

# Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Wednesday, March 5, 2025

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Gainbridge Fieldhouse

## Nebraska Cornhuskers

**Amy Williams**

**Alberte Rimdal**

**Amiah Hargrove**

**Alexis Markowski**

Postgame Press Conference

Nebraska - 84, Rutgers - 60

THE MODERATOR: Joining us for Nebraska's press conference is head coach Amy Williams and student-athletes Alberte Rimdal, Amiah Hargrove, and Alexis Markowski.

Coach, if you would give an opening statement.

AMY WILLIAMS: We're thrilled. We've been talking about being in one-game seasons, so we're thrilled to be advancing and playing another day.

Just proud of the contributions that we got from up-and-down our roster today. Just thought a lot of people contributed.

**Q. Amiah, Alberte, this is your first Big Ten tournament. You did great, both of you double digits. Berte, how is it different from your first SEC Tournament? Amiah, was it different than what you expected this first game to be like?**

ALBERTE RIMDAL: It's always fun to play tournaments. I was so excited going into this with my Nebraska team. We have so much fun, and I love playing with all of these girls. Yeah, I'm very excited that we won tonight.

AMIAH HARGROVE: I didn't really know what to expect. I just know Big Ten is the best conference. I'm just really happy to be here.

I've been excited this whole season and this whole week gearing up to this moment. Just enjoying it with my team.



THE MODERATOR: What is it like for each one of you? Is it the first time you've played in this facility, and what do you think of a very historic arena in terms of Big Ten Championships and other things. What did you think of the background and being able to shoot and play in this arena?

ALEXIS MARKOWSKI: My freshman year we actually played the Big Ten Tournament here, so we have a little bit of experience here, the seniors. We made it to the semifinals playing against Iowa and Caitlin and lost to them.

It feels great to be back here, and it's fun to be here with this group of girls.

ALBERTE RIMDAL: I'm just very excited. When I found out it's the Fever's and Pacers' gym, it's very cool. So, yeah, just very excited.

AMIAH HARGROVE: It's super fun. I'm only three hours from home right now, so a lot of my family gets to come, which is exciting for me, yeah.

**Q. Alexis, you have had a great season all season, but really over the last few games, you have just exploded offensively. Can you kind of talk about maybe what's happened or what's changed that has -- I don't want to say changed. You've been great. But what's been going on the last couple of games, do you think?**

ALEXIS MARKOWSKI: I think early on in this season I met with Coach Williams, and we kind of just talked about living in the moment. I think I was kind of just struggling with that maybe or just the grind of the season was kind of getting to me.

Knowing that my time is kind of coming to an end, I feel like I really am living in the moment and enjoying every second I have out there on the court with these girls. They really are my best friends, and I want to give everything I can out there for them and everything for this program and university.

I'm from Nebraska, so it's far beyond that, even for the



state. So just knowing that I have limited time left as a Husker, I just want to give everything I have out there on the court, leave it all out there. I just think that's kind of where my mindset has shifted.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, I asked this earlier, but talk about the depth of the Big Ten Conference and really night in and night out you have to bring it because you're playing a team that's competing for a national tournament berth. How do you handle keeping your kids locked in in the moment and knowing that each night they have to have their best effort to be able to compete?

AMY WILLIAMS: Yeah, that's the tough challenge. I thought this conference was an absolute grind always, since I've been blessed to be the head coach back at Nebraska. Then this year we added four of the best teams from the Pac-12 into it and making it just that much stronger.

I think it's been unique and different this year where you just only have one team in the league that you're playing twice, so every game it's kind of like a new opponent and a really good one. So it's just a lot of preparation, a lot of -- there's nothing else to do but to just talk about taking one game at a time and knowing that on any night anybody can knock off anybody.

I think we've seen that throughout the league this year, and it's just incredibly daunting, but iron sharpens iron, and it's certainly what all of the players we have at Nebraska came here to do is to play with and against the best players in the country. It's just an exciting thing to be a part of.

**Q. Coach, I am fascinated at how you're holding together losing two important cultural pieces to your roster and then keeping this group of intangible, wonderful young ladies together in the Big Ten in the land of sharks. What's the special code that you're whispering to keep them connected and to have folks like Rimdal and Hargrove stay connected to your mission and your task?**

AMY WILLIAMS: Well, the best thing is that the pieces that are culture pieces that we lost on the court, we haven't lost on a daily basis. I could not commend Natalie Potts and Allison Weidner more for the way that they have continued to pour into this team. Even though they are not able to be on the court getting game minutes, the way they pour into and continue to establish the culture for our program has been nothing short of just incredible. Their impact is still very felt.

Today the girls really talked about let's just keep going and playing for each other, and half the time I feel like our kids

are really playing for Natalie and Allison when they know that they really want to be out on the court and they can't be. I think that's a big part of it.

But we recruit kids that are competitive, that want to keep being challenged, and they just have continued to grind and want to rise to the occasion.

**Q. Last time you played Rutgers, only a seven-point victory, only three made three-pointers. How important was that coming into this game? How much of that was a point of emphasis saying we have to get the deep ball going, even so much as Alexis having two threes and looking confident out there from deep?**

AMY WILLIAMS: When we left to go play Rutgers, we got on the airplane about 45 minutes after Allison Weidner went down with her third knee injury in practice, and it was a really, really emotional time for us -- emotional plane trip, emotional trip, road trip in general.

I was very, very proud of the way our team fought and tried to kind of channel their inner Allison Weidner on that trip and honor her with a really tough road win. We just felt like it was a really tough road win.

But when you're wanting to advance in the tournament, we know we're going to have to make baskets, and for us, I thought, yes, that included the deep ball from behind the arc, but I thought there was a little pit of a stretch in tonight's game -- today's game that we maybe fell in love a little bit too much. Like we really want to make our money by continuing to understand we need paint touches too.

