

# Pac-12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 3, 2021

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

## Utah Utes

## Lynne Roberts

### Postgame Press Conference

Washington State 57, Utah 48

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Coach. We'll take questions.

#### **Q. How did the COVID delay affect you coming into this one?**

LYNNE ROBERTS: Oh, I don't know. I don't know. It's hard to put into words how disruptive this season has been for everybody in the country. So much of being -- I can only speak for college basketball, but I don't think it's different for any other major sport, whether it's pro baseball or women's college basketball or whatever.

So much of it as a player and as a coach is routine, rhythm of a season. There's things you can count on. It's like you step up to the free-throw line, you shoot a free throw with your routine for a reason, right? That gives you confidence in your shot. It's the same thing as you prepare for a game.

All of that, it's the routine and the rhythm of what you know you can count on. This year has been one of those things where our routines, our normalcy, the things we can count on haven't been there. I feel like last weekend is just another drop in the bucket of all the things that have been disruptive.

We're not unique. Everybody's gone through it. It's challenging. When you've got a young team -- the biggest thing is it's hard to get momentum. We were playing pretty well, at shootaround before the Oregon game we found out we weren't going to play. There's not a handbook as a coach as to how you deal with that. 10 a.m. before we're supposed to play Colorado at noon, we find out we can't play. There's nothing you can do unless you're always on your toes that things are not predictable.

Yeah, it's really hard to describe how weird this year has been.



#### **Q. You were right there with Washington State through stretches of this game. Got as close as three in the fourth quarter. To you what ultimately decided this one?**

LYNNE ROBERTS: We couldn't score. We got really, really good looks around the basket. You look at our stats. I'm just now looking at our stats. We just missed so many shots. It was an extremely physical game, so maybe in other games we get to the free-throw line a little bit more.

I thought our team did what we asked them to do. We were running the stuff that we wanted to run, getting paint touches. We wanted to try to get to the free-throw line. We wanted to try to get into their depth, score inside. We were getting good shots. We just missed baskets.

When your two post players go 2-for-14, didn't take a shot outside three feet, that's hard. But it's not on them. It's not like everybody else shot well. Looking at our lines, 1-for-6, 0-for-3, 4-for-11, 1-for-7, 1-for-6, that's not winning basketball right there.

Having said that, we were still right there. I mean, we did. We cut it to two, had a shot. But you got to make shots to win it.

#### **Q. Given the year to where your players have had to fight through COVID, you had a couple of stoppages along the way, but for them to be able to still come out and compete and still do schoolwork, practice, talk about how much fight they had to go through and maybe how proud of them you are.**

LYNNE ROBERTS: Yeah, I appreciate that question.

I think for me this year has been the most challenging. But I also have a family I get to go home to. It's a job, that kind of thing. I have perspective on that.

These guys are 18 to 22, in college, some of them for the first time. What we ask them to do, 'we' being college basketball, have no social life, you can't see your family, you can't go home for Christmas, you don't get to hang out



with anybody other than your teammates. Significant others didn't exist. The normalcy of what being 18 to 22 in terms of being social and figuring out, learning about other people, sitting in classes, being around diversity, learning about things, they didn't get any of that.

To me, no one asked me, but I don't know if that's the best thing to do, make college kids not be normal. I don't know if that's good developmentally for them. You think about what college is supposed to be about.

What we ask them to do - and again this is not me, this is college basketball, and I'm a part of that - is kind of nuts. So to your point, I just told our team we have to get better. Plain and simple, we got to get better. But we didn't have any drama. We didn't have kids that checked out. They showed up every day, to their credit.

I think back when I was 18, I don't know if I had the maturity to do that. My college basketball coach would probably say I didn't (smiling). So I'm so proud of them in that. Again, this is kind of one of those 'free years' where it will always be asterisked just in my mind, even if it's not officially, it's just strange. Kids get the year back if they want it.

I'm very, very proud of our players for hanging in there. I'm not proud of what our record is. We will get better. I just told them, We will get better. Utah women's basketball has a storied tradition, a great history. We will get better.

**Q. You touched on the record. As a coach, that is the one thing that stands out. Knowing you, you obviously take that very seriously. Is there some positives that you are able to take away from this season?**

LYNNE ROBERTS: Yeah, always, always, always, always. There's always a silver lining. Sometimes, what do they say, the darkest before the dawn? I think we've got tremendous guard play, and they're young. We've got some tremendous guards coming in. We're just really, really young still. I feel like we say that every year, or last couple years.

We got people coming back. So I just told the team, I love this team, I love this program. I don't love how we did this year in terms of outcome, but I do love them and I believe in them. I believe in myself and our staff.

But there's no secret sauce. You work hard. You have to work hard. That's what we've got to get back to.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

LYNNE ROBERTS: Thank you all. Appreciate it.

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