

Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Friday, March 6, 2026

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Gainbridge Fieldhouse

Iowa Hawkeyes

Coach Jan Jensen

Taylor StremLOW

Journey Houston

Postgame Press Conference



Iowa 64, Illinois 58

JAN JENSEN: Well, I'm just really pleased with how we opened up. I think it's always the rub; Illinois is playing three games in three days but they also had some of that experience.

Sometimes when it's your first time, we don't get a shootaround here today due to the timing. But I just really was pleased with how we came out out of the chutes. We really knew the scout, and I think our defense set the tone.

So I'm just really grateful to get that first win.

Q. Journey, there was a play in that fourth quarter, I believe, where you stole the ball away from Cearah Parchment. Can you tell us about that play?

JOURNEY HOUSTON: I really just have the stay-ready mindset all the time. We've had to handle a lot of adversity lately with Hannah being out, so I took my role serious today and I was just ready for all moments.

Q. When Illinois starts to get closer in those last final moments, how do you guys stay in the right mindset?

TAYLOR STREMLow: I think like Coach Jan said, it's a great experience for us. Regardless of who's on the floor, we're trying to stay together, stay on the same page, make sure we're looking over at Coach, getting the plays, and I think that group that was out there gave it their all and they're going to use what they learned today for the following games and the rest of the postseason games, so great experience for us.

Q. Taylor, I wanted to ask you about that play late in

the second quarter where Chit-Chat kind of dropped it between her legs and you threw a one-handed pass. Were you expecting her to do that? How good did that pass feel?

TAYLOR STREMLow: Yeah, Chat has done that about twice now so I should have picked it up on it a little sooner. I could have made that shot off of it, but it ended up being fine. Got to drop it off to her. Those plays are fun. Got to make sure you complete them, that makes it more fun.

But yeah, fun play, chat is a good player, she made a great play, good lay-up, so yeah, loved it.

Q. The pace from the stands for offense seemed much slower than we're used to watching. Was that the plan coming out or after a lead was established?

TAYLOR STREMLow: I think pushing the pace is something we wanted to do. I think our transition was pretty good. Coming off the -- just from the start of the game, so slowing it down as the game progressed, trying to manage the clock was probably what made it appear a little slower.

Definitely a strategic thing but also want to make sure we continue to push the ball in transition.

Q. Can you speak about the X factors that you locked down Illinois's explosive offense for the first three quarters?

JOURNEY HOUSTON: We really took the scout serious. We kind of struggled with it a bit last game, so I feel like everybody did a good job studying it and being well prepared for this game.

Q. You see a sea of black and gold out there. Can either of you describe the feeling of seeing your community get behind you like that?

TAYLOR STREMLow: Yeah, I wouldn't expect anything less from the Hawkeye fans. We never take it for granted they travel wherever we go. There's no place like Iowa and the fans will show up and cheer us on regardless of where



in the country or out of the country even that we take our squad.

So go Hawks.

Q. Obviously eight days ago you guys played Illinois and that was a really close back-and-forth game. What did you see differently that went well for you guys?

JAN JENSEN: Well, I thought back then, we didn't -- we weren't quite as sharp defensively. We didn't remember who were drivers and who were shooters. This league is really a good -- it's just so good.

The 10 seed is Illinois, right? They were all so crazy hot that night. I think they hit nine threes in a row. That usually not as high of an aspect for them, so they were really good that night. We made some defensive tweaks in how he wanted to handle their 4 and 5. We changed that up a little bit.

I also did some switching on occasion with Chit-Chat and with Kylee. So we just tweaked a little, but I think we remembered who we needed to stunt, who we needed to try not let's see the light of day.

I just think Journey was right; I think our scout was better, but I do think our staff did a good job going back and watching the film and what we could correct and tweak a little bit. We were able to tone down their inside kids a little better.

Q. 20 assists tonight; you're second in the country in assist rate. As a coach, how much is that something that you can instill in your players or do they need to have that within their being to share the ball?

JAN JENSEN: That's just something -- I've been at Iowa now since 2000, and that's kind of been engrained, and I think the philosophy we've always had. We just really always celebrate the pass.

I think we try to make almost a bigger deal out of the pass on some occasions than the score itself. You try to drill it. You're trying to let them know what option one and option two is.

But they're pretty selfless team for the most part. I'd say Chit-Chat Wright to a fault. She is always -- I think she could shoot it about 25 times more a game I feel, but she really wants to probe and look to hit someone. But it's a little bit by design, but I think it's a little bit about the young women I'm blessed to coach and try to recruit to that. You try to come here and you want to be a part of it.

You're not sure who's going to be the one, but I think if you recruit to be a part of it, it's a pretty fun system to play in.

