

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship Final Four: LSU vs Virginia Tech

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Dallas, Texas, USA

American Airlines Center

Virginia Tech Hokies

Kenny Brooks

Georgia Amoore

Elizabeth Kitley

Kayana Traylor

Semi-Finals Postgame Media Conference



I'm proud of them. Proud of them whether they won, whether they lost. They respect everything. That's why they're going to be future leaders of tomorrow whatever they do. I promise you that. It's because they understand it, they respect it, and they will be very, very successful. So thank you.

Q. Hi, ladies, sorry for the tough loss tonight. What happened in the fourth quarter? You guys were coming out firing in the third quarter, and in the fourth quarter, what did they do differently to change up?

GEORGIA AMOORE: They just started playing more aggressive. Obviously we knew that they were going to come out with that aggression with us being up, and I just don't think we were good enough to stop Morris coming down and playing with that confidence.

And they just really took over with the intensity.

ELIZABETH KITLEY: I think we did a really good job for the most part in the first two quarters of limiting them to one shot, and I think we gave up a lot of offensive rebounds when they were come back in the fourth, and that definitely hurt us.

Q. This is a question for Liz: I know you and Georgia are close. She broke the NCAA Tournament record for three-pointers made tonight. Just kind of wondering from your perspective what it's been like kind of watching her thrive through this tournament on this run you all have been on.

ELIZABETH KITLEY: It's been amazing, and I'm so happy for her. Part of that is just because I know how humble she is. She'll never give herself enough credit but -- why this question? What?

But we all love her so much, and we're just really happy to see her successful because we know she's had it in her the whole time. It's nice that people are seeing it now.

Q. Even though the season did not end as you had hoped, how will you remember this season?

LSU - 79, Virginia Tech - 72

THE MODERATOR: Welcome to the Division I national semifinal Game 1 post-game press conference featuring the Virginia Tech Hokies. We'll hear an opening statement from Coach Brooks and follow with questions from the student-athletes.

KENNY BROOKS: I'm extremely proud of this group, not only because of what they accomplished on the court, but how they conduct themselves on the court, how they conduct themselves in our community, and this is the best year of basketball that I've ever had in my life.

It's not because of the 31 wins. It's not because of getting to the Final Four. It's because I get to coach these young ladies, and I'm so happy and proud. I love the way they respect the game. I love the way they respect their opponent. I love the way they respect their universities. I love the way they respect anybody they don't know when they come across them.

I'll take that every time. No sacrifices. No sacrifices to get to anywhere, and that's who we are. That's what Virginia Tech is. That's what Virginia Tech will be. And these kids right here represent so well.

So I'm the proudest coach in the country. Regardless of if I didn't get the actual prize, the fact that they love me as much as they do, that's all that matters. That's all that matters. I've been doing this too long, too long, and this is the absolute best that I've ever felt with a group.



ELIZABETH KITLEY: This is my favorite team that I've been on by far. Yeah, the goal was a National Championship, but a Final Four is pretty incredible, and I'm going to remember it as that.

But also just mainly this group of girls has been so fun to play with, and it's the kind of relationship that I feel like is going to carry on for however many years, and we'll always be able to look back on this season and remember how much fun we had together. I'm sure we're going to have a reunion in 50 years and be able to talk about it. So I'm looking forward to that.

Q. What do you think the legacy of this team may be?

GEORGIA AMOORE: Like just underdogs the whole year. We got the 1 seed. We won the championship, and people still didn't believe in us. People were saying we're the first team to not leave our of region, all of that.

Then we had inside adversity. I think we just grew maturity-wise and set a standard for Virginia Tech basketball and like who we are as people and athletes.

Q. Liz didn't come out of the game for a second today. What do you think that says about what she has meant to this team?

GEORGIA AMOORE: That doesn't surprise me. That woman cops a beating every single night, elbows thrown, all of that. But she means a lot to this program.

Just the face of Virginia Tech, coming here from day one, and worked her butt off really and trusted in Coach Brooks. Virginia Tech loves her and she loves Virginia Tech.

