it starts with Odyssey Sims. I’m not sure I knew what was fair to expect of our team until I watched them in game situations. I knew what we had with Odyssey Sims. Odyssey Sims is an All-American, and she had to accept the leadership role that she hadn’t embraced before this year. I think a lot of the young players and inexperienced players that we have just kind of followed in her lead. She’s had a phenomenal year, she’s bailed us out of a lot of games, but yet at the same time, as the season progressed, she started trusting her teammates more. When you do that, it builds confidence and we have a very confident basketball team even though we’re very young.”

On what to expect from Odyssey Sims...

“I think the first thing that will stand out is her on-ball defense. She’s just one of those types of players that you never have to teach her how to defend. I think her on-ball defense is tremendous. Her quickness with her hands and how she can really dictate that flow of the game on the defensive end of the floor— that’s the first thing that you will notice. I think the second thing you will notice is that she can score being guarded and not many girls can finish and get and ones. Odyssey can do that. She can shoot the open three. I think that what you will see is a lot of players guard her. She never can just be guarded normally like a lot of teams guard the opposing players. She either sees box-in ones, triangle and twos, traps, double teams and she still is able to produce. Now, sometimes her field goal percentage is not very good but, for our team, if Odyssey goes four for twenty we don’t get too concerned about

that because she's usually taking good shots. Sometimes they're forced, but sometimes I'm comfortable with her forcing shots because she's that good."

On not being a No. 1 seed...

"We were the No. 3 seed when we won the thing in 2005 and had to beat three No. 1's— we've done it all at Baylor. Really, seeding is more a compliment of what you've done the entire course of the year but it doesn't guarantee you a championship and I really don't know if it guarantees you an easier road because we play on home courts. We're just playing and survive another day."

On striving for perfection...

"I can only speak for my personality. I think it's the personality of the coach and teams are a reflection of the coach but we never discuss perfection. That was never a goal of ours. But once you reach the NCAA tournament it has to be a goal and that's kind of how we approached it. But not many teams can say they went undefeated. I was blessed to be a part of that at Louisiana Tech as a player and to be a part of it as a coach. Is it tougher? I don't know, because really, at the end of the day, all you're trying to do is win six more ball games."

On thoughts about Kentucky...

"I think pretty much the same thing as when we first played them. They're very athletic, dribble penetration, you've got to keep them out of the paint, transition defense, we've got to rebound the ball and now you add that you've got to attack their zone defense. Nothing has changed other than their zone defense. They probably want to stay on the floor and not have four players foul out and we sure don't want to have seven players foul out. Hopefully all of the parts can remain on the floor and it will be another good game. I think it will be entertaining, I think you'll see different styles but there are some similarities between the two teams. We both like to run, we both like to push it. I'm not sure you're going to see me play a zone but I have known to do that occasionally."

On freshman Nina Davis...

"Nina [Davis] was probably the most unheralded of the four freshman and yet she just worked her way into the lineup. I like to tease her she's got an ugly shot, you don't know how it's going to go in against the bigs in there but yet she'll finish games with 15 rebounds, 17 rebounds and those are against the UConns of the world. She just has developed into a player that quietly does her job and when it's over you look at the stats sheet and she'll have a double-double every night. I'm just amazed at the kind of year that she's had because she has a quiet personality but she's just a competitor and she gets extremely competitive when the games on the line."

On the development of the freshmen...

"When we played Kentucky earlier in the year we played to see how they would handle and really how good they were. Part of it we played them out of necessity because we ran out of players. If you'll remember, Alexis Prince, who has not played at all this year—she's being redshirted or hopefully medically redshirted because of her injury—but we got down to four players and she went in and scored a bucket and almost scored a three to tie it. But the four freshmen today, they are a big, big part of what we do. One of them starts and the other three are just big producers for us. We play eight or nine players and they're just so much better. They score, they defend better and they're confident. I'm sure when we played Kentucky the first time they were nervous, as they should be but they are just better basketball players today than when we played Kentucky the first time."

On the success of the season...

