

# Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 7, 2024  
Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA  
Target Center

## Penn State Nittany Lions Carolyn Kieger Ashley Owusu Postgame Press Conference

Penn State - 80, Wisconsin - 56

THE MODERATOR: We'll start with the press conference for Penn State with an opening statement from Coach Kieger.

CAROLYN KIEGER: First of all, I just want to say how proud I am of our team. The last two games, we've played a really good defensive game. We've played personnel almost flawlessly. We did a great job on Serah Williams tonight, who's a phenomenal post player. So much respect for her game and her improvement over the last year. Can't say enough about her.

But our team, they weathered that matchup. They did a great job sending two, three people obviously to the boards tonight. That's something we've been talking about all year, wanting to own the defensive rebounding, and I think our team did a really good job of that tonight.

Obviously sharing the basketball, 20 assists. That's what we say, we're a much better team when we space the floor, play with pace, and share the basketball.

Really excited for this next round matchup. Obviously Iowa is doing phenomenal things for the conference, Caitlin Clark and what it means for the sport of basketball. Phenomenal opportunity for us, Big Ten tournament sold out with a great opportunity in front of us.

**Q. Ashley, you came out in the first quarter very aggressively, and Wisconsin struggled to guard you, but then you took on more of a facilitator, kind of connector role the rest of the game. What did you see from UW's defense in the first quarter that caused you to exploit it and score so many points?**

ASHLEY OWUSU: For me, just personally coming out, like



you said, coming out hot, coming out ready to play. Obviously we didn't have the outcome we wanted last game, so I wanted to make sure it came out a lot differently than last game.

**Q. They said on TV that this is Penn State's first quarterfinal appearance since 2014. We talked about earlier how you do have experience playing in March Madness and making runs in conference tournaments. How does that feel from a personal standpoint to get your team to this point?**

ASHLEY OWUSU: It feels great. Being a part of history is always awesome. Just being able to come out and do it with a team that I love and coaches that support me is awesome.

**Q. Ashley, you guys outscored them really handily in terms of bench production. Getting that kind of output from Kylie, where she was nearly perfect, how big was that for the rest of you ladies to see and to really kind of help bolster things?**

ASHLEY OWUSU: It's very huge. This is postseason, and if we want to get to where we want to get to, we're going to have to play a lot of games.

So being able to rely heavily on our bench players, our game changers, it's great.

**Q. Coach mentioned that you guys got Iowa coming up. You're only about a month removed from playing them last time. Just what do you see in that matchup, and what do you do against Caitlin? Obviously for the fact we know she can do scoring, but 15 assists last time against you. How do you approach it this time?**

ASHLEY OWUSU: Coming in ready to execute the game plan. I'm not exactly sure what the game plan is just yet, but I'm sure we'll get it after this. Coming in ready to play, ready to execute the game plan, and laser focused.

**Q. Over your first five years now, you've had more wins in each of your first five years, and now this is the furthest you've made it. From a coach's standpoint,**



**you've had a lot of players come in and out. Some of them stuck with you through it all. Makenna's been here all five years. How does it feel for you to know that you're one of the last eight standing?**

CAROLYN KIEGER: First of all, obviously really proud of our players. They've put a lot of blood, sweat, and tears into getting this program back on the map. It hasn't been easy, and we've done it the right way. We've built the foundation brick by brick.

When we came here, we wanted to put the jersey back in a better place and put it back where Penn State belongs, which is back playing deep into March. Can't say enough about our team like Makenna Marisa, she bleeds blue and white. She stuck through it all, through the good, through the bad, through the ugly.

Now I'm just so excited for her and her teammates to feel what it's like to play through March. They deserve it. They put a lot of hard work in. Really I'm just more elated for them and excited for them to feel what it feels like to be proud of themselves.

**Q. Coach, you mentioned that Serah Williams did some damage against you all the first time. What specifically were you trying to do differently tonight as opposed to the first time? And what did you like from Ali Brigham, who was defending her one-on-one for some of the game?**

CAROLYN KIEGER: We wanted to throw different people at her. Obviously we wanted to make it hard for her to get open looks. I think even tonight four of her points came from outside shots, which was great for us to bottle them up inside.

We sent two. We sent three, just really working on our double-teams and our gap defense to make it hard on her. She's such a phenomenal player.

I thought Ali did a great job wearing her out. Even though she only scored eight points, she was ducking in at the right time. She was making it hard for her on the offensive end and doing a great job bodying her up on the defensive end.

We knew going into the game we'd have to be physical with her and try to tire her out. Once again, kudos to our team for following the game plan.

