

# NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - Gonzaga vs Nebraska

Friday, March 18, 2022

Louisville, Kentucky, USA

Nebraska Cornhuskers (Sam Haiby, Alexis Markowski, Head Coach Amy Williams)

## Media Conference

Gonzaga - 68, Nebraska - 55

AMY WILLIAMS: Yeah, just incredibly disappointing game for our team. We just feel disappointed for a lot of reasons. Number one, we felt like we are better than what we showed in the NCAA Tournament. I think we're disappointed that we lost and we didn't advance. We came down here expecting to win and to find ways to advance in this tournament.

Mostly disappointed just because it's over, and this has been an incredibly special team that I have just absolutely loved every second of the opportunity to coach. So my heart is broken that this season and this team are done.

**Q. It was close there at halftime, and third quarter obviously was a big difference for them. What did you see in the third quarter that was a big difference for Gonzaga?**

AMY WILLIAMS: I really thought that they just did a great job of attacking the paint, getting points in the paint, some of those offensive rebounds and put-backs. They did a good job also of, with their pressure, kind of just changing up things where we were not as able to play with the pace that we wanted to offensively and kind of just had us a little choppy on offense.

**Q. Rebounding was obviously a big topic going in. How did you feel like the rebounding went?**

AMY WILLIAMS: I'm disappointed. We felt like that was going to be the game within the game. We know Gonzaga outrebounds their opponents by ten on average for the season, so we knew that was going to be a very tall task. For our team to get outrebounded by seven boards and to give up 14 second chance points to only 3 for ourselves, I thought that was a really big difference in the game.

Also, we want to always dominate the paint, and the paint points were 32 to 18 in favor of Gonzaga. I think a lot of those things are dependent on rebounding and probably pretty telltale for why we didn't come out on the other side.

**Q. What impressed you about Gonzaga and their athletes and how they executed in this game?**

AMY WILLIAMS: The thing that impressed me most about this team was the thing we came in knowing what was going to be an advantage for them. They have a lot of players that have great experience, four seniors and a junior in their starting lineup, and players that have a lot of NCAA Tournament experience.

I've been in coaching long enough to really value experience and what that can do for you and just the poise that you need in pressure situations. I thought it was a very physical game out there today, and I thought they really were composed through that and stayed pretty composed. I think that's a credit to the experience that they have.

**Q. In what ways do you hope this season changes the Nebraska program?**

AMY WILLIAMS: I can tell you that there are a lot of hurt hearts kind of in that locker room, and I think the expectations that our program now has moving forward to be playing in this tournament and to win in this tournament, they've been cemented.

Just a huge credit to our upperclassmen, players like Sam Haiby, who have come here and for four years have poured their blood, sweat, and tears into this program to get us into the NCAA Tournament, and now it would be an absolute shame if we didn't find a way to just continue to build on that and raise the expectations even higher based on all of the things that they've done for our program.

**Q. Do you feel like next season will be a big extension of this year with the potential for a large group of people to be back?**

AMY WILLIAMS: Yeah, I think it really can be. I told our team in the locker room after this game is to just bottle up that -- just that pain that they're feeling, that yucky kind of just feeling in your gut and just bottle that up and let's use that to fuel our fire as we continue to build for the future.

I most certainly think that the future is bright for Nebraska women's basketball. We have a lot of incredibly talented young players coming back that are going to learn from this experience and continue to find ways to improve and help our program get better.

**Q. Their players made it very tough on you defensively. Were you just not able to run your offense to your liking? Did they push you out? Did they do anything in particular that disrupted you?**

AMY WILLIAMS: Yeah, I thought they were incredibly physical, and the game got very physical. I thought then for a little while we were kind of just rushing shots, expecting to get fouled, and not just kind of slowing down and taking our time and finishing shots that we normally finish.

Definitely the press that they ran kind of took us a little bit out of our pace, and we were not in the same attack mode that we wanted to be in. But I really felt like it was just something where it was a physical ball game and we needed to adjust a little quicker than we did.

**Q. Sam, just overall how do you feel Nebraska played in this game?**

SAM HAIBY: We're disappointed. We feel we didn't play a complete 40 minutes. That's what you need to do when you come to the tournament in order to win games, but I think just disappointment.

**Q. Alexis, what was it like inside this game both rebounding and trying to score?**

ALEXIS MARKOWSKI: It was a pretty physical game down there. I think if we had limited their offensive rebounding, that we would have come up on top today. We really let that physicalness of the game get to us.

**Q. What stands out about how they rebound? Obviously you talked about it, and you saw the stats, and you saw it on tape. When you experience it, what do you think of Gonzaga's success rebounding?**

ALEXIS MARKOWSKI: We knew like they outrebound their opponents by ten, and we wanted to outrebound them. We knew, if we did that, that we'd probably come up on top, and we didn't. I hope that we all learn from this and remember this feeling because we don't want to feel like this again.

SAM HAIBY: Yeah, it's one thing to see those stats and know it, but then you've got to go out there and compete. Rebounding is a lot of heart, and I think at times they just wanted it more and were super physical. We knew that going in, and we just needed to take that into consideration and have all five of us want to rebound.

**Q. Sam, what did Gonzaga do to impact the most? What kind of shots would you guys have liked to get in this game?**

SAM HAIBY: I think the press set us off the most and slowed us down. We like to play with a lot of pace. I think they did a really good job of slowing us down just enough to be able to take us out of rhythm and take us out of the shots we wanted to get in the paint.

**Q. This is just one game. It was a long season, Sam. I guess what you're going to have to think about this game for a while. How do you think this game improves this team going forward?**

SAM HAIBY: Yeah, it's definitely not just this one game that proves what we're capable of. I think we had a really good season. It didn't end the way that we wanted to, but just the fight we showed throughout all the games we played this year starting in November shows what this team is really capable of.

**Q. Sam, do you think you'll be on this team next season?**

SAM HAIBY: I'm not sure yet. I have some things to think about. I need to rest up. I've got to heal up too. So we'll see.

**Q. Alexis, going forward for you, obviously a great freshman season, but what do you need to do personally and with this team to take the next step?**

ALEXIS MARKOWSKI: I need to do a lot of things to get better. Just everything. Personally, I want to be more dominant than I am. I want to be really good, and I know I've got to put in the work in this off-season if I want to do the things I want to do.

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