

2026 Phillips 66 Big 12 Women's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 5, 2026

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

T-Mobile Center

Utah Utes

Coach Gavin Petersen

Lani White

Postgame Press Conference



BYU 70, Utah 52

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Utah Head Coach Gavin Petersen, student-athlete Lani White. If you'll just start, Coach, with a couple of comments, and we'll open it up for questions.

GAVIN PETERSEN: Yeah, hats off. BYU played really, really well in that third quarter and into the fourth. I was really proud of our first half tonight. I thought we were playing Utah basketball. We were dialed in. Our energy was good. Then not sure what happened in that third quarter, but we kind of got away from that, maybe started pressing a little too much.

Then they gained momentum. This time of year momentum is hard to stop, and we just weren't able to get kind of over the hump there in that third and fourth quarter.

But, like I told these guys at halftime, it was a fun group. I was really enjoying just their energy, not about resulting, but just really proud of how they showed up and how they're continuing to fight.

Good in terms of we have a lot of youth, and locker room, they are all hurting right now, and we want them to sit in that and use that as momentum. Maybe that carries us into postseason with a little bit more of an edge.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Lani, what's your overall thoughts right now?

LANI WHITE: I'm hurt. No one wants to lose in this tournament. It's tough, because I think we had a really good few days getting up to this. We had a good first half.

We were confident, and I think we had been talking about it all season, the third quarter is what hurts us, and it hurt us tonight.

So I'm really upset as a senior, because I'm wishing I could have done things different, but...

Q. Gavin, they employed that full-court press in that third quarter. How did that change maybe the dynamic of the game, especially when they started hitting on offense, and defensively you couldn't kind of get out of that trap?

GAVIN PETERSEN: Yeah, it was just little fundamental things that we've discussed, but you know, sometimes when fatigue sets in or a run, adrenaline, and you kind of get tired, you don't cut to the baseline, you cut to the sideline.

Again, credit to them. They got some hands on the ball, deflections that go out on us. They have to make those plays, but we have to be a little bit better fundamentally to make sure we get the ball inbounded. So, you know, that's something we can absolutely control.

Again, you have to tip your hat to them for ramping it up and creating those turnovers.

Q. Coach, during that third quarter, they went on a 20-2 scoring run. What was your reasoning behind not taking a timeout during that scoring run?

GAVIN PETERSEN: I thought, you know, it was getting close to the media, so I didn't want to burn one. I believe in these guys so much in being able to make a comeback, so I thought I would definitely need those time-outs towards the end of the game.

Again, in that third quarter you'd hope that they can stop the bleeding. I mean, hindsight 20/20. I do feel like -- and we talk about it all the time, the ability that we have to shoot the basketball and score the basketball, I wanted to give them a chance and then chip away, and maybe we'll

use those time-outs when they're a lot more needed. But, again, hindsight 20/20.

Q. Lani, you guys came into this potentially being on the bubble for the NCAA Tournament. Obviously you would love to go out with an NCAA appearance. What would be your pitch to the committee even though you've suffered a loss? What would be your pitch to what this team can be?

LANI WHITE: I think our team is deserving. We had some pretty good wins. We fought in a lot of games. Obviously in a perfect world I would love to dance in March as a senior, but man, I mean, whatever our postseason -- however it plays out, we're just going to be grateful that we're still playing, to be quite honest with you.

I believe in this team, and whatever path we do take, hopefully we're going to succeed.

Q. Lani, what would you take from this group of girls, especially being in your senior year, and you mentioned the path going up into this game. What are those emotions like after all of this is over, and how are you going to evaluate going forward?

LANI WHITE: I mean, all I can say is that I'm proud of this group. We fought to get to this position that we're in right now. For me personally, I mean, I told them this a few days ago, but I think this was the season that really made me fall back in love with the game.

So moving forward, I mean, I have to keep my head held high as a senior, as a leader, and as a role model to some of these girls. But moving forward, I want to keep being successful for those behind me.

Q. Gavin, if you could describe Lani White to somebody who maybe is just now tuning into her game and getting their eyes on her as a player, how would you describe her?

LANI WHITE: Don't make me cry. Don't make me cry.

GAVIN PETERSEN: She's passionate, loyal, witty, and just kind-hearted, man. It's that -- I think we vibe because of that aloha spirit. Love this kid, man.

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