



2014 NCAA DIVISION I WOMEN'S BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

Regional Final · Notre Dame vs. Baylor
Purcell Pavilion at the Joyce Center · Notre Dame, Ind.
Monday, March 31

REGIONAL FINAL QUOTES – Notre Dame

Muffet McGraw – Head Coach

Opening Statement...

"I could not be prouder of a team than I am of this group right now. This senior class, what an amazing group. They came in unheralded and just set all kind of records – four straight Final Fours. But to win it at home, that was really amazing, to celebrate with our fans. They were so loud and so important to that win today. We definitely could not have done it without them. And Jewell Loyd the MVP, what a phenomenal game. I thought Natalie Achonwa had a fantastic game as well. Just two great offensive performances.

On Jewell Loyd's spurt in the first half...

"That was huge. I think she hit a three in that stretch. We just needed every single thing that she did. Again, we were trying to go inside to Ace [Natalie Achonwa], but Jewell felt like she could score. She wanted the ball, so we started running things for her. Things that we usually run for Kayla [McBride] we ran for Jewell. She just delivered on every possession."

On a fourth straight Final Four...

"It means so much to our program. I think it's a statement. When Skylar [Diggins] came in, I think people expected that we would be in the Final Four, and then when Skylar graduated, I don't think anyone expected that we'd be back in the Final Four. So I think it says a lot about this team, the mental toughness and the grit that they got together and had this unbelievable season. Like Kayla said, it takes a lot of hard work, they're motivated every day, great leadership. We just put it all together with great balance and team.

On Natalie Achonwa's injury's effect on the mood of the team...

"Yeah, it sucked the air right out of the room. We don't know what it is yet, but it's just unfortunate. It was a really hard foul, one of many hard fouls in the game, and you hate to see a player go down like that."

On the bench's performance in the game...

“I think Madison Cable is a great example of that. She came in and made two big free throws. There was some pressure on those two free throws, and she did a nice job defensively. She was in the right stops, trying to take charges, getting rebounds. She really helped us tonight. And I thought Taya Reimer as well, I thought both of them did. Michaela Mabrey gave us some good minutes. I think everybody really contributed. I think I was probably most proud of Lindsay Allen. She had the ball in her hands the whole game – Odyssey Sims is a great defender – and she had three assists and one turnover. So it was a phenomenal game for her.”

On Ariel Braker...

“She was the X-factor today. She was able to convert on some breakaways and a two-on-one. They left her open a little bit. She had that big steal that came down, got the free throws. She hit her free throws, she made every basket – she was 100 percent from the field. What she did defensively and rebounding-wise, it sometimes gets overlooked. But she was a big contributor tonight.”

Jewell Loyd – Sophomore – Guard

On sparking a 12-point Notre Dame run...

“I was just trying to get something going and find some energy. I just took what the defense gave me, and I credit my teammates for finding me and trusting me enough to take those shots.”

On playing for the seniors...

“Being a sophomore and knowing how hard our senior players have worked, we were definitely playing for our seniors tonight and our coaches. We were playing for them.”

On Odyssey Sims...

“Yeah, she’s good. She knows how to split the defense and things like that. It was a team effort tonight to stop her and I think we did a pretty good job at that.”

Kayla McBride – Senior – Guard

On Natalie Achonwa and Jewell Loyd’s contributions while she was in foul trouble...

“It doesn’t surprise me at all. It’s something I expect of them. They are talented players, and it says a lot about this entire team that when I am out, I don’t really have to worry because we have so many players who are willing to step up. I think Maddie [Cable] and Ariel [Braker] gave us great minutes today. It just comes from everybody, and I think the team effort is what pushed us through to get to the second half and we got on a run. Now we are here.”

On a fourth straight Final Four appearance...

“It is definitely a special feeling. As a senior, this is my fourth straight one, and just knowing that we get to have that opportunity again is special. I love playing for this program under Coach McGraw and this coaching staff. It means a monumental amount to me. We’ve worked hard, and I think we have earned the respect we have now. We are ready for the Final Four. We’re ready for another challenge.”



