

Pac-12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 3, 2021

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Washington State Cougars

Krystal Leger-Walker

Postgame Press Conference



Washington State 57, Utah 48

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Krystal.

Q. Big win for you tonight. You yourself had a very nice game. Very young team that you had. Did you feel like you took a bit of a senior leadership role to help some of the younger players see this one out?

KRYSTAL LEGER-WALKER: Yeah, a little bit. A little bit. Played a bit of a leadership role, but that's my role on the team. Keep us together. I think that's just a point guard role as well.

Yeah, definitely took a little bit. But very lucky in that having international players, they might not be experienced at the college level, but definitely had some big games they've played in, and know how to ride games out.

Although we don't have much experience, yeah, in the college system, there's definitely some girls that have played a lot of basketball and know how to close the game. Yeah, not just me taking the lead, helping us grind that one out. Definitely there were some other girls out there that stepped up and helped us with that one.

Q. Talk about Bella a little bit. Program record 12 rebounds for a conference tournament game. How much does that help you guys in what you can do offensively when she imposes her will in the paint like that?

KRYSTAL LEGER-WALKER: When Bella is on, she's on. When she's having a good day, you have to get it to her and she'll make good things happen. Super proud of her for getting a double-double. Getting it done on both ends of the floor for us, pulling those rebounds.

At the start they were killing us on the boards, when she started cleaning those up, definitely gave us a little bit of leeway, we were able to extend our lead a little bit.

Q. Utah made a couple of runs, cut it through three in the fourth quarter. Talk about your resiliency.

KRYSTAL LEGER-WALKER: Yeah, they were going on runs. We made it ugly. Super proud of how the girls were able to hold it out. But, yeah, definitely a great team. They've got shooters. Maxwell can knock it down. Torres can knock it down. McFarland -- sorry, not McFarland, McQueen hurt us.

Yeah, just super proud of the girls in getting the job done. At the end of the day, yeah, we made it a little bit ugly out there.

Q. The team hasn't won a Pac-12 tournament game in four years. You hit some clutch shots to help them earn that. How are you feeling about the way the team handled the moment, especially giving the NCAA tournament hopes for you all?

KRYSTAL LEGER-WALKER: Yeah, definitely a big win, especially for our bid to get into the tournament. Just great. All the girls came. We came with a great energy today. Everyone was excited. We know how much these games mean and how lucky it is to play post-season games.

Yeah, we just can't take any for granted. So definitely, definitely excited that we got this win and that we're still in the hunt, yeah, that it gives us a bit of a chance to get a bid to go to the tournament.

Q. You knew the stakes coming into this game in terms of the post-season. How does it feel to pull out this win and be that much closer to knowing you are going back to the NCAA tournament for the first time in three years?

KRYSTAL LEGER-WALKER: Yeah, honestly it just feels like we can take a breath. If you've been following us this season, we've had some ups and downs all season, lost some games that we technically shouldn't have, won some that we shouldn't have.



Yeah, just feels like we can take a breath and that we got this first one out of the way. Definitely go back to the drawing board. Yeah, just so excited, so proud. But, yeah, it feels like a lot has just come off our shoulders. Yeah, just feels good.

Q. Is that nice to go into a game against Arizona and not have to worry so much, be able to play free out there?

KRYSTAL LEGER-WALKER: Yeah, definitely. Arizona is so tough. They've had a solid break. They got the first bye. I'm sure they watched this game, were almost licking their lips a little bit.

Definitely just excited to go and give them another great shot, try to get a win there. Yeah, sorry, I'm just super proud and just excited for us and our program, for all the girls. I think Coach E said in the locker room this is the first time she won here. Dana, one of the girls that was here before Coach E got here, said this was her first time she's won here. Just feels great to get a win, yeah.

Q. Does it feel nice going into that Arizona game knowing you can beat them, that they are beatable?

KRYSTAL LEGER-WALKER: Yeah, definitely. Obviously we started the season picked 12th. We came into every game as the underdogs. We still try to carry a little bit of that mindset even though we've had some big upsets. We're trying to build our program, we're trying to build it up. Just to come in with that mindset, no pressure, but instead to give it our best shot, outwork teams if we can, pick up some wins, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Appreciate your time. Best of luck tomorrow.

KRYSTAL LEGER-WALKER: Thank you.

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