

# Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Wednesday, March 4, 2026

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Gainbridge Fieldhouse

## Illinois Fighting Illini Coach Shauna Green Lety Vasconcelos Berry Wallace Lety Vasconcelos

Postgame Press Conference

Illinois - 82, Wisconsin - 70

THE MODERATOR: Illinois is here with Coach Shauna Green and Lety Vasconcelos and Berry Wallace. Coach, if you would make an opening statement.

SHAUNA GREEN: I need to get in shape. I'm out of breath after walking up those -- no. Just really, really proud of these guys. We had a tough couple games in the regular season and really, really locked in these guys the last couple days into getting back to what we do and defending and rebounding. That was the challenge tonight.

Then even at halftime, just really I thought we got away from it at the end of the second and came out and got 15 O-boards, and I thought that was the game changer. Just made plays when we had to. It wasn't perfect. We couldn't make a three to save our lives.

We found a way to win with 46 points in the paint and just really showed toughness and grit and great togetherness, which is something we've been talking about the last couple of days.

**Q. Lety, five offensive rebounds and a career high in your first conference tournament game. What does this day mean to you to perform like that?**

LETY VASCONCELOS: First I'll say it means a lot to me to get to contribute to my team and see everybody happy and just going 1-0 today. It really just means a lot to me for real.



**Q. Lety, what was working differently for you today? I thought you had your best game of the season.**

LETY VASCONCELOS: I think just the mentality of like getting 1 percent every day in practice and kind of watching a lot of film and fixing things I need to fix and just locking in on things I need to correct.

I feel like I was really intentional about that so I could be the best version of myself for my team.

**Q. Berry, you've been so consistent all year long and in a tournament style game. What allows you to still come out and be the best that you can be on the floor?**

BERRY WALLACE: I think just sticking to what we know our principles are as a team and trying to be as consistent as I can on defense. Then also just reading what the defense is giving me. They guard me differently every game and they guard all of us differently every game. So just trying to read that and taking feedback from my coaches during the game to kind of see what's open and see what we have to help us win.

**Q. Berry, I wanted to talk to you about your team's defense tonight. Eight steals, one block, very efficient getting the points off of turnovers. How do you feel the defense played? And another tough opponent tomorrow. What are you guys going to do to make sure that you're ready to go?**

BERRY WALLACE: I think we work our defense every day in practice, and we know how important it is to our success. I think we did a great job today. Even when they did make a couple runs, we always responded and came back and got some stops, which ultimately helped us get the win.

We're going to need that tomorrow. We know our offense fuels our defense and fuels our team in general, so I think it's going to be just as important against Michigan State. They're a good team, so we just have to stick to what we know is going to help us win.

**Q. Lety, can you just walk us through what that third**



**quarter was like for you? And for you, is it just a matter of confidence as it continues to roll for you?**

LETY VASCONCELOS: I would say I was just focused on like doing what I'm supposed to be doing on the court, which is like protecting the paint, making sure I'm really a presence in the paint and rebounding, being a good teammate, high fiving my teammates.

Making sure I was really focused on doing whatever I was supposed to be doing in the moment, and I felt like that carried me in the moment.

**Q. Berry, just wanted to get your thoughts on how you felt the team adapted from the Iowa and Minnesota games.**

BERRY WALLACE: I think we did a good job just taking what we messed up in that game and what we did well as well and just learning from it and tried to apply it to today as well. I think we know that anything can happen in March, and we used those two games to fuel us coming into the tournament today. I think we learned a lot, and we've played even more connected since then.

**Q. Shauna, same question I kind of asked Lety; with her is it just confidence? I feel like we've been talking about it all year, but can you walk me through what the third quarter was like for you as the coach to see her succeed like that?**

SHAUNA GREEN: Obviously the last couple games we've struggled with defending inside. I loved we -- on Monday our players had another players-only meeting, and they were in there for over an hour before we started up. They took accountability. All of our posts took accountability. They knew they weren't doing exactly what they needed to do to make our team the best that we could possibly be, and they took ownership in that.

Then Lety and I had a really good talk yesterday too, or the day before, and just again revisited that what I know -- I know she's capable of doing this, like I see it, and that you've just got to continue to leave everything out there and to give even more. I told her I'm going to continue to push you because she wants to be great, she wants to be elite, and we need her.

Yesterday in practice -- and we were joking about it on the way up here because she didn't do something and I just lit into her. I'm like, you want to be -- I know you want to be great. I know you want to be elite. It needs to be better.

I'm telling you that practice, she's up there flying in for rebounds. We were joking. Is that all I needed to do? I

could have done that like eight months ago or whatever.

