



2016 NCAA DIVISION I WOMEN'S BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

First Round · Notre Dame vs. North Carolina A&T
Purcell Pavilion at the Joyce Center · Notre Dame, Indiana
Friday, March 18

PRACTICE DAY 1 QUOTES – North Carolina A&T

Tarrell Robinson, North Carolina A&T Head Coach:

On the key for turning around the season...

“I took ownership of a lot of our issues. Coming into the season as the preseason No. 1 (in the conference), I put a lot of pressure on my players and staff. With young people who are still trying to figure out who they are, what they want to do, and what their ambitions are, it can be overwhelming to them. So I took the accountability on myself and told them that we needed to have fun. We needed to enjoy each other and the wins would come with it. Next thing we know, we won [five] games in a row. Then they are starting to believe in themselves and in what we are trying to get done. That’s when the magic starts.”

On taking responsibility for the team...

“I had a heart-to-heart with the team. It was after we lost to Coppin State. We had a tough loss on the road. We had a heart-to-heart and an emotional conversation in the locker room. They really thanked me for taking ownership of my approach. I’m very commanding, and for young people in general, their time is different than ours. For adults it’s now or never, but they just went with the flow and didn’t understand that every game earlier mattered. We started 0-4, but they woke up and responded. We had some luck go our way, but they were excited and confident in the conference tournament.”

On what helps the team to play better...

“Chemistry. They started playing for each other. Our turnovers went down and the assists went up. They trusted each other. We didn’t switch much from the game plan. Aprill (McRae) became a little more passionate with what she wanted and how she wanted her senior year to end, and every one else picked up on it.”

On keeping from getting overwhelmed against Notre Dame...

"I would be surprised if we are not ready to play. We are playing our best basketball. We've been at the bottom of the cellar, so we know how it feels. What you are going to get is a good brand of A&T Lady Aggie basketball on Saturday. Whether or not we win, a lot of things have to fall into play because Notre Dame is a great team."

On focusing on Notre Dame...

"When you are playing the No. 1 seed, a team that's 31-1, you have to focus on their best. We've been focusing on ourselves all year. But now we have a different attitude when we are playing a team coached by Hall of Fame coach Muffet McGraw with championship talent. We have to focus on them."

On biggest concern of Notre Dame...

"Whether or not they're making shots. They have a great mixture of experience and youth. They have fantastic, dynamic freshman coming off their bench. We can scout some of their starting line-up, but with young people, you never know. The younger [Marina] Mabrey and [Arike] Ogunbowale are unbelievable. They are confident and they're just playing basketball. They've been here before. We just have to try to make them uncomfortable."

Aprill McRae, North Carolina A&T (center):

On the key to turning around the season:

"We just had to refocus ourselves and get ourselves back on track. We knew we were a good team and had the capability but we just had to get ourselves back on track."

On preparing to play in tomorrow's game...

"We're just looking at it as a game that's in front of us. Just stay focused and determined anyway possible."

Dana Brown, North Carolina A&T (guard):

On what got the team back together...

"I wouldn't say there was a moment. I would just say everybody wanted it so we all decided to come together."

On preparing to play in tomorrow's game...

"I just look it as another basketball game and as another opportunity to show how good we are."

On the intimidation factor of playing Notre Dame...

“We have a lot of respect for them. We know what they are capable of doing, what they did do this season, and what they have done before. For us we can't get caught up in the moment because once tournament time hits it's one-and-done. It doesn't matter what happened before. It just matters what's going to happen now.”