

# Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Saturday March 3, 2018

## Brenda Frese Eleanna Christinaki Ieshia Small Brianna Fraser

Maryland Terrapins

Maryland - 66, Nebraska - 53

**BRENDA FRESE:** You know, I thought we came out with a ton of energy, and it started on the defensive end for us. You know, our defense and our rebounding.

But just like you've seen all year, just so many key contributions. Our bench was huge tonight. All season long, we've leaned on so many different players each and every game. First half it was Ieshia being able to work the hot hand. Obviously what Eleanna and Bri were able to do just consistently throughout the entire game.

Obviously we continue to see when we play like this and we play together and we work extremely hard, good things pay off for us.

**Q. Ieshia, after senior night you were so adamant to us that this run for you guys wasn't over, and it seemed like you were feeling your shot tonight, especially in the second. What was going so well for you in the first half?**

**IESHIA SMALL:** Just my teammates doing a great job getting me the ball. Just executing the plays, getting the open shots, and not trying to force anything, and I thought we did a good job just playing basketball and just playing Maryland basketball, really.

**Q. Bri, coming off the bench, both you and Ieshia, 31 points combined. When the starters maybe aren't scoring and obviously Eleanna and Kaila picked it up later, but how important is it for you guys to make that impact off the bench?**

**BRIANNA FRASER:** I think it's really important. Our teammates, they just feed us a lot of energy. Even if they aren't scoring, they feed us the ball. They're so passive, and they like to pass the ball, even if they're not even scoring, so I feel like that was just -- they just



do a good job of that.

**Q. Eleanna, we don't often see you leading the team in rebounds. Was that something you were focusing on? If your shot isn't going in or you're not feeling the offensive rhythm, have you been working on that, or was that kind of a mindset thing?**

**ELEANNA CHRISTINAKI:** Defensively the coach says when I don't score, I need to do more things to stay on the court and help our team. So today I was focused to, if I don't make my shots, to rebound more and pass better to my teammates.

**Q. How has this experience been for you so far? It's obviously your first tournament here with Maryland. Have you either learned anything about the team or yourself? Has the pace been a little bit different?**

**ELEANNA CHRISTINAKI:** Definitely. It's a different environment. The tournament is one game each time, and I have great teammates, and I'm very happy that I'm here with all of them. We enjoy every moment all together, and I'm so happy that I have the opportunity to be here with these teammates and coaches.

**Q. Ieshia and Bri, Ohio State again tomorrow night; you guys have both played them a lot in your careers here at Maryland. What are you looking forward to to face Kelsey Mitchell and the Buckeyes one more time?**

**IESHIA SMALL:** I'm just looking forward to the moment, just being able -- not a lot of teams get to go to the Big Ten championship. So being just happy to have won a lot, not being happy to be there. We're coming there to win.

But just soaking it all in. I know this is my last Big Ten Tournament, and I'm just happy we're able to get this far and play the best that we can, and the outcome will come. I'm just excited for the moment and to be playing against a really talented team.

**BRIANNA FRASER:** I'm just excited to keep the legacy going. They've been -- Maryland has been winning the championship for a while now, and I just want to keep that going.

**Q. You talked about how the double bye was kind**

**of a double-edged sword. Did you see a more warmed-up team tonight or a team that was ready to start on offense a little bit quicker?**

BRENDA FRESE: Yeah, I think you saw that from the tip, that we just had a lot more confidence, a lot more energy, pep to our step. Having shootaround in the arena, all those factors I think were important for us to be able to get the start that we did.

**Q. Last week the close game against Nebraska, how much did you take from that game that helped today?**

BRENDA FRESE: Yeah, we definitely used it as motivation for our team coming in. Obviously we've watched Nebraska enough, what they've done this season, that we knew that they were going to come in and play hard for 40 minutes. We were going to get their best shot. Just really wanting to kind of keep our foot on the pedal and not take it off.

**Q. What kind of worked so well defensively tonight? Obviously they were held to 47 points. I think they shot 25 percent from the field.**

BRENDA FRESE: I just thought, one, our ball pressure. I thought Kaila Charles defensively on Whitish was big. I thought she was able to kind of take away a lot of her vision. But we were just there for each other. When they did go to attack us off the bounce, which you saw against IU, they took it to us. I thought our help side this game, Brianna cleaning it up, we were really there for each other on the defensive end tonight.

**Q. How can you translate that into tomorrow night, an Ohio State that scored 90 points in the semifinal game today?**

BRENDA FRESE: Yeah, obviously we've played them once this year, but just continuing to be who we are. I think as we've continued to find a way this year with this team, the success that we've had is when we continue to play within ourselves, and so we have to continue to do that on both ends of the floor.

**Q. This is the third time you guys played them this year, third time you kept KK off the floor for a good chunk of the game. How does that open things up for you guys on both ends of the floor?**

BRENDA FRESE: It's huge. I think the X factor for us has been Brianna Fraser each time. She's been big getting her out of the game and has a lot of confidence. That's a big piece of who they are. She's going to have a talented career. But I think that X factor for us has been big.