She just was unbelievable today. She played with great pop. She played with great confidence. She played with some nasty to her, and she changed the game for us.

So for me in that third quarter, for me in that game to just see her playing with that confidence, I could not be more proud of anyone because, again, what she's been through, the journey last year, the surgery, the ups and the downs. You just love to see people like that have some success.

You saw a glimpse of what she can do for us, and I could not be more proud.

**Q. Coach, Destiny was really assertive early in the game, ends up with a career high. What does it do for your team when she sets the tone like that?**

SHAUNA GREEN: Yeah, that's what we've been talking about too. The last couple of games, I was all about getting in the paint and being aggressive and getting downhill, and she did that right from the start.

I think it's a really cool thing for a coach to see because her last two games, if you talked to her, probably didn't think she played the best either.

Again, through talks and conversations and film, she was ready to go, and she knew what she needed to do, and she knows what she needs to do at a high level to help our team be, again, the best version of ourselves.

To see the responses, to see the changes and the energy and the focus and the things we've been talking about the last couple days, and obviously the whole year, to see them execute that, especially our young guys, it's just awesome because that's what this is about. It's about progress. It's about getting better.

It's about these guys understanding, using past failures to apply and adapt and execute in quick time, and they did that from last game till now.

**Q. Wisconsin started off the second half on a hot streak and was really able to shut down your offense. What adjustments did you guys then make to go on that 16-3 run to take back the command?**

SHAUNA GREEN: I think with us it's our defense kind of fuels that. They started getting hot. The first time we played them, we held them to five threes. Really we still only held them to eight, which for them isn't as many as they normally get. But they started getting some confidence.

In our defense, when we're rebounding and we're able to get stops, then we're able to play in the pace we want to play. They got it to where they were hitting some shots; now it's a half-court game. Now they're able to get set in that zone and really muck it up in the paint. We weren't hitting threes.

And then I thought our defensive rebounding was the game changer in the second half, and I thought Lety was the game changer because they were just clogging the paint so much, and we were able to get her some. She was a presence down there, where we could throw the ball in and she could score or I thought she cleaned up some boards.

So I thought the defense obviously and the O-boards were able to get us going a little bit.

**Q. With a predominantly young team, you had one upperclassman in the starting lineup; how do you hope they build off of this experience of winning in the Big Ten Tournament?**

SHAUNA GREEN: For us, this whole year we've learned. Literally every day is something new because we have so many people who have never been here before.

Again, we have one junior that starts and two juniors really that play, and everyone else is freshmen or sophomores. This is great for us, and it's going to be great for the future.

But I tell them all the time we want to win now. It's going to be great for next year and all that, we'll worry about that when this is done. This team is locked in. We know what we're doing. We've played with or beat some of the top teams in this conference. On a neutral court in March, you never know what's going to happen. We're just happy to survive and play another day against a really good Michigan State team.

**Q. Coach, I wanted to get your thoughts on just how the team kind of showed poise and just closed this game out tonight.**

SHAUNA GREEN: I think that's something we learned the last couple games. Obviously we've been in two tight games, and we've had some of those instances where maybe we didn't make the correct play. I thought we were very intentional in our timeouts.

I thought our team did a great job of being intentional in their huddles of communication and learning and making sure we're speaking up to try to handle things on the court and not needing a timeout.

So credit to them. Again, they used some of the things we've learned the last few games, and we were always able to make a play and get a stop. That's what it comes down to.

You've got to be able to make those plays to stop a run. You've got to understand time and score and the feel of when you really need a stop and when you really need a bucket. I just thought we were more disciplined in those two facets, both on the offensive end and the defensive end, whether it's missing a shot and then we flew in and got an O-board and we were able to get it out and run something else and make a big play on the defensive end. We were able to get those in key moments tonight.

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## Wisconsin Badgers

### Coach Robin Pingeton

### Kyrah Daniels

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THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Wisconsin head coach Robin Pingeton, student-athletes Kyrah Daniels and Laci Steele. Coach, if you will make an opening statement.

ROBIN PINGETON: I appreciate everyone that was able to come out to the tournament. Hat's off to Shauna and her ball club. They're a gritty team, really well-balanced. They've had a great year.

Proud of our players. Disappointed obviously in the outcome, but I think when you look at a month ago to today and how we competed, really proud of the resiliency. I thought we did play hard. I thought we played gritty.

Obviously the free-throw line was hard for us. We really wanted to keep them off the free-throw line knowing what a great free-throw shooting team they were. We gave up several possessions early in that second half where it was multiple and-one plays, and they capitalized on their opportunities to get to the free-throw line. So that obviously hurt us.