Q. Can you speak about the impact of Ava on the game tonight and just how much she's grown?

JAN JENSEN: Yeah, I'm just really proud of Ava. It was about a year ago where she had a really nice Big Ten Tournament and started to show glimpses of what I thought she could be in the recruiting process. There's really a nice article in the Des Moines Register, one of our sports beat writers Chad Leisitkow, and Ava was really honest in that interview and talked about how frustrating it was. She wasn't trust the process.

But boy it's a beautiful thing if you coach when all of a sudden the lights kind of go on, even if they're not quite sure that they want to go through steps 1 and 2 and 3, they just want to get to 4.

I thought her impact tonight, what was she, 6 for 7, and her fouls tonight were kind of weird. Even though she had fouls they were these moving screens and that is such a subjective call. I believe it was -- I thought the refs were great, but it's like, oh, the leg is too wide. Her knee was out.

I can send in about 12 other clips during the course of the year. So I'm happy that it's that type of foul tonight, because that I can say, okay, do not move, make your legs as narrow as possible. But I just thought it was a really well-played game. I thought she changed the game when she was in there.

Q. Can you speak to the game plan for defense going forward with Hannah coming back injured today, Ava six blocks today?

JAN JENSEN: Yeah, number one, I just want to shout out Hannah Stuelke. I told our local media on Wednesday I think was my last presser, Hannah has not come to practice barely since the Illinois game when she got hurt. Then two days ago she got that virus stuff that everybody has going around, and our training -- I shout out to Andrea Chilcote and our med team.

The elbow injury, a lot of wrestlers get it, so she went over to the wrestling complex and really talked to the trainers about all the different ways to tape the elbow, and Hannah, the swelling was so much, so on Wednesday she wasn't even in the gym.

So then we left on Thursday and she was also not feeling well. It just didn't look good. She couldn't even have shot it. We found a good mechanism of taping this morning,

and she looked really good at shootaround.

She told me she had a lot of people praying for her, and I agree; I was, too.

Q. Coach, I'm curious to see what you saw from your team, 36 points in the paint this evening. What did you see in the early phases of the matchup that allowed you guys to get so much inside presence this evening and exploit some of that from the Illini defense?

JAN JENSEN: Yeah, I think from the first game we had a pretty good inside presence so I knew unless they changed things drastically we should be looking in there. It's kind of an interesting matchup because their 4 and 5, how good is Parchment, right, a freshman, and Berry Wallace is as good as they come.

But they're a 4 and 5 that can shoot threes and do guard actions, and so we have to defend that. They can also post-up.

But we spend a lot more of our time doing the post-up, so if we can get an advantage in there, you kind of have to defend and not give up too many threes because you're getting twos, but I thought our angles were pretty good. I thought the first 35 minutes, I think this game was really great.

Then the end of it, I just wanted to make sure my locker room held because it was a really good game the last five minutes. That just happens if they leave their people in and you're going with some of yours to get some rest. I just told them, hopefully that experience is going to come in handy if we get to keep playing deep in April. But I did like the matchup on that high-low.

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the tournament, I hope we're able to respond and win those games in a row.

Q. Berry, wanted to ask about the deep ball this evening. Was it just a matter of the perimeter defense that you were getting from Iowa or were just the shots not falling this evening?

BERRY WALLACE: Yeah, I think we were able to read how the defense was playing me and they were going under a lot of stuff, so we were able to get a lot of those pop-backs and threes for me. I think they just weren't going in. Those are shots I normally hit, so...

Q. That 17-2 run in the fourth quarter, what were you ladies doing differently, kind of adjusting things that you did in the fourth that you weren't doing in the first half?

JASMINE BROWN-HAGGER: From my observations, we just played free, played hard. We gave everything we had into those last five minutes, the last battle of the game. Everyone on the court was together.

I think that just shows what we can do when everyone is locked in in one moment in time.

Q. Berry, just three games in Indy for your team, for this young group, as well. What can it do for you building into the NCAA Tournament and then also having success like you did as a team?

BERRY WALLACE: Yeah, I think this week was a great learning experience for us, and I think we're just going to watch film from this and learn a lot of different things.

And I think we did a good job this week in just adjusting. We had a great win yesterday, and just trying to get through some of the adversity that we faced early in the season. Maybe we didn't get those wins early in the season, but I think we were able to learn from that.

I think playing these back-to-back games is good for us, especially going forward into the tournament. It's going to be quick turnarounds, so I think ultimately it was just a

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SHAUNA GREEN: Just the first quarter to start the game, we came out flat and got behind and dug ourselves a 10-point hole and just didn't have enough to really fight back.

I thought our fourth quarter was great. Loved our intensity. I loved our fight. This team, the one thing about this team we're never going to give up, we're never going to stop fighting. We clawed our way back and ended up cutting it to six.