"I would say it's talent. It's talented players that come into a program with expectations and now they have their opportunity to play and let's make sure we do well. When you look at Sune [Agbuke] and when you look at Kristina [Higgins] they guarded [Brittney] Griner for one and two years and that's not any fun in practice but you have to be better because of it and now they have their opportunity to play. They've had a tremendous year, they really have."

Odyssey Sims – Senior – Guard

On her recollection of the four-overtime loss to Kentucky earlier this season...

"Just when I think about the game, I think we gave up a lot of points. It was a great game, but I don't think we defended them as well as we should have in terms of dribble penetration. We'll make sure we'll focus on that a lot more and try to come out with the win."

On Baylor playing its best basketball at this time...

"I actually think we are. We had two great games in Waco [Texas] against two great teams. I think we needed those two games to get ready for tomorrow. I think it will be a more grinded-out game, a little closer, but I think it will come down to who fouls less and who can make free throws."

On only the last two overtimes of the previous game against Kentucky being televised...

"I had already fouled out at the time. They probably should have televised that game. I kind of thought it was going to be a good game—I didn't think four overtimes. But everyone really only knows the last two overtimes that were shown. That was definitely a game to remember."

On making it just as far as last year's team despite losing six seniors...

"With this team being so young, everybody said we wouldn't get here. But we just took that as motivation into this season. I think we've handled it very well. We got back to where we were. Now it's in our hands to try to get a little further than what we did last year."

On what Baylor needs to do to win tomorrow...

"I think our dribble penetration, mainly. When we went back and watched the film [from the previous game against Kentucky], they just ducked their heads and took it right at us. We didn't really take as many charges as we should have. We got a lot of fouls on us. I think our concern won't be fouls this time because we'll handle it better, but transition is very key. Rebounds are very key. Their post players are very physical, along with their guards being athletic. It will come down to rebounding and who can get to the free throw line."

On going back and forth with Kentucky junior Jennifer O'Neill during the last game...

"To be honest, I didn't really notice it. We weren't planning to go at each other. I didn't realize how many points I had. We just gave it to who was scoring—just whoever can get to the basket, you give them the ball. At the time we were trading buckets, but I was just trying to score as much as I could, and try to get my team the W."

Nina Davis – Freshman – Forward

On her recollection of the four-overtime loss to Kentucky earlier this season...

“I felt like we were very young. We gave up a lot of fouls and they got a lot of free throws, which I felt made a big difference in the game. It’s been a learning process. I just feel like we not the same team that we were back then. It’s going to be a different game tomorrow.”

On what Baylor needs to do to win tomorrow...

“One of the things we need to do is rebound. They have two very physical post players, so we’re going to have to keep them off the boards. We have to stop their transition points. They’re very athletic, so they like to get up and down and play an up-tempo game. We have to stop their dribble penetration and not give them wide-open looks. If we do those things, I feel it will pretty much go our way.”

On how the freshmen have improved since the last Kentucky game...

“We’ve improved a lot. Just the other day, we were watching the film on Kentucky, and we were just laughing, looking at ourselves and the mistakes that we made back then compared to the mistakes we make now. We’ve grown a lot. We owe that mostly to our teammates and our coaches. They’ve helped us grow as a team. Now pretty much, at this time of the season, we’re all comfortable, so we’re all just excited to play.”

Makenzie Robertson – Senior – Guard

On her recollection of the four-overtime loss to Kentucky earlier this season...

“That was our first real test of this year. We’re such a young team. We didn’t know what to expect—no one knew what to expect. We fouled a lot, but I think there was a lot we could take from it. We learned what our young players could do.”

On making it just as far as last year’s team despite losing six seniors...

“I think that just shows the program’s strength. No team is one or two players, or I guess six. We came out this year, and a lot of people doubted us because of what we lost, but with our work ethic and the coaching staff, we knew the potential we had. People are just realizing it.”

On what Baylor needs to do to win tomorrow...

“I don’t think it will come down to fouls, because at that time [of the previous game against Kentucky], it was pretty early in the season, and both teams were adjusting to the new rules. So I think it’s just going to be a different game all around.”