Q. Can you talk a little bit about facing Angel and how difficult a matchup that was and what challenges she presents?

ELIZABETH KITLEY: She's super athletic, really good at getting rebounds on you. I think the first half she had like two rebounds on you. Coming out, her not being in danger of foul trouble as much, I knew she was going to be really aggressive on that end, and she was. She gave them a lot of second-chance opportunities, and that definitely helped them come back.

Q. Throughout the season, Coach Brooks has trusted you guys when the other team makes a run to figure it out and not call a timeout. Tonight obviously what happened happened, but throughout the season, what has it meant to you that he's put that trust in you in those situations?

GEORGIA AMOORE: I think it's just such a good relationship between us and him, the trust and the respect. I would do anything for him. A lot of these girls would, and vice versa.

It just helps us maturity-wise. Like I'm really saying it, I think we are one of the smartest and most mature teams out there. It's just an effort from him from giving us that trust. We're not on a leash. Like he's given us the chance to prove to him that he can trust us.

Q. Liz, I'm curious what you think that you bring to the next level? What can teams get excited about when they see all that you have been able to accomplish at this level?

ELIZABETH KITLEY: I think at the end of the day I just love basketball and I love being part of a team, regardless of what my role is. I just feel like I'm willing to give my all to what I'm involved in.

I think I'm just a good teammate also and able to listen and learn and get better with criticism.

Q. Georgia, when you think about what this team can -- the returners or even people coming in from next season can take from this experience to get to the Final Four, both in this game but also just the run in general. What do you hope that group can take moving forward?

GEORGIA AMOORE: We've grown a lot this year, especially myself just knowing what it takes to get here and being here. As soon as it ended, it just was I want to be here again.

So hopefully whoever comes back, whatever happens, I know that I can place myself in a leadership position to know what it takes to get here and be here and just continue to bring those who come in, who come back, whatever, along with for this.

Q. Kayana, that 16-0 run from the end of the second going into the third, I believe you had 9 of those points. What changed from the first quarter going into that run, and why do you feel you were so successful within that time frame?

KAYANA TRAYLOR: I think my teammates put me in really good positions to be successful. I was just waiting for my opportunity. We were struggling a little bit shooting-wise, so we had to do different things, play good defense, get stops, get to the rim.

So I just did what my team needed at the time.

Q. My question is for the student-athletes: What are some principles that Coach Brooks has taught you over your time here, and how will you continue to reflect on those lessons as you grow as people?

GEORGIA AMOORE: I'm going to let you all answer this because I'm a junior. I get to enjoy it for a few more years.

ELIZABETH KITLEY: That's a loaded -- everything I know, is that an answer? He just taught me to focus on what's important to me. Something that he says often that I think he got from a former player is just to focus on your focus, and I think we did that really well this season.

Because there's always going to be adversity, whether it be inside what you're doing or outside, but at the end of the day, you've got to do what's important to you, if you want to get the most out of whatever you're involved in.

So I think that will stick with me for a long time because me and this group of girls were able to do that really well, and we got success from that.

Q. Coach says how you guys are his daughters and that you'll be leaders for the future. What does he mean to you guys?

KAYANA TRAYLOR: Everything, honestly. I think it's a two-way street as far as like we just have the ultimate respect for him, trust in him, and same, vice versa. I think, as long as you meet him halfway, like he's going to do whatever he can to put you in the best position possible, and I think that's why we're here today.

ELIZABETH KITLEY: Yeah, I agree with her. He's just willing to do so much for his players, and all they have to do in return is respect him and do what he says. And if you do that, then he'll do great things for you and take you great places.

Just everything that he's invested in us is why we're in the spots we are and why we're making these great memories and having the best experiences ever.

GEORGIA AMOORE: Yeah, I have the utmost respect for him. Because of that, I know he has my back all the time. He's just been a solid figure.

Q. This question is for Georgia: You've been the big breakout star of this tournament. Just give me your reflection, just give me your mindset on just throughout the entire tournament. How have you been able to do what you've done?

GEORGIA AMOORE: Going into it, I wasn't thinking necessarily this is huge for me. I just wanted to win so bad. From the minute we got chosen on the selection show, I knew it was going to take the absolute most from me for us to get where we got.