But that balanced scoring attack is going to be important for us to be able to advance or win any at this time of the year. So no doubt about it, that 3-point shooting really helped secure a little more solid victory this time around.

**Q. In a tournament setting like this where there are a lot of games, short turnaround time, how important is it to have your bench get off to a good start in this? They scored 38 points this game. Can you talk a little bit about that and the importance of that?**

AMY WILLIAMS: Thanks for asking that question. I really feel like that was huge for our team. We've been saying it to our kids, and for them to be able to prove that right here in the very first game of the tournament, it's just that it's going to take everybody on our team has to contribute something. You've got to bring something.

Then Jessica Petrie got into a little bit of foul trouble early in this game, and that gave Amiah Hargrove some opportunity, and she gained some confidence. But I

thought everybody -- Kendall Coley came in and just made some terrific post feeds and passes and things where everybody, I felt like, that got an opportunity to play was bringing something to the table, and that gave us the opportunity to spread our minutes out, which is important as well just to stay fresh in a tournament setting.

But mostly just because we need to have that confidence that, if we have to come to you, that we can count on you.

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THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome Coach Washington and student-athlete Zachara Perkins. Coach, if you'd like to make an opening statement.

COQUESE WASHINGTON: Just want to say congratulations to Nebraska and that they played a really good game, shot the ball really well. It was an honor to be on the court with them and to be in the Big Ten Tournament and participate.

**Q. Zachara, the end of your freshman year probably not the way you want it to end, but overall how would you assess your first year On the Banks?**

COQUESE WASHINGTON: I would pretty much just assess it as I'm very grateful for the opportunity. I'm grateful for my seniors. I'm grateful for the opportunity that we had to play in the Big Ten Tournament.

I think just overall I'm just glad -- I couldn't ask for it to go any other way. Obviously it didn't end how we wanted it to, but I am very grateful for the team, and I'm grateful for everything that we went through and all the trials and everything else that we went through.

**Q. Zachara, you mentioned your seniors. What was the biggest takeaway and things you learned from a couple of those seniors on this team?**

ZACHARA PERKINS: I think I could say anything about every single one of them, but I think overall just leadership. I think they really helped me learn how to be a leader and continue that next year when I come back.

I think also just passionate. They were all so passionate about the game, work ethic and everything else. I think



that's one of the biggest takeaways, just staying in the gym and just staying passionate about the game no matter how it goes. Just making sure I stay passionate about it.

**Q. Could you talk a little bit about playing in this venue, and regardless of the outcome, getting an opportunity to come to the Big Ten Tournament when not every team can make it. What are your takeaways from that, and what will you use next year to make sure that you can come back here and have success?**

ZACHARA PERKINS: I think, as far as playing in the Big Ten Tournament, it was such an amazing opportunity. I loved everything about it -- the atmosphere, the city, everything. I loved it all. And playing with my team, I was very grateful for it.

Coming back next year, I'm very excited for what's to come. I know we have bigger things in store. I'm very proud of my team, and I know that we're going to come back next year stronger and better.

**Q. Coach, obviously losing a lot of seniors after today that meant a lot to this program. If you could, just in a few words how would you sum up what those four seniors have done in their time here?**

COQUESE WASHINGTON: The four seniors on our team -- Destiny Adams, Awa Sidibe, Chyna Cornwell, and JoJo Lacey -- mean a ton to their teammates. Like Zachara mentioned earlier, the passion they play with all season long is something that's an imprint they've left on this program. And it will be something that we'll build off of for teams in the future following their lead to play with a tremendous amount of passion, dedication, and love for Rutgers.

**Q. Again, not the way you want the season to end, but if you could just go back and look at how the season went, made the Big Ten Tournament. Out of 15 teams, you're the last ones in. What would you say was maybe a highlight of the season and maybe a low light of the season, if you will?**

COQUESE WASHINGTON: My perspective is always,



having been in the game of women's basketball for a long time, going back to being in middle school and high school, every season is its own journey. You get to these press conferences, and you get questions about what does this mean, what does that mean, but every season is its own journey.

Zachara talked about being grateful to be able to be on this journey is just an important thing to go through. It's too early right now for me to assess the highs and the lows, but the journey and the journey that I've gone through with Zachara and her teammates and these seniors and all of that is a special moment, it's a special season.

Sometimes you go through these seasons and you end with -- I mean, I've been a part of championship teams and you're the last one standing and you win the game, and sometimes you go through these seasons and you don't win the last game. So what does all of that mean? It's all a part of your overall basketball journey.

I'm grateful and appreciative that I'm able to be at this place at Rutgers with these people this year, and it's been a magnificent season because of that, because of the journey that it is and what we learn about ourselves, what we learn about each other, what we learn about the university, how you put yourself in a position moving forward to be impactful in people's lives.

So in some ways it doesn't matter how it ends. It's what was the journey? And what was it that was meaningful in so many ways? That's the space that I'm in right now.

**Q. With the new format where only 15 teams of the 18 get in, does that change the regular season and the emphasis on every game? Because really every game can matter and it can come down to the last week whether you get a chance to come to the postseason.**

COQUESE WASHINGTON: I absolutely think the stakes have definitely risen, and you see that. I think the last Saturday and Sunday, all those games had impact on seeding, they had an impact on whether you made it to the tournaments. It's definitely shown that the regular season in every game is important, especially all those tiebreakers, and you never know. You finish 10-8, and you play on the first day because of the tiebreakers.

I think that's, again, what makes this conference so amazing to play in is because you're playing against such great talent, you're coaching against such tremendous coaches, and playing in a conference where the competition is so, so, so strong.

It's a fun conference to play in. It's a fun conference to

coach in, and I'm appreciative to be a part of it.

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