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Student-Athlete Round Table:

**TEXAS A&M DANIELLE GANT
COLORADO KARA RICHARDS
TEXAS TECH DOMINIC SEALS
NEBRASKA DOMINIQUE KELLEY
KANSAS STATE SHALEE LEHNING
OKLAHOMA DANIELLE ROBINSON**

BRENDA VANLENGEN: I'm Brenda VanLengen, analyst for the Fox Sports Net, the Big 12 Package. We're going to use this opportunity to introduce you to the student athletes from six of the schools and get to know them a little bit better off the court so maybe you can do some features or other stories, but try to dig into some stories and questions you might not otherwise know about these young women.

But we're going to start off by having each of you introduce yourself, what school you're from and what year you're in school. If you want to start, Danielle.

DANIELLE GANT: Danielle Gant from Texas A&M. I'm a senior.

KARA RICHARDS: Kara Richards. I'm from the University of Colorado. I'm a senior.

DOMINIC SEALS: Dominic Seals. I'm from Texas Tech, a senior.

DOMINIQUE KELLEY: Dominique Kelley, I'm a sophomore from the University of Nebraska.

SHALEE LEHNING: I'm Shalee Lehning. I'm a senior from Kansas State University.

DANIELLE ROBINSON: Danielle Robinson, University of Oklahoma. I'm a sophomore.

BRENDA VANLENGEN: We're going to start with Danielle Gant. Danielle, coming back to Oklahoma City, went to Putnam West High School. Her mom is here in attendance today. And then finishing off the year last year with a Sweet 16 win and playing in the Elite Eight against Tennessee and this year the Big 12 tournament is here and a

regional is here. Oklahoma City is a pretty special place to you, right, Danielle? You want to talk about that a little bit?

DANIELLE GANT: Just last year being able to come here and play in front of my hometown and my family and friends is a great feeling, and just being able to come back as a senior, my last go-around, and being able to play in front of my family and friends like I did last year is going to be a great feeling for me.

Q. Talked about what happened last year when you played in the regionals what kind of fan support did you have, what kind of friends, what did you have to do to get ready for the game?

DANIELLE GANT: I had to get at least five, six tickets from each teammate. Because I had a lot of family and friends that wanted to come to each game. So just being able to get those tickets for my family and friends was a great feeling.

BRENDA VANLENGEN: Shalee Lehning from Kansas State, I asked all these players what are some questions, you're all media savvy, get asked questions all the time. What are some questions that you don't get asked that you would like to answer sometime? And Shalee talked about wanting to discuss what's your personal experience been like at Kansas State and what motivates you to play the way you do?

SHALEE LEHNING: My experience at Kansas State has been a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I've absolutely loved every minute of it. The opportunity to play under a coaching staff that truly believes in us and challenges us every day has been awesome. My teammates are my best friends, so I consider it a blessing each day to play. And I play with a passion that my savior Jesus Christ has given me. It's just a blessing to step on the floor every day, so I hope every time I step on the floor I give him the glory.

So overall it's just been a wonderful experience and I'll carry these memories with me for the rest of my life.



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BRENDA VANLENGEN: I understand you were out doing a little on camera work before this. Tell us about that.

SHALEE LEHNING: Yes. My major is broadcast journalism, so I'm hoping someday to be maybe in your position. But I got to go around and ask a couple of the girls questions and Coach Gary Blair, and it was just a great experience. It was fun to pick their brains and be on the other side of being interviewed.

And it's not an easy task. It's not easy to come up with these questions just off the top of your head. It's a good experience, and, yeah, I'll hopefully have some more fun with it.

BRENDA VANLENGEN: I might turn it over to you right now. Go ahead. (Laughter).

Kara Richards from Colorado, I asked a question to all of you about what have you done in the off season that may be different from the past, and you said that you've done something called the pain train in the off-season. You want to tell people about that?

KARA RICHARDS: Yes, our strength and conditioning coach had this great idea of having the pain train. We would do buddy carries up our football stadium stairs, and what it would be is I would get on my partner's back and she would carry me up the stairs. She would get on my back and I would carry her up the stairs.