**Q. We all know last time you guys met Caitlin had a great game. I think the main force is really Hannah Stuelke, 47 points, 9 rebounds. What's it going to take to stop her?**

CAROLYN KIEGER: Obviously she's a rim-running clinic. She puts it on every game. She plays so fast. She plays with a lot of heart. She crashes the offensive glass. We've got to get back in transition against her. We've got to keep her off the boards. We have to have better ball screen defense than we did first time around. She got a lot of open stuff off ball screens.

Obviously Caitlin is Caitlin. We have to do different schemes. I don't think you can go into Iowa and have one scheme to play. You have to have plan A, plan B, plan C, sometimes plan D all the way down to try to stop her. Stuelke and obviously their entire team do a great job with their synergy and how well they play together.

**Q. Coach, you mentioned Ali, the job she did, the amount of help defenders that you guys had, Leilani Kapinus being an all-defensive team selection. How big was she today and being able to come back from that ankle injury too?**

CAROLYN KIEGER: Leilani is -- she's a beast. She just really is. In my mind, she's the best defense player in the country. She's the best defender. She can guard 1 through 5. She can rebound. She can D you up 94 feet. She can stay on her feet in the half-court. I'm excited for the country to realize how good of a defender she is, and she's just going to keep getting better and better.

Can't say enough about what she's done not only tonight but throughout the whole year. Where she's really growing is her IQ on the defensive end -- short closeouts, playing personnel. You've seen her the last five or six games, really weathering that and making sure she's playing smart and not just hard.

**Q. Going into tomorrow there's a lot of talk about Caitlin Clark's scoring, but how does her passing facilitating kind of throw a wrench in the game plan for you guys?**

CAROLYN KIEGER: It's funny because obviously she's the best scorer in college basketball history. The crazy thing is people don't talk about her passing enough. She's got phenomenal vision. She sees plays before they happen. She's thinking two steps ahead. Obviously you need to have high hands.

I thought we did a good job obviously last game with her high hands. She had 12 turnovers. We're going to have to repeat that and really kind of get -- changing, throwing different bodies at her, longer defenders. Switching it up with how we're guarding ball screens.

Can't say enough about her dual threat with her scoring and her assists. I think, like I said, she doesn't get enough credit for how good of a passer she is, elite.

**Q. Just curious, you guys had a lot of players out on the court today, no one really playing 30 minutes at all today. How important is the depth that you've built with this program in a tournament setting?**

CAROLYN KIEGER: I'm glad you asked that question because I think that's our secret weapon all year. We've been talking about our depth and our versatility. When you're playing in March, that gives you such an advantage, right? We knew tonight that we have 12 starters on our team. I truly believe that. We call them the game changers.

Starting lineup goes out there. The game changers come in. Every single one of them could be a starter on our team. And our team buys into that. Our team buys into next woman up. It's just phenomenal.

No one played over 26 minutes tonight. So hopefully we have fresh legs tomorrow. That's what we're going to do. That's what we said is going to be our best thing about this team all year, and we're really going to buy into that here in March.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

# Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Championship

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**Wisconsin Badgers**

**Marisa Moseley**

**Serah Williams**

**Brooke Schramek**

Postgame Press Conference

Penn State - 80, Wisconsin - 56

THE MODERATOR: Wisconsin press conference will start with opening statement from Coach Moseley. Go ahead.

MARISA MOSELEY: First of all, I just want to give credit to Penn State on a really well played game on their part.

Also, this has been a growing year for our program. I think for us to be able to clinch the 10 seed, that was something we were looking to try to be able to be a little bit higher, obviously, but I have to give kudos to the young lady to my right, Serah Williams. Obviously this year had an incredible year.

And I said to somebody in the media at some point, you don't have that without teammates who put you in the position to be successful like that, but she put in a ton of work and has continued to grow. Kudos to her.

Also, just really grateful for the senior class that we had and all the time and dedication and the trust that they put in me for the last three years that we've been together.

**Q. They really kept you in check early on. Didn't create a ton of turnovers out of it, I don't feel like, but just trying to kind of fight through that constant pressure early on. What was so difficult about them keeping you in check the entire like first half really?**

SERAH WILLIAMS: I mean, I don't know. I can't -- from what I feel, I don't know what the court view is, but they were very physical. Every possession, I think there was about one or two extra people behind me. Every time I would try to go get a rebound, there's someone in front of me, there's someone behind me. It just made it very hard



for me to play the game I play.

That was the goal, right? Good job to Penn State.

**Q. Serah, I'm sure it isn't at the forefront of your mind right now, but setting the Big Ten record for consecutive double-doubles is an impressive feat. Beyond the points and rebounds, what are you looking to most improve on heading into next season?**

SERAH WILLIAMS: Definitely my passing. I kind of want to play like a mix of Jokic and Anthony Davis. So just being able to move the ball around the court is the next step for me.