Then just the turnovers, learning how to play gritty and hard. We want to push in transition but made a lot of 50-50 passes, trying to make the home run play versus keeping it really simple.

I'm proud of that locker room. Right now we ended on a tough stretch of the season, and just the way they continue to show up in that locker room and who they are and the foundation that they've laid for our program, I couldn't be more proud of them from that standpoint. A lot of times there's small victories within the big picture, and a lot of you guys don't get a chance to see that, but I get a chance

to witness it every day.

I'm proud of the foundation they've laid, and I'm looking forward to hopefully having an opportunity to play in the postseason in one of these tournaments and get some fresh legs under us and stay after it.

**Q. Laci, talk a little bit about the program with Robin. You guys have been competitive. I mean, every game you watch, you're more competitive than I've seen Wisconsin in a few years. Talk about what it means to you to get in there with your teammates and to give everything you've got.**

LACI STEELE: I'd just say for me it's something that I take pride in is competing. I think Coach P recruited all of us to be competitors, and I think we all lock arms and we all compete to the highest ability we can, and I think we definitely did that today.

Obviously there were some stretches where things didn't go our way, we didn't execute, but I felt like we gave it all we had in terms of that.

KYRAH DANIELS: Like Laci said, locking arms and competing I think is really important. Yeah, wouldn't want to be doing it with a different group. I'm really proud of our heart posture and what it means to step on the floor with everyone every day. It really means a lot.

**Q. You guys really got a lot of momentum towards the end of the first half and then going into the second half had a lot of momentum, too; cut the lead to one point. What should you have done to have kept the momentum going afterwards?**

ROBIN PINGETON: Like I said, I felt like we gave up a handful of possessions of 3-point plays, gave up some offensive rebounds. They're so efficient in the paint. We were really trying to guard inside-out, but missed some defensive opportunities to not allow those second-shot opportunities.

They're relentless. I thought we played gritty. I think they're a really blue-collar, hard-nosed team from top to



bottom. They had some of their star players really show up for them. Hit the offensive boards hard, got to the free-throw line, and converted, you know, that's really the biggest difference to me in this game.

They got to the free-throw line 29 times, shot 82 percent, so made 24 for 29. We knew they were one of the elite free-throw shooting teams in the country, and we wanted to be really intentional about playing inside-out too, trying to get the paint points, trying to get the and-ones, but they executed at a higher level than we did.

**Q. What changed after you cut it to one point?**

KYRAH DANIELS: I think just, like Coach said, the rebounds, offensive rebounds and 3-point plays really took away our momentum. It's a game changer when you're letting them get the rebound and can't get out in transition. So just some of those undisciplined plays we could be better at.

LACI STEELE: I would just say it's a game of runs. We cut it to one, they hit us back, and we didn't convert on that end.

**Q. Kyrarah, what was going through your mind in the fourth quarter when you were perfect from the field and on free throws?**

KYRAH DANIELS: Not a lot. I think I'm at my best when I'm not overthinking. I think my teammates did a great job finding me in transition, and being able to convert was really big.

**Q. For both players, getting a first round exit in the Big Ten Tournament doesn't make you stand out a lot, but what do you think makes this team special?**

LACI STEELE: I think just how we come out and play. It was a good game, the whole game. We competed hard. I think that we're just a hard-nosed team. I think that's what stands out about us.

KYRAH DANIELS: I think our ability to respond and stay together is what sets us apart. Something we talk about all the time is being connected, and I think we're the most connected team. So continuing to lean into that even when it's hard. Take a deep breath, look at each other, sometimes a good wink, but really keeping each other centered and leaning on each other.

**Q. Coach, can I ask you about 21 assists on 26 field goals made? What does that tell you about your team as you head into the next chapter of Wisconsin basketball?**

ROBIN PINGETON: Yeah, and that's the thing. That scoreboard is really important to all of us. None of us like to lose. It's hard, but I think when you're building a program, it's important that you find those small victories within. Things that we get a chance to see every day in practice that maybe you guys on the outside don't, but just the way that they continue to lean into the culture in that locker room and the standards and behaviors that we want to exemplify.

I think tonight, having 21 assists, we did a really good job, and we've been trying to move the needle in this area, but I thought we did a really good job sharing the ball. Just really some unselfish plays -- working together on our screening action, keeping the ball hot. Gifty obviously was having a really good game for us.

I think collectively, to kind of piggyback off what Kyrarah said, just that connectivity is so important to us and the style that they want to play, it's just really unselfish basketball. I think when you have 21 assists on 26 field goals, that's a good sign for your team.

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