A lot of learning opportunities for a young team of what it takes in this tournament, and then also learning opportunities as we continue to grow going into the NCAA Tournament.

Just ran out of gas a little bit.

But credit Iowa. They're a really good team. Just didn't have it tonight.

Q. Jasmine, you guys had three games in a row here in Indy. Just want to get your thoughts on how you think this will help you guys as you're entering the postseason?

JASMINE BROWN-HAGGER: Kind of like we mentioned in the locker room, I think this was a great testament for us to be able to respond hopefully going into the NCAA Tournament that we're going to be playing games back to back and knowing we have to respond and not give in to the fatigue.

One thing about us is we learn from experiences, so come



good learning experience for us.

Q. 21 wins this season. As you guys reflect on the season as a whole, what is your biggest takeaway?

BERRY WALLACE: I would just say my biggest takeaway is just that we're capable of anything. We had a lot of close games with a lot of really good teams, and I think just going into this postseason tournament and into next year, we know that even though we're young, we're capable of so much.

I think just knowing that when we play to our full potential on defense, that's going to fuel our offense. We really saw a lot of glimpses of that today and all season we have, and I think when we just continue to string that all together, we're going to have a lot of success.

Q. Beyond two wins, what did this three-night experience do for your team as you go into the NCAA Tournament, and what can you take from it beyond the two wins?

SHAUNA GREEN: So much, right? So much. Just the understanding what it takes in a win or go home environment, understanding how to have quick turnarounds and still be able to get a scout in, and again, with a team that has never been through a lot of this stuff together.

I think today we just didn't execute at a high level. Then when the shots -- the thing also about a young team, sometimes when the shots aren't going in, then that almost mentally -- then your defense. We can't have that. We've got to still have our defense fuel our offense, no matter the circumstances, no matter what's going on. So those learning moments, and again, experiences with this team.

But I mean, I'm so proud of this team. We wanted to win tonight. We played Iowa tight before. I know we're capable of doing it. It just wasn't our night for whatever reason.

Again, this team -- one thing we've done well all year is we've taken failure, we've taken adversity and we've been able to grow from it, and that's what I think got us the big win last night.

I think we took some of those moments from some of those previous tight losses into being able to execute last night when we had to. A ton of things we can learn from it. A ton of things we're going to carry into the tournament with us, and a ton of things that can really propel us into next year.

Q. 11 three-pointers that you hit up there in Iowa City. What was the difference maybe in this game? You referenced maybe thinking you got some good looks. What did you see from that perspective?

SHAUNA GREEN: I really did. Berry, I agree with her 100 percent. All those looks, they were going under, so we put some tweaks into some of the plays to pop her back and just a little short on everything.

I don't know if that's fatigue, whatever it is, they just didn't go in. I always tell our players they're not going to hear me get upset about shots that don't go in. They're going to hear me get upset if we're not playing hard, we're not giving everything they have, we're not putting all-out effort, we're not having all-out position, we're not having all-out togetherness.

But the shots, sometimes they fall, sometimes they don't. Could we have done some things better in our execution of game plan and scout and effort on the defensive end, yes.

Q. I wanted to get your thoughts on Jazz and her setting the example for the team no matter what the score was.

SHAUNA GREEN: That's what Illinois basketball is about. That's what being an everyday woman is about. You play the game the right way. You play hard. You play tough. You never stop. You don't care about the scoreboard. It's process driven. You leave every ounce of yourself out on that floor.

I thought she embodied that today. That's what we expect from a junior, one of our few upperclassmen, someone that's been in this program, someone that loves this program. That's the toughness that we need.

The last couple weeks Jazz has just been on a whole 'nother level in terms of her leadership, her work ethic, her ownership in this program, her ability to lead. I'm just so proud of her, and the future is bright. She really kind of gets us going.

But we fought. We came back. We clawed. We did everything we could do, and we emptied our tank in that fourth quarter.

So I'm really proud of that, and we need to take that fourth quarter effort, focus, discipline, execution into our next game.

Q. Maddie had nine points and Destiny had 10 points. Could you just speak to how they've impacted all three games for you this week?

SHAUNA GREEN: Yeah, Destiny has been -- she's been huge for us. She's a freshman. She's a freshman point guard that's still learning a lot, being on this stage. It's a lot. I thought she had some plays, but she responded, as well. She ended up with six assists and only two turnovers so she took care of the basketball, which was something that was really important for her.

She missed a couple that she normally makes, too. She's been absolutely key to us all season. We're not at 21 wins without her. We're not at 21 wins without all these guys doing their jobs and doing everything they possibly can every single day.

Again, just proud of this group.

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