Freddie Murray, Grambling State Head Coach

Q. From an X's and O's standpoint, what makes Baylor such a scary team offensively and defensively?
FREDDIE MURRAY: Well, we know that Kalani Brown is a big part of what they want to do, along with Lauren Cox. Size is definitely something that is their strong suit. When you lose players such as we have, and they have as well, you have to kind of tailor your offense around what your strengths are. We know what they kind of want to do going in. It makes it a little bit more easy to prepare for. But they're a well-coached team. Coach Mulkey's success speaks for itself.

We know what they kind of want to do going in. It makes it a little bit more easy to prepare for. But they're a well-coached team. Coach Mulkey's success speaks for itself.

Like I said, we're going to treat this like any other game. As you can tell with my players, we don't really get too high, we don't get too low. We prepare for everybody the same way. The same thing is going to happen with this game tomorrow.

Q. You and this team have been in a do-or-die mode since the start of the SWAC tournament. How does that play into an advantage approaching this game?
FREDDIE MURRAY: These players have heard me talk about this since I've been here. I've been fortunate to make it to this level a few times. They hear me talk about it so often. So for us to finally get here, they really know that it can actually happen.

Like I said, do or die, with sports, one thing about sports is that on any given day anybody can be beat regardless of how big or how small you are. We don't look at it as a do-or-die, we prepare every game the same. Every game brings a different set of circumstances that go along with it.

We're prepared. We've going to use this next day and a half to sharpen what we want to try to do against them. We always say styles make fights. This is two contrasting styles, and it should make for a great game tomorrow.
Q. Do you feel the non-conference schedule you had this year, pretty tough, do you feel that set you up for a good spot tomorrow?
FREDDIE MURRAY: I think it does. It's part of the plan in non-conference. We play a pretty tough non-conference schedule. We were here two or three years ago when Baylor was in the top 10 in the country. When we walked off the court, we got a lot of praise from a lot of fans here because we were small then. Wasn't as deep depth-wise as we are now. We were small then. People really appreciated what they saw from our team on that particular night.

At that time Shakyla Hill, Jazmin Boyd, were freshmen. They were new to it. Now they're juniors. They come here with a different looking mindset, prepared for Baylor.

We played Mississippi State when they were in the top 10 that same year. We played George Washington, they were in the top 20 that same year.

The stage will never be too big for these players. That's why I always say, don't bet against the underdog.

Q. What makes Shakyla Hill such a great player?
FREDDIE MURRAY: The kid is special, man. She's special on the court, off the court. She flirts with quadruple-doubles every single night. She very rarely gets the credit that she deserves. You all just saw the one time she did score a quadruple double. We see it on a regular basis.

She does everything for our basketball team. She has the heart of a tiger. Like I said, we wouldn't be here without her. I'm just glad she's a junior and we got one more year with her.

Q. As someone who went to the WNIT last year, you upset Ole Miss, how strenuous was the journey this year, never giving up on your goal of going to the NCAA tournament ultimately?
FREDDIE MURRAY: I alluded to it earlier in an interview. We came up short in the championship game last year in our conference. It kind of propelled us into summertime workouts with the mentality that we want to try to achieve our goal. Our motto was: Road to redemption.

We were able to meet that same team in the semifinals in our conference and beat them, come on into the SWAC tournament game, win that. All of that hard work, along with being able to beat an SEC team last year in Ole Miss, that poses the same problems that Baylor poses. I think all that kind of works to our advantage.

We've seen teams like that before, so like I said, our team wanted this. They wanted this from June all the way up until March. We're not here to just be glad to be here. I think we're fortunate to be one of 64 teams playing. We honestly are coming here looking to advance on. That's the mindset of our players.

Q. What support have you seen from outside colleagues? Friends in the profession given you any tips on Baylor?
FREDDIE MURRAY: I'm an old school player, I'm an old school coach. I've been doing it about 19 years. Like I said, that's one of the things I bring to our team, is the old school mentality. That's to prepare for everybody the same. Obviously you come with a different game plan.

But the outpouring of love around the country has been awesome. I've been in it about 18 years, so I got friends far and wide, every conference you could possibly think of. Everybody is happy for us. They're
happy for my success. They're happy for the team’s success.

One thing about it, they know as coaches, we preach the same thing to players each game. You got to believe that you can win. This team really truly believes that they can win.

Q. How do you block out the noise from social media, and the literal noise tomorrow night?
FREDDIE MURRAY: Me personally, I don’t deal with social media. I don’t have to deal with that (smiling). They get on me about being old school, not nothing what Twitter and all this is. I’m not really into all of that.

We take they phones away from them, we take they iPads away from them. We try to reduce as much distractions as possible at this time in preparation for the game.

They've heard it. They know. Like I said, we try to put their minds on other things to prepare them for what we need to do. We try to block out all of that the best we can.

A lot of it you really can’t avoid because it's the age we’re living in. But right now, the only thing on our mind is this game tomorrow night.

Q. Did you watch Alexis Morris at the Big 12 tournament? I asked Shakyla about it.
FREDDIE MURRAY: Trust me, she doesn't know about it, I know about it. She's a special player. It's almost like if y'all are sportsfans, go back to the Alabama game when Alabama was in the national championship. Their starting quarterback wasn't performing. It was a person that came off the bench off of their practice squad who nobody never knew anything about that made the most in that game.