So it was just having that team mindset and just being put in really good positions by my team. There was times where I was putting up shots and they weren't falling, and I wanted to stop, but they all told me keep shooting. He told me keep shooting. So just playing my heart out for the team.

Q. Kayana, you guys did a lot of the little things right in the second and third quarter, but it seemed like down the stretch there were some turnovers, and the game just kind of got away from you. From your perspective, with the little things, what kind of went wrong there? What kind of got away from you?

KAYANA TRAYLOR: Like you said, I think we had a few crucial turnovers, as well as missed boxouts where they scored on second-chance opportunities. Yeah, I think that's just what it came down to really.

Q. Kayana, even though it's only been two years for you, how will you remember your Virginia Tech career? Liz, if this is the end, if that is the case, how will you remember your four years at Tech?

KAYANA TRAYLOR: For me, whenever I transferred, honestly, coming here I got exactly what I wanted out of it -- an ACC Championship, a Final Four, and then most importantly, just being around people who welcomed me and loved me from the day that I got here.

So definitely these past few years have been the best of my life for sure.

ELIZABETH KITLEY: Yeah, definitely what she said. We've had the most incredible accomplishments as a program, but at the end of the day, these people that I'm around, I'm so lucky to be with. Couldn't have picked a better place. Virginia Tech really does feel like home to me, and it will always be that way going forward.

I know that Coach Brooks and I will always have that connection for the rest of time. So it just means a lot. But also the relationship with the girls, we're just a huge family honestly, and I'm very grateful for that.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much, ladies.

At this time, we'll open it up for questions for Coach.



Q. Kenny, I don't think you've done a whole lot of zone this year. What went into that decision? What worked so well with that zone early on that you think they solved a little bit there at the end?

KENNY BROOKS: I thought it threw them out of rhythm a little bit, caused them to be stagnant on their end. We also did it for purposes too. Taylor Soule had two fouls. We were playing kids in the second quarter extensive minutes.

So it was just a really good solution to some of our issues, some of our problems. And as a result, we were able to go on a run. Go on a run and -- so we contemplated. We knew we had it in our back pocket that we wanted to try it at some point before the game started.

Q. There will be obviously a Final Four banner that will get put up next fall. How do you want fans to remember the legacy of this team?

KENNY BROOKS: I want them to look at the Final Four and appreciate all the hard work, the dedication, the sacrifices that this group put in. And I want them to understand this is a phenomenal group of young ladies, and what they have done for this program, for this university, they're proud to be Hokies.

As soon as we touch down, I bet they'll be at a lacrosse game. I bet they'll be at a softball game. And not to be seen, but because they genuinely love being Hokies.

So I want everyone to know it's more than just basketball with this particular group. If you're a Hokey, if you're a fan of Virginia Tech or you just like watching them or just peeking at us, I want you to know they're phenomenal kids who represent us so well.

Q. After that great third quarter, what do you feel went wrong for you guys offensively and defensively there in the fourth?

KENNY BROOKS: They hit a couple of shots, gained a little momentum. I think they had a three right off the bat and had a steal for a layup, kind of changed the momentum. They were a little bit more aggressive in the passing lanes, but they were also a little bit more aggressive down low.

You know what, I have the utmost respect for Kim Mulkey and her program, and any program that she's a part of. But I do think that there needs to be some changes because our game is a great game, and it needs to grow. To grow -- and this is not a knock on the officials. I thought they did a phenomenal job in trying to navigate a game like

that. But I think we need to adopt some of the rules that the WNBA have.

We're missing out on watching Elizabeth Kitley be able to move in the paint freely. There needs to be a defensive three-second call. Let her move freely, and how beautiful would the game be?

Watch Angel Reese get the ball on the block, and she's got freedom of movement. That's where the game can be beautiful, and everyone's doing it. The WNBA's gone to it. The NBA has it. It's freedom of movement. You watch these athletes be athletes instead of having three and four people around them when they catch the basketball.

I don't think Elizabeth Kitley caught the basketball in the last month and a half without three people being all around her and attacking the ball. And I say attacking the ball because she has no recourse. She can't chin it anymore because it's an offensive foul. And somebody can go in and tie her up with three and four people. We're missing out on an opportunity, in my opinion.

