

# Pac-12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 9, 2022

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

**California Golden Bears**

**Coach Mark Fox**

**Lars Thiemann**

**Jordan Shepherd**

Postgame Press Conference



Washington State - 66, Cal - 59

MODERATOR: Welcome Cal now to the podium. We've got Coach Fox, Jordan Shepherd next to me, and Lars Thiemann in the middle. Coach, you can give an opening statement and then we'll open it up for questions.

MARK FOX: We didn't start the game very well in the first half. I was disappointed in our defense. Offensively we seemed a bit out of rhythm and didn't shoot it well in the first half, so we dug ourselves too big of a hole, even though in the second half we played a little bit better. We just dug too big a hole, and so we're going home.

**Q. Coach, were you guys expecting the 3-2 zone at the very beginning of the game?**

MARK FOX: Yes. It's not a 3-2 zone, by the way, but, yes, we were expecting --

**Q. I had a bad angle.**

**Q. Coach, you guys play a physical brand of basketball. Was that the game plan going in, to slow it down and force them into a physical rock fight?**

MARK FOX: Well, the strength of our team when we play well is our defense, and it needs to be physical, and we needed to take away the three-point line. And we just didn't -- I think they shoot 46 percent in the first half. That's just too high. And you combine that with us not finishing some plays and you create the deficit that we just couldn't overcome.

But certainly we wanted to be physical and defend, and we just didn't do it for the -- consistently enough to put ourselves in a chance to win.

**Q. Y'all cut the lead down to four a couple times before they eventually pulled away. What's been one of the prevailing factors to why they have been able to withstand some of your runs, not just this game, but throughout the season?**

MARK FOX: Their team?

**Q. Washington State.**

MARK FOX: Well, I would say our inability to finish plays consistently. Once we decided to defend, we got back in it and -- but we didn't make enough shots to give ourselves a chance to really put the pressure on.

But they're a team that obviously shoots the three well. They have interior scoring, and so I think they're balanced enough to play through some of those situations.

**Q. A question for Lars. Obviously not the end of the season you wanted, but you really seemed to find some momentum, in Kelly's absence towards the end of the year. Next year you'll be going into your fourth year, and we'll see what happens with Kelly. Lots of graduation and turnover. What can you build on from the end of this season to become more of a senior leader next year?**

LARS THIEMANN: For sure, got to get some -- get a lot of minutes at the end of season for me, kind of get prepared for next season, and just take -- work hard on the offseason, and then we're going to see next year.

**Q. Thank you. And a question for Shepherd. Obviously this is the end of your time at Cal. Can you talk a little bit about what this year has meant, what this team has meant for you and this experience?**

JORDAN SHEPHERD: It's meant a lot. I came here, I didn't really know what I was expecting, but it was a great year. We battled through adversity at times, but it was great. I had a great time playing for Coach Fox, I had a great time with my teammates, I made some brothers, at the No. 1 academic school in the country, so it was a win



all the way through.

MODERATOR: Any other questions? Okay. Thank you, guys. Appreciate it.

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