Then we would roll down the football field and back. We would bear crawl down the football field and back. Then we would run once around the football field and then we would do some more buddy carries. So in all we were supposed to be taught mental toughness, and I don't know if it happened. We'll see.

BRENDA VANLENGEN: I would hope. I think you'd get a little mentally tough. Then being in Colorado, you have the benefit of having some very beautiful surroundings. And you talked about that you went to Glenwood Springs for kind of a team outing, team bonding, biking and hiking, and how did that help your team?

KARA RICHARDS: It was our camping trip. We were supposed to go camping but it got way too cold way too fast we stayed in a hotel room, six to a room, which was a lot of fun.

We went hiking up to Hanging Lake, which is in Glenwood Springs, and then we went on a 14-mile bike ride. And it sounds like a workout but most of it was downhill so it was pretty easy. And along the way we would stop every so often and have a team bonding moment, where one of the

girls would share an experience, an obstacle, something that they had to overcome.

BRENDA VANLENGEN: Wanted to go on to Dominique Kelley. One of the things you said you wished people would ask is what kind of relationship do you have with Coach Yori on and off the court.

DOMINIQUE KELLEY: On the court Coach Yori is extremely intense as I'm sure all of our coaches are. But I think the thing to remember is that she is human and that she's a female on top of that. And she's, for me, I have found her very extremely personable, somebody that I can talk to about, if I'm not understanding something in regards to basketball, but also just personal life and somebody that I can go to for advice or just how to handle different situations.

BRENDA VANLENGEN: That seems to be a theme because Danielle Robinson said she wanted to be asked a question about how much time do you really spend as a student as opposed to all your time as a basketball player and athletics, and how much time do you spend with your teammates off the court?

DANIELLE ROBINSON: With our teammates, I spend a whole bunch of time off the court with them, as much as I do on the court. And as far as being a student, it's crucial. All the time you spend in study hall or all the time you spend outside of the classroom meeting with other students for tests and all that.

I think that's -- we came to college of course to play basketball but just to get an education, I think the time we spend off the court, not only with our teammates, with other students, it's crucial for the college experience.

BRENDA VANLENGEN: Makes an all-around team. You all are student-athletes. Dominic Seals, you talked about that as well, wishing people would ask you more about your time away from the basketball court. So what are you like off the court and what are some of the places that you like to travel? That was one thing you wanted to talk about.

DOMINIC SEALS: Some of the places I like to travel, like last year we went to Vegas. I've never been to Vegas. People say, you've never been to the Vegas? And I was like, no, never in my life. Not during the AAU tournament or nothing, but I thought that was fun last year because we had a lot of team bonding and stuff. Like in our spare time we go bowling or play laser tag or

something, or Coach Curry even jumped in one time and played with us.

So I just think people should ask more because we like to have fun outside of the court, too. It's not just strictly basketball. We do have a life outside the court.

BRENDA VANLENGEN: That's true. And it's hard to see that from our side sometimes because we only see you on the court. So that's why we're having an opportunity like this to talk about it. So thank you for sharing.

Danielle, you talked about the fact -- Danielle Gant, you talked about the fact that I asked who had the biggest impact on your basketball career. And you said it's your brother Ricky, why is that?

DANIELLE GANT: Since I've been little he's been taking me to the basketball courts nonstop. Every time we go out and play a game he will pick me over all the bigger guys so they gave me a lot of confidence in my game since my high school years.

BRENDA VANLENGEN: He didn't play in college but what about his playing career after college?

DANIELLE GANT: Right now he's in Japan with his wife. He got married and he moved to Japan. So he's playing with the team on base. He's playing with them and they travel a lot. They just went to Hawaii, and he just got an award for being one of the best players. He's going to move to Alaska, which is weird. But he's moving to Alaska with his wife in a couple of months.

BRENDA VANLENGEN: Dominic Seals, you said that the biggest impact that somebody had on your life was a guy that told you that you'd never play college basketball, so you wanted to prove him wrong. Who is that guy, by the way?

DOMINIC SEALS: I can't remember his name, but he was like "you're too pretty to play basketball, you'll never make it in college." I was like, "Really? Okay." So I just started going to Nancy Lieberman camps and just getting better and now that I'm playing college basketball.