**Q. Brooke, they shot really well to start. What was it like trying to kind of combat that and kind of work against that early current? I think they got up like four, and it really didn't shrink beyond that. What was going through your guys' heads trying to combat that and find your kind of groove offensively?**

BROOKE SCHRAMEK: Yeah, I think right from the start they just came out -- they were hitting their shots, and we on the transition defensive side, we weren't rotating as well. Our communication was a little bit off. If a team sees another team struggling on the transition defensive side, they're going to attack that, and that's what they did.

We had a few runs here and there, but we just couldn't stop their runs. We couldn't match that. We kept trying to fight back, but they were knocking down everything. They were pushing the ball really well and finding us where we were messing up on our transition rotations.

**Q. Brooke, as one of the few seniors on the roster, what advice do you have for Serah and Ronnie Porter, who will be assuming veteran status next season?**

BROOKE SCHRAMEK: I tell them all the time, have fun every single day. This goes by so fast. It's crazy to me that I'm already a senior. I was talking to Halle and Nat, we started in the dorms together, and look at us now. It goes by really, really fast. Take advantage of every single day you have.



Go to the gym if you can. I always tell my team, hang out with your teammates, even if it's the smallest little thing. Go do what you can with your teammates because one day you're not going to be part of a team anymore, and you're not going to have it.

On the basketball side, just give it everything you've got every single day because it's over in the blink of an eye. It's crazy to me that I'm already done.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Serah, Brooke. You can head back to the locker room.

**Q. Coach, what more can be done in their improvement next year for both Serah and Ronnie?**

MARISA MOSELEY: I think Serah spoke to it. Obviously the type of scorer and impact player that she is offensively, like being able to pass out of doubles or have more patience when the ball comes in, basically baiting people in and being more of a playmaker out of those, I think is the next step.

Even though she got Defensive Player of the Year, which is an incredible accomplishment, I do think there's even more on that side for her. And she's really worked on her perimeter game. But I think her being able to knock down threes consistently or pick and pop a little bit more so she's not necessarily relegated to the lane, and if it is a really physical game, being able to move around a little bit more.

For Ronnie, I think Ronnie gave us her very, very best this year, consistently becoming a better three-point shooter is going to be something that she will work on, I know for sure. Then decision-making as far as kind of being that floor general and running our team.

**Q. Marisa, just got behind the eight ball early, didn't really -- I think you guys had only a dozen turnovers.**

MARISA MOSELEY: 13, baker's dozen.

**Q. Just what didn't click offensively in your mind, just trying to kind of create something? Was it just kind of against that tide of momentum? Just when you need a bucket and it just doesn't fall, it just kind of mounts and mounts?**

MARISA MOSELEY: I felt like we were just a bit rushed and disjointed, like we weren't really kind of playing all five people together on the court today. This wasn't the first game that Serah's been doubled. All year that's happened. I think that people were trying to potentially step up, but it felt like at times we probably played a little bit too much

one-on-one or one-on-two.

Being able to move the ball side to side, and like you said, getting behind the eight ball when you're trying to fight from behind. It's a lot easier to play freer when you're up 10, 12 points.

So I think that's really kind of what ended up biting us today.

**Q. Brooke mentioned it a little bit, but there are multiple occasions where the defense looked confused, and it resulted in an open Penn State look. What would you have liked to have seen done better by the team on the defensive end?**

MARISA MOSELEY: It felt like we really weren't communicating very well. Especially in transition. Like we knew last game that they were able to get open threes in transition. So I think we covered that when they would leak out on the wings. But then in the paint, if our guard was back, which usually your guard's the first to head back, they'd get stuck on a big guy or big guys would come in. There just wasn't that communication that was necessary to play a team like Penn State, who does have a lot of different weapons and were aggressive attacking the rim.

So I think we needed to have much better communication. Then also just being a little bit -- having a little bit more toughness there to battle, if it was a mismatch.

**Q. Marisa, I asked Coquese this yesterday as well. Black girls and Black boys got a chance to see two Black women coaching on the sideline in a big tournament like this. How important is it for them to see you and her in these kind of roles?**

MARISA MOSELEY: I think there needs to be obviously role models, and as a young person watching, even they're not just young Black men and women, but kids in general, I think in order to see that it's possible to have people of all different walks doing this, then for she and I to have the opportunity to coach at this level and be a role model or potentially inspire a next generation of coaches or leaders, I think it's incredibly important.

**Q. You have improved your win total each of the first three years you've been in Madison from 8 to 11 to 13. When you look back on this season in a few days, what will you be most proud of?**

MARISA MOSELEY: I think probably the thing that I would be most proud of is that despite how this ended, the steps that we're taking and the way that we're trying to build this and the way that we're trying to help each of the young



women on the team become a better version of themselves, that to me is really why you should be doing this.

The wins are -- I love to win, but I can't just be focused on that. So I think just the improvement of them and the challenges that we went through together and the growth that all of us, myself included, had this year.

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