We know what she's capable of doing. These players are recruited for a reason, whether it happens at the beginning of the season, whether it happens at the end of the season, in a tournament. They're just waiting for an opportunity.

Alexis Morris is a special player. We're going to have to be dialed into her tomorrow because she can pose some problems. Like I said, the only difference I think right now outside of the size is they have eight players really that are playing and we have nine players. We got one up on them (smiling).

Q. Coach Mulkey was talking about how she wanted the Grambling band to come play in the arena. Is that going to throw you off?
FREDDIE MURRAY: Band is at all of our games. Kim is a big fan of Grambling. She grew up in the area. She's aware of the aura around Grambling, and the band plays a big part in that.

The band was at our tournament game, as well. They are part of our fan base as well. I don't think it's going to pose a problem. I think the fans here are probably going to love the array of songs they going to play. I think right now she wanted them to come and I think they are coming.

Q. With the amount of connections Kim has to Louisiana Tech, the area, are you friends, do you message quite a bit?
FREDDIE MURRAY: No, we don't really message that much. We see each other a lot of times on the recruiting trail. At the end of the day, we're all friends. This is a small fraternity. Everybody knows everybody. I know their whole coaching staff. Johnny is a real good friend of mine being from northern
Louisiana, as well. We all really at the end of the day are competitors on the basketball court, but we're a family outside of that.

**Shakyla Hill, Grambling State Guard**

**Q.** The moment, being here, getting in the tournament, how does it feel playing against a team with such a high caliber as Baylor?

**SHAKYLA HILL:** We're all pretty excited about this game. We're also pretty excited about being here. It's actually a really great feeling. We're just happy to be here.

**Q.** When you see all the film of what Baylor does well, which seems to be everything, how do you not get wide-eyed?

**SHAKYLA HILL:** Us as a team, we kind of think we match up well with anybody. So we try not to get discouraged about anything that they do. We all know as a team that they put their shoes on just like we put our shoes on, so we're ready to play.

**Q.** Playing the tough non-conference schedule you had at the start of the season, how has that prepared you for tomorrow?

**SHAKYLA HILL:** It's prepared us a lot. Coach Murray always says it's not how we match up with teams, it's how teams match up with us.

Although they do have height, a lot of the schools we played in our non-conference schedule, they also had height. We'll take heart over height any day and we're really excited about this game.

**Q.** You and this team have been in do-or-die mode since the SWAC tournament. How do you feel that plays into your preparing of you've already been in the situation if you lose, your season is done?

**SHAKYLA HILL:** I think Coach Murray and the coaching staff, they instilled in us this is win or go home. None of us really want to go home. I think going into the SWAC tournament, we knew we had to play our best basketball. Right now we're playing our best basketball.

Going into this game, we're just going to continue riding this high we're on. We plan on coming out with a win.

**Q.** I'm sure you look at Twitter, Facebook, ESPN. How do you block out the noise that Baylor is a 2 seed, you are 15?

**SHAKYLA HILL:** I think we don't really look at the seeding and the rankings. If you look at the SWAC tournament, we weren't No. 1. We weren't even No. 2. We came out and won that.

We don't really take that too personal. We really don't I don't want to say care, because it's important, their accomplishments are great, but that means nothing to us.

**Q.** Overall what has the support been like on campus? What have fellow students been saying to you?

**SHAKYLA HILL:** The support on campus has been really big. Actually it's kind of propelled us forward, I think so, because more people believe in us than we actually would have thought. Like especially on social media, people have been tweeting us, people at school coming up to us, We believe in you, you guys can win.

Coming in, I think we all know they're bigger and they're in a bigger conference. But having the support
back home, from our family and friends, it really means a lot.

Q. I don't know if you would be necessarily matched up with her, but Alexis Morris took over at Baylor at point guard. I don't know how much you would have seen of the Big 12 tournament. What did you see from her?
SHAKYLA HILL: Actually, I have no idea who that is, so... I have no idea who that is. But like I said earlier, it really doesn't make me any difference because they put on their shoes just like we do. I'm going at whoever is holding me, whoever I'm holding, I'm going at them the same as if they were anybody else.

Monisha Neal, Grambling State Guard
Q. The moment, being here, getting in the tournament, how does it feel playing against a team with such a high caliber as Baylor?
MONISHA NEAL: It's an honor for us to be here. Everybody is excited. We're pumped up for the game.

Q. When you see all the film of what Baylor does well, which seems to be everything, how do you not get wide-eyed?
MONISHA NEAL: Just because it's a bigger conference, we can't look at it that way. We have to keep our head straight and know that we can play with them, so...

Q. Monisha, the matchup inside with Lauren Cox, Kalani Brown, how do y'all try to deal with that kind of size? Have you seen that kind of size this year?
MONISHA NEAL: We played height before. Height doesn't really matter. We're smaller, so we're going to run on them. Height can get tired quick. That's what we plan on.

Jazmin Boyd, Grambling State Guard
Q. The moment, being here, getting in the tournament, how does it feel playing against a team with such a high caliber as Baylor?
JAZMIN BOYD: We're all excited to be here. The experience has been great so far. We're just seeing what's next.

Q. When you see all the film of what Baylor does well, which seems to be everything, how do you not get wide-eyed?
JAZMIN BOYD: Playing big schools like this doesn't do anything but motivate us. We're kind of pumped up to play them.