**Baylor at Louisville**

**2022 NCAA Volleyball Regional | KFC Yum! Center | December 7, 2022**

**Prematch Press Conference**

**Louisville head coach Dani Busboom Kelly:** “I am really excited to be here back in the KFC Yum! Center, where we had an awesome turnout here on a Wednesday night against Notre Dame. So, I feel like we could pack this place for the tournament. I feel like this regional is extremely tough with four great teams. We are going to have to play great and we are excited mostly to be in front of our fans.

**(About pressure of getting back to the KFC Yum! Center)**

“I feel like we had a really tough first round draw with Purdue. We have a little bit of a rivalry going with them. We have played them the last four years and so I felt that game we felt a lot of pressure. There was just a buildup to get back here. You have your friends, family and fans coming up to us and saying ‘we can’t wait to see you in the Yum! Center and we can’t wait to be back there’ so everyone is saying that but we had to get through two great teams first. Getting here was a relief and took some of the pressure off our back. We have played free. It takes a whole season, and I don’t think people realize that you have to play great five months to get a top four seed and it’s extremely hard to do. It would have been very disappointing to earn that top four seed and then not make it here. I felt, as a coach, a lot of pressure in that second round match because we wanted to be here so badly. We know big of an opportunity it is.

**(About not losing a set in five straight matches and how the middles coming up big this time of year. Is that the thing that has really clicked over the past five matches)**

**Dani Busboom Kelly**

“PK (Phekran Kong) who is new to the court this year, her and Cara (Cresse) split a lot of time, we are going to need them both to win tomorrow. Just to see her (PK) develop and make plays, that’s been huge. That wasn’t something that we expected right away just because she was so new. She’s really merged this season. I think Amaya (Tillman) just being at the M1 spot and being more and more reliable as the season has gone on. You can just rely on her to get a kill like we relied on Anna Stevenson. That’s been huge. Those were two, technically, new positions that we had to fill this year. That’s why it took a while for that to develop. I think it has really helped our team and our offensive flow and just confidence.”

**Anna**

**(Same thing for the players. Did y'all feel that pressure to get back here?)**

“Yeah, I think so. There's always a little bit of pressure and you're always anxious to see you have those first couple of rounds. We had trust in each other and we kind of knew nothing is going to be easy from here on out. So I think we use that pressure to our advantage and really took charge in that Purdue match and that kind of gave us confidence heading into this weekend.”

**Amaya**

**(Same thing for the players. Did y'all feel that pressure to get back here?)**

“Yeah, especially since the last time we played the Yum! (Anna) DeBeer wasn't able to play because of her injury. So I think that just kind of from a teammate standpoint, it made us all work even harder so we can get her on the floor at the Yum! and experience such a great fan base.”

**DBK**

**(Talk about Baylor and where do you see the threat from in Baylor's game?)**

“Baylor is very balanced offensively. You look across their stats and a lot of their players have over 200 kills. So they're very evenly distributed and they have a great setter she's young, but she was Freshman of the Year in the region and very talented. So we know that they are a great offensive team.”

**(Do they remind you of any team you have played?)**

**Amaya Tillman:** “Honestly, for me no. I'm just kind of taking it as a new team. I don't think we've played anyone quite like them. I'm not really comparing necessarily.”

**(About having gotten used to this stage over the past few years. What have you taken from some of the big matches in the past that you can apply when you get to this stage of the tournament?)**

**Anna DeBeer:** “We really realized that in the Final Four last year, just having that environment. It's easy just to get caught up in things and we just realized that every set counts. We have learned a lot from that and to really make sure like we're ready to start strong this year and not taking anything for granted because we've been there before but we don't want that to happen again. We have a lot of experienced players that have been there and we're ready.”

**(Describe your leadership style?)**

Amaya Tillman: “I would say I'm more of like the hype-woman. like I hype everybody up, but also just holding people accountable. So I would say those are my two main leadership styles. I like to instill confidence in people when maybe they're needing it.”

**(Describe your leadership style?)**

Anna DeBeer: “Yeah, I agree with that. She (Tillman) definitely holds people accountable a lot and that's what we need. We need someone in our gym to get everyone going. I think for me, I am a vocal leader, talking, and cheering everyone on, but also trying to help each other and help with the technical stuff too not just random noise and random yelling, just trying to actually be good on and off the court as well. So I think those are the big parts.”

**(Do you agree with those assessments?)**

Dani Busboom Kelly: “They're both great leaders. I can give more examples, but I think they nailed it. Amaya (Tillman), we don't even have a nickname for her but she is one of the best competitors you'll play with. She definitely leads by example in that way and Anna (DeBeer) brings so much calmness to the court. I always call (Anna) DeBeer my safety blanket when she's out there, I feel like we're going to do really well. She's like the weighted blanket that you buy when you're going through a tough time.”

**(Talk about Raquel (Lazaro) and what she brings to the team.)**

**Dani Busboom Kelly:** “Raquel is a really fun player. She plays with tons of emotion. She wants to be the best. She’s a student of the game. She has added so much to our team this year. We really needed that experience and we needed someone that had a little chip on their shoulder that wanted to prove themselves. That’s what she brought into our program. It’s crazy that she has only been here for six months. It feels like we have had her for much longer. That says a lot about her personality and how she really took this team and embraced them and merged herself from day one.”

**(About Libero Elena (Scott) What has she meant to the team for both of you?)**

**Amaya Tillman:** “I won’t get good sets without Elena’s digs. Even if I get a touch on the block and I look back and think someone’s not going to get it, I look back and Elena is on the floor or running down to get it. Just having a libero that’s going to put their body out there for any ball is really helpful for anybody I think.”

**Anna DeBeer:** “We always say she does all of the unseen things and doesn’t always get the recognition. We make sure and tell her a lot. Some of the plays she makes, no one really gives her credit for, but they are insane plays that help us as a team. I think it’s important for her to know that. The hitters, we always get a lot of the credit. Having her back there brings us so much confidence. I trust that she’s behind me, ready to take care of everything. It is also nice that she used to be a setter, so we get those nice out-of-system sets which are perfect every time.”