I wish I could find him so I can laugh at him.

BRENDA VANLENGEN: Shalee, you talk about your mom and dad being the biggest impact for you. Why is that?

SHALEE LEHNING: My parents have just been so supportive. They took me all over the country to play in every tournament imaginable. They just were a great support system together as a team.

My mom was definitely the caring and "you did so great" no matter what happened, and my dad would be the one that would sit me down and say "this is what you need to work on, these are the improvements you need to make."

It was a great combination. But just the support that they've given me has meant a lot because it's made basketball that much more special to me it's become a family event for us, and, yeah, it's been a total blessing to have those two in my life.

BRENDA VANLENGEN: Kara, you talked about your mom giving you confidence. What is it that your mom has done that's made such a big impact on your basketball career?

KARA RICHARDS: My mom's a single mother. And the times when I was younger she would always be there. And I am bigger than a lot of the other kids. And I did get picked on so I would come home and she would always be there to comfort me. I've always remembered that.

BRENDA VANLENGEN: And, Danielle, it was actually -- Danielle on this end, Robinson, it was actually your high school coach who saw you at a very young age. So talk about her impact on your basketball career.

DANIELLE ROBINSON: It was actually -- she tells me the story all the time about how I was in sixth grade and I was at Archbishop, my high school basketball camp, and I guess I streaked down the court and called for the ball and took it in one dribble from half court or something like that. And she was like "I gotta have that kid on my high school team."

And from then on I came to play AAU ball for her and she's just been the greatest influence in my life, besides my family. Always supportive, but she's just so open and honest with me that I can't help love her for who she is and what she's done for me in my life.

BRENDA VANLENGEN: Her name is?

DANIELLE ROBINSON: Sue Phillips.

BRENDA VANLENGEN: You still stay in contact with her?

DANIELLE ROBINSON: I talk to her every day.

BRENDA VANLENGEN: Dominique Kelley, you talked about several people, three different people that have had an impact on your life. Tell us about that your basketball career.

DOMINIQUE KELLEY: If I had to pick one person out of those three people I would probably

say my high school basketball coach, Rich Olson. Because I think he's just taught me a lot about balance. His wife has been battling Lou Gehrig's disease for 20 years, and I think how he handles his life with her and how he treats people and how dedicated he was to me and the rest of my high school teammates was tremendous.

But he also challenged me in all aspects of life, not just on the court. But also my walk with Christ and just helping me to be a better person off the court and just academics and just all around as a person.

BRENDA VANLENGEN: Now, I'm going to ask the same question of all of you. And let's just go down the line, start with you Danielle Gant. Something about your coach. Just remind everybody who your head coach is that maybe no one else knows about that coach and you'd like to share with everyone in attendance today.

DANIELLE GANT: My coach is Coach Gary Blair. Outside of basketball he likes to have fun. I know in Hawaii, one of our assistant coaches -- his son had a skateboard and Coach Blair thought he would get on the skateboard and ride on that skateboard. And instead of rolling he actually hit the ground. So instead of just basketball he likes to have fun outside of basketball.

KARA RICHARDS: My coach is Kathy McConnell-Miller, and I don't know if you all know this, but she's got three kids and they are great. They're hilarious. And whenever we have team functions or anything, they're always there to lighten the mood, especially after a loss.

DOMINIC SEALS: My coach is Kristy Curry. Coach Curry is funny on and off the court. She likes to cook and she likes to invite us to her house and show us like that she can cook and that she's a loving mom and she's a loving mom to us.

DOMINIQUE KELLEY: My coach is Connie Yori, and I think she is the most laidback and low-maintenance person ever. But I also think she really -- she tries to take interest in things that we think are important, whether it's shoes or clothes or whatever, she really like -- she tries to get really involved in that and she just takes interest in asking us questions. "Have you bought any shoes lately?" or "Why would you spend that much money on a pair of shoes?" -- just little things like that.

SHALEE LEHNING: My coach is Deb Patterson. She's like Coach Blair. On the court she's really intense but off the court she's one of the most caring and inspirational people I've ever

been around. But at the same time she knows how to have fun.