This is for the rules committee. I hope they listen. I hope they watch. We have a beautiful game with tremendous athletes. Those kids are athletic. They're big. They're strong. They're doing something that no females have done before them, and we've got to continue to grow the game. I think it would be such a beautiful game if they opened it up.

That's for the rules committee. That's not to the referees. I thought they did a tremendous job in navigating the whole situation, but we have a beautiful game that needs to grow.

Q. That 16-0 run in the second going into the third, what do you feel like sparked that, and how did you guys kind of maintain that for such a long period of time?

KENNY BROOKS: We got some good looks. We knocked down some threes. We also had some threes in the stretches where they went on runs, but I feel like they were in and out. They were really good looks. I think Kayana had one that really could have silenced the run they had. Georgia had one in the second half and just kind of rimmed it in and out. She had a couple like that.

She came up to me one time and she said, "bloody heck." She didn't say "heck" but -- you know, she's right there. I think those were some of the things.

In a game of this magnitude when both teams are high level and there's a lot of shot-making going on, you've got to make some of those shots to be able to survive and

continue those runs.

Q. Between the men's and women's, when it comes to March Madness, there have been a lot of firsts, just like your team. How has that created more opportunity for schools that most of us don't know where it exists until we look it up? Obviously everybody know where VT is, but how does that create more opportunity for teams like yourself and others in the nation?

KENNY BROOKS: I think the game is evolving. The evolution with the transfer portal, NIL obviously is something. But when you give kids an opportunity to move without repercussions, without sitting out, a lot of kids will go, and the parity is going to continue to grow in our game.

It's been like that on the men's side for a little while. I think the women's side is starting to catch up. We're not an overnight wonder. We've been building this thing for a long time, so we're very fortunate to be here. But because of the leadership and hard work of some young ladies that were particularly sitting by my side, with the addition of a couple kids who put us over the top.

So I don't think it's the last time you're going to see teams that haven't been here before. I think it's an opportunity just because of the evolution of the game and where it's gone because of the transfer portal, et cetera.

Q. Georgia talked about the fact that, as soon as this ended, she started thinking about ways to get back here. Just two parts to that. One, what have you seen out of her out of the last even half dozen games which seem even above the level that she had been playing at throughout the year? And what, if anything, is another level for her to reach for you guys to get back here and maybe win this game next time around?

KENNY BROOKS: There's definitely another level to her, and I promise you, as soon as we get back, when I say it's okay for her, we'll start working out again because she'll probably want to do it as soon as we get back.

There's a lot of things, she's like a piece of putty for me, and I can just mold her into what I want. The joy for me is that her work ethic, her joy that she gives back to me, it's documented that I do a lot of their individuals. That's my favorite thing to do.

When I got hired, when Whit hired me, I said I don't really like shaking hands and kissing babies. I'll do it. But my favorite thing to do is I want to be in the gym. I want to be with them. She is marvelous at that.

What you can teach her -- Liz is the same way. What you

can teach her in a day, and then she'll carry it over in their practice, she'll carry it over into the next game. It's a coach's joy.

So there's definitely a next level to her, and there will be some stuff because she's not going to sneak up on anybody anymore, and they're going to understand who she is and what she can do.

We'll get back it. I promise you, I promise you she'll be better next year than she was in this run towards the Final Four.

Q. When you have a chance to step back, what is this run going to do for the trajectory of your program?

KENNY BROOKS: It gives us credibility. It puts us up there with a lot of the programs that have been here before. All of a sudden, we become a cool destination for women's basketball. Our style of play, we've got a beautiful campus. You'll get a wonderful education. We do fun things. We do things first class.

We respect the game. We respect everything about this process and this opportunity. So when I get back -- we're late. We're behind right now in the transfer portal because we've still been playing, but hopefully we'll get some -- create some credibility because we got this far.

I definitely think that we're going to capitalize on this, and I think you have to because, when a coach called me -- two coaches told me, who had been here before, they say, once you get here as a participant in the Final Four, you don't really want to come back to the convention. Nothing against the convention, but that's how special this is -- how special the opportunity, how special the whole situation is. It can be addicting.

