

# Pac-12 Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 13, 2024

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Oregon State Beavers

Coach Wayne Tinkle

Dexter Akanno

Jordan Pope

Postgame Press Conference



UCLA - 67, Oregon State - 57

WAYNE TINKLE: Tough finish. It's been a real grind, but I'm really proud of our group for all that they've endured in the process of rebuilding things for us at Oregon State. We talked about the days of us "just being competitive" are now behind us, after year two of our rebuild.

We gave ourselves chances in a lot of games, including tonight, in the second half, after a very poor offensive performance in the first half, and we're just a play or two away from that thing going down to the wire.

Credit UCLA with one of the best defensive teams in the league for a reason. And then the Andrews kid throwing some real daggers at us throughout the game, but especially down the stretch.

So proud of the group, and we're going to just keep forging ahead. We know what we've got to do moving forward, and it's our challenge to get there.

**Q. When you've got a player like Andrews, who is shooting like that, obviously you're expending a lot of energy trying to play catch up. How did that feel to you as you're out on the court in that match-up.**

JORDAN POPE: It was tough. Credit to him. There was a time we cut the game pretty close and he came back answered with a big shot to Adem or a shooter. Shots like that are demoralizing when you're fighting back, clawing back, you're almost there and one miscue on defense, one relapse, it can get out of your hands just like that.

It's definitely tough. Gotta get back to the drawing board trying to figure out how we can fix that moving forward.

DEXTER AKANNO: Yes, like Jordan said, we were trying to claw back, make it close after struggling a bit in the first half. And He hit some really big shots. Credit to him.

WAYNE TINKLE: He had some tough ones, but we've got to get better defensively because there were times when we closed up underneath him with our hands down. This is after he's hit three, four, five, you've got to make a shooter a driver. We mixed up. We went man-to-man a lot and still back-to-back possessions, gave up 3s in man to man, one to him and one to Stefanovic on a little of a flare where we lost them.

We've got to get better and get more disciplined and get tougher as we build this thing. We obviously know there's areas we've got to address this spring, but I love that we fought.

This is a team that manhandled us on the glass up in Corvallis. We gave up a few, but we really battled them on the boards. So there's some positives out of here. The second half, when we ran offense and executed and moved the ball, we scored against them. We scored 35 in the second half.

I don't know if the first half was a little bit of jitters or what. It didn't help that there were a couple of fouls on Tyler early, but these guys battled, and they're going to learn from this. And I know it's going to be great -- going to continue to be a character builder moving forward.

**Q. Coach, you guys got within, I think, five points in the second half. What did you guys do to narrow the lead as much as you did? Why weren't you able to encroach even closer than you did?**

WAYNE TINKLE: You know, obviously didn't get off -- we got off to a good start. It was, like, 11-10 us. And then we went on a drought which we've done multiple times this year where it's dribble, dribble, dribble, dribble, hold it, hold it, hold it, the clock's running down, someone's got to hero up.

We've learned enough lessons about that, and I thought we would maybe avoid that in the postseason.



And I've got to give credit to UCLA. They stymied us. They trapped this guy a few times. We didn't get to our spots to expose it.

But then the second half we played with much more energy on the defensive end, and then we ran offense. We executed. We executed out of timeouts. We got him, the first play of the second half. We executed our sets. And that got us back in.

And then we had a couple of possessions where we went away from it, thinking we're rolling now. We can play a little bit more instead of sticking to the turns of the ball, screening hard, cutting hard. And defensively we lost a couple of guys.

We weren't rebounding as well as I wanted to start the second half. We put in Justin Rochelin. Seven rebounds in the second half. Tip our cap to him for his effort. But we flowed offensively, we executed, and we played with much more energy on the defensive end and on the glass.

That's how we got back into it. And a couple of possessions where we didn't rely on our defensive principles and they made us pay from 3.

**Q. This is your last ever Pac-12 game. Any thoughts?**

WAYNE TINKLE: For the next couple of years.

**Q. You know what I mean.**

WAYNE TINKLE: I know.

**Q. The Pac-12, as we know it. Your thoughts on that?**

WAYNE TINKLE: I purposely didn't want to think about that a whole lot. I'm kind of over my disgust and frustration and I want to celebrate.

In fact, when I did the pregame talk with the network off the bus, I finished with thanking everybody behind the scenes, behind the camera and in front of the camera, because it was a hell of a ride. And it's a shame that we're in the position that we're in, to be quite honest.

And I'll probably lament on that stuff now that we're done, but we wanted to keep our focus on the present.

And it's a damn shame. We say damn this, damn that, because of beaver dams. It's a damn shame. But it is what it is. We've got to regroup. We've got to retool. And I love where we're going to take our program and we're excited about where we're going. And that's what our motivation is

going to continue to be.

**Q. You mentioned some things you need to work on in the spring. What are some of those things that you're looking to do?**

WAYNE TINKLE: Inside presence, defensively, offensively, rebounding, shot blocking, scoring. We need some more help out on the perimeter. We need to shoot it better. We need more guys that can play. And physical athleticism. And those are the things we've got to address.

I don't want to count and throw out a number and be wrong, we had a lot of close games, like three-, four-possession games this year. And when we've got what we need, we win the majority of those, and we're not quite there yet.

And we're going to need some help. We're going to need some help with today's landscape. With NIL and all that stuff, we got things rolling early at Oregon State, and then we had a year where we were devastated by injuries, year three.

We didn't panic and we reached out to Beaver Nation for help. We needed a new locker room. And some former players and Charlie Sitton brought a bunch of guys and they got the momentum going. We redid our locker room. You saw what happened after that.

Now we messed up a couple of years ago, after our run. We messed up that next year. We're committing to our young group to get there. We know we'll get there. We need Beaver Nation to jump on board again and have our backs, because we've proven a couple different times that we've rebuilt this thing. And we're taking the challenge to get there. Now that we've got two years under our belt, get there right now.

**Q. I know your daughter played under Tara VanDerveer at Stanford. Thoughts on Tara breaking the record, your relationship with her, your reactions to that.**

WAYNE TINKLE: So fired up about that. Thanks for asking. My daughter loved her experience at Stanford. Got out of sales and marketing and get into coaching because it's in her blood and because of the inspiration she got from Tara and the rest of their staff.

I wrote her a note after she broke the record. We're very close with her. I hope she holds that forever. I'll just say that. And what she's done, not just for the women's game, not just college basketball on both sides, I'm talking college athletics. She's an incredible woman and incredible

humanitarian, and we all know she's Tara. She's one of the best ever.

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