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REGIONAL FINAL QUOTES – Baylor

Kim Mulkey – Head Coach

On Odyssey Sims...

“Well, I’ve said it numerous times, Odyssey Sims is WNBA ready. If I had the first pick in the draft, I’d take her because she can score, she can defend, she can play the point, she can play the off-guard. She’s just a competitor. She hates to lose. Basketball is important to her. Some kids play basketball because they’re tall, some play because they’re good, but it means something to Odyssey. She will have a great career and a long career because she loves the game.”

On her team and perspective of the season...

“I kept it in perspective before we ever played. I kept it in perspective when we won the BIG 12 tournament and the BIG 12 regular season and when we won the two games to get to the Sweet 16. There’s never been a moment when I have failed to tell that team how much I enjoyed them and enjoyed coaching them. If you could coach a team like that every year, you don’t have to get to the Final Four to understand and keep it in perspective. They’re just a joy to be around. They take care of their business, they just epitomize everything that a student athlete should be. I could coach a group like that every year. I’ve won national championships; I don’t need anymore. I just love to coach kids like that. They give you everything they have, they hurt when they feel they’re let you down, they go to class, they perform in the classroom, they speak well and they represent Baylor well. It was a fun year.”

On coaching her daughter Makenzie Robertson...

“Not many coaches get an opportunity to coach their own kid. Makenzie is such an unassuming child. You don’t understand what children of coaches go through, you don’t walk in their shoes. As they grow up, they have to hear all of the insults in the stands, they have to bear all of the criticism, so they have to have a tough core about them as they grow up. Then when you have an opportunity to have them in your own locker room, you’ve got to have a special kid, and Makenzie is that kind of kid. Everybody likes Makenzie, everybody pulls for Makenzie. She’s graduated with all these honors from Baylor, she’s working on her MBA, she’ll be married, I’m sure soon— and I like the guy by the way. It’s hard because there’s no worse feeling in the world than when you’re a senior and you take that uniform off for the last time. It’s horrible. I bet half of y’all have never done that, have you? I bet half of you, or not most of

you have ever played collegiate athletics, have you? There is no worse feeling as an athlete. It's all you've known all your life, and you have to take it off for the last time. It's emotional."

Odyssey Sims – Senior – Guard

On the second half run that cut into Notre Dame's lead...

"We just had a lot of dumb, quick fouls. We just kept playing hard no matter what the score was and gave it our all."

On the team's mindset during the comeback against Notre Dame...

"Our mindset was that it was 0-0 going into the second half. We didn't look at the score or the time, we just told each other to stick together no matter what happened. We wanted to play hard each possession, and when the buzzer went off, as long as we gave it our all, we would be satisfied."

On her season and career at Baylor...

"I had a great run. I enjoyed it. I had a chance to play with a lot of great players. This season has been my most enjoyable season, and I really like the teammates I've played with."

On Baylor overcoming adversity to reach Elite Eight...

"I'm very proud of my teammates. We played well tonight, and I thought everyone gave it their all. It wasn't until the last minute or two when we didn't think we were going to win the game."

Sune Agbuke – Junior – Forward

On the problems Notre Dame presented close to the basket...

"I don't think it was so much what they did as what we didn't do. They moved a lot, they finished and they rebounded."

On Baylor's struggles to finish shots in the paint...

"You get blocked one time, and it kind of gets in your head sometimes. I don't think we were getting some of the calls that we were accustomed to getting throughout the season, so I think that also got in our heads. We were a little better in the second half, but it was tough."

Makenzie Robertson – Senior – Guard

On team's mindset during second half comeback...

"We weren't really focused on the score. We just came out and knew we had to hit it fast during the second half."

On challenges associated with playing at Notre Dame...

"It's really unfortunate that we had to play such a big game on a home court. I would have loved to face them at a neutral court, but we couldn't do that. The crowd was loud, but we still just didn't do what we needed to do."

On the second-half run that cut into Notre Dame's lead...

"I think the whole game, we felt like we were in a position to pull it off. There wasn't really a point until the very last minute when we realized it would be really tough. We always felt we had a chance, we just didn't play Baylor basketball."