Fear of failure, we'll get right back at it and start working again because this has been a marvelous experience. The NCAA has been terrific. Everything my girls got to experience will be memories for a lifetime, and it was wonderful for me sitting back and watching them experience it. Hopefully we'll continue to work hard to try to get back here.

We understand how hard it is. Not everyone gets to experience this. I know coaches that have been in the game for 30 years and never got this opportunity. So we cherished it. We enjoyed it. But now we really do want to try to put together something that can get back here.

Q. Coach Brooks, my question for you is how can an aspiring coach of color look at your story and draw inspiration from it?

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KENNY BROOKS: You can work hard. You can be where your feet are because I didn't just get here overnight. I've been doing this my whole life. I started coaching when I was 23 years old, 24 years old.

I had to go pick up Lefty's laundry. I had to go pick up his No. 7 from Wendy's. I had to drive him to Charlotte, North Carolina. I had to answer his phone calls at 12:00 at night to do something, and it's never easy.

For anyone who ever asks me, I always tell them, don't try to emulate my path because my path is my path. Your journey is your journey. You can take bits and pieces, but the best piece of advice I can tell you is be where your feet are.

You've got to do a phenomenal job everywhere you are so that you can move and you can get an opportunity. You can't just say, well, I've been here ten years, I should get my opportunity. No, you've got to work. You've got to work hard. If you're somewhere and you're thinking about something else, you're not going to do a good job where you are.

So I hope -- and I'll continue to talk -- that my experience and what we've done and where we've gotten our program to, I hope it opens many doors because there are a lot of people who look like me who deserve an opportunity who I think will do a tremendous job.

I don't think that we're just recruiters. I don't think that we're just workout guys. I don't think that we're just good assistants. I see a lot of young minds, and a lot of them are assistant coaches, who I think that's all we need is an opportunity.

We're not perfect. We're not perfect. Just because I say someone is good, yeah, they've got to go prove themselves. They're not going to be a great coach because they're a coach of color. Everyone has to work and work hard.

I love sharing my experiences, and even though my path is my path, my journey is my journey, maybe people can take bits and pieces of it and try to help their journey.

Q. Sorry for the loss, Coach.

KENNY BROOKS: Thank you.

Q. There's not many teams in the country that talk about trust as much as your team does. We heard it maybe 20 times when the players were talking. And it comes out in those moments when the other team is

making a run and you let the players figure it out. It's worked out a ton for you this season. In those moments, what goes through your head in terms of not only trusting the team to make the right decision but trust yourself to make the right decision in terms of calling a timeout?

KENNY BROOKS: First and foremost, everything -- one of my favorite and funniest and grammatically incorrect phrases is "everything ain't for everybody." I tell my kids that all the time.

To play here and you talk to them and you listen to them talk about trust and the trust that we have, the experiences, it's culture-based. And what we are, we're very close. I spend as much time with Liz or Georgia or K.T. on how to talk to you guys as I do how to shoot a fadeaway. I talk to them about little things.

They come into my office, they sit, and many so times they'll be in my office, and I have a couch in my office, and they'll sit on the couch and before I know it, they're asleep, and I just continue to work. But that's how you build trust, and that's how I know what they're thinking.

It's kind of like being a parent. When you're a parent to a child, if you sit there and you listen to your kids and you continue to let them talk, they'll tell you everything. That's what I do. They come into my office and they sit, and they tell me everything. Together that builds the trust. That's how we build our culture.

Yeah, they went on the run, and I'm thinking, well, we can do this and we can do that. There's nothing I can tell them during a timeout that they don't already know. They understand it. They know what we're supposed to be doing. I can call a timeout and look at them and say, well, hey, let's play better defense. They know they need to do that. I could call a timeout and say, hey, take care of the ball. They're going to shoot the gaps. They know they're going to do that.

It helps me keep my timeouts towards the end. But it is, it's trust. It's trust in each other, and that's how we've gotten here because of the culture of our program. Not everybody speaks culture, and I think our culture is tremendous.

My opening statement is because of our culture. My opening statement is because of the trust that we have in each other. I love these kids. I love them. Like I said, though, I'm not perfect, and everything ain't for everybody, but what we have going on together is phenomenal and I've been very appreciative.

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