One of my favorite memories was we were at a baseball game, just one of our K-State games. The team was there. This girl had on roller skates. She got this idea she was going to put these roller skates on and try this. Well, she didn't fall, but Dani and I -- Danielle Zanotti and I had to run alongside her to keep her from falling. It's neat to see how willing she is to try new things and she's as competitive as they come. So it's been fun.

DANIELLE ROBINSON: My coach is Sherri Coale. I think she still thinks she's playing college basketball. Last year we had like a throw-back day and we were all dressed in like high school gear and short shorts and that kind of thing for practice.

And all of a sudden we see this figure run down the stairs into our practice gym, and she has on her Oklahoma Christian college uniform, like tight and short and just like little things like that. She was going around the gym like breaking us down. I still got it, I got it.

BRENDA VANLENGEN: That's impressive that she still fits in her college uniform. I'm not even going there. All right. What about somebody -- I'm kind of going off the script here. I didn't ask you these questions ahead of time so I'm asking you to think on your feet a little bit. Somebody on your team that people get to see on TV playing, they get to see as a player, they know their name, but something about that person that others may not know anything about. Can we start on your end Danielle, have you got one?

DANIELLE ROBINSON: Nyeshia Stevenson. She can dance and sing great. A lot of people don't know that about her, but she's just really outgoing, and you can probably see it on the court how passionate she is. But off the court she's one of the funniest people besides Rose Hammond on our team. But, yeah, she can dance and sing real well.

SHALEE LEHNING: My teammate Marlies Gipson appears to be very quiet and shy, but she's one of those people once you get to know her she's absolutely hilarious, kind of like her friend. But she's willing to try anything and we've had some pretty funny memories when we've gone fishing.

And nobody even believes this story, but we went fishing last summer. We caught the biggest fish we've seen ever. Nobody believes us.

It got away, broke the line. But it did happen. Marlies is one of those people on the court you think she's intense and fiery but she's pretty outgoing and fun.

DOMINIQUE KELLEY: My teammate Jessica Periago, sophomore from Toulon, France, but English is not her first language but she is the best tutor in the world in any subject. She will attempt to help you and she's really great at math.

DOMINIC SEALS: My teammate would be Alana Rumph. On the court she's like very fast paced and like nobody wants her to guard them, she's so quick, but off the court she's so motherly to us. We go and be like "I'm going to get that sweet tea" or something. "No, you need to drink water." You know, she's so motherly like, so I appreciate her.

KARA RICHARDS: I'd have to say Bianca Smith is probably one of the funniest people I've ever met. You can name one movie and she can quote the whole movie for you. And she's really intense on the court and then you know her off the court and she's so laidback.

DANIELLE GANT: I'm going to have to say Sydney Colson. Sydney, on the court, as you know, she plays very well, but off the court I think she's actually crazy. I think she actually would jump in front of a car and start dancing out of nowhere. Would probably go up to anyone, start singing to them even if she doesn't know them. I think Sydney Colson.

BRENDA VANLENGEN: Shalee, you get your chance here, if you have something to ask of one of your fellow panelists here? Anybody that you play a lot or not very much that you want to ask them something?

SHALEE LEHNING: I had this question asked me the other day. I thought it was pretty cool.

If you had, like, a song -- anybody can step up and answer this. If you had a song that would describe your life, what would it be? When I had it asked, I was like, whoa, there's so many songs. But, Danielle, do you have a song off the top of your head that you would want to describe your life?

DANIELLE GANT: Kanye West, *Welcome to the Good Life*. Because since my high school I've had a great life. That song represents my whole entire life.

KARA RICHARDS: I'm going to go with Jimi Hendrix, *Foxy Lady*. (Laughter).

DANIELLE ROBINSON: *Sexy Back* by Justin Timberlake.

SHALEE LEHNING: Mine would be *Legacy* by Nichole Nordeman.

DOMINIQUE KELLEY: Mine would probably be a song called *Be Blessed* by Yolanda Adams.

BRENDA VANLENGEN: Very nice. Well, again, as with this morning's panel, we found out that not only are these young women very talented on the basketball court but very articulate and well-spoken off the court. We want to thank you very much for your time. Thank you.

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