

# Pac-12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 4, 2021

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

**Stanford Cardinal**

**Tara VanDerveer**

Postgame Press Conference



Stanford 92, USC 53

TARA VANDERVEER: I thought that was a great team win against a very good USC team. Mark and his staff have battled injuries, and they have some really tough players, so we had to play well, and I thought we did.

I loved our balance. I really loved our defense coming out. We ran hard. We play in a very tough conference, and I think the fact that we had a lot of these games, it really got us ready for this, and we're really excited to be playing tomorrow night.

**Q. You mentioned the balance, and what stood out to me is you had a different leading scorer in each quarter for the team. Was that the plan or did that just happen to be that way?**

TARA VANDERVEER: I think it just happened that way. I think that it just points to the unselfishness of this team, people really wanting to move the ball and share the ball. Just really excited for when their teammates do well. They're excited for each other. So that was fun.

**Q. Will you just speak for the moment about how much momentum matters when you come into this tournament or any sort of postseason tournament, how important it is to have been playing well coming into this and how much confidence a team builds in this kind of situation when you've already been playing well coming in?**

TARA VANDERVEER: Well, I think our team, just like anyone, if they're feeling confident, then that can spill over to how well you play. I think our team is feeling confident. They're excited that we won the regular season and want to go after the automatic bid and the PAC-12 Championship Tournament.

I think we just have some really good leaders on our team with Kiana and Anna and Alyssa and very unselfish

players, and they understand that it's a grind. If you can play three games in three days or four days, we're going to need everybody. This was a great start.

**Q. That was going to be my follow-up. The opportunity to play a lot of people so that you've got people that are fresh and have playing time coming into the next couple of days has always been really important, hasn't it?**

TARA VANDERVEER: Well, I think it is really important. You know, you don't usually play back-to-back games in any situation during the season, this season especially.

But we're hoping that we will be rested and excited to play tomorrow and be very aggressive. We're going to have to play very well. Oregon State is an excellent team.

**Q. I just wanted to ask you, and this is looking a few days ahead, but you spent so much of the last two months bobbing and weaving and doing all these pandemic protocols, and you're going to go to a place where they just kind of declared the pandemic over in Texas. No masks. And I'm just wondering how you feel about that. I know Gregg Popovich said he thought it was a travesty. I'm just wondering after everything you guys have been through if you have any feelings about the safety now of going to Texas.**

TARA VANDERVEER: Well, I don't think they have a rule that you can't wear a mask, so I double mask, our staff all double masks, our team all double masks, and I'm really hopeful that everyone that we're around will mask or we won't be around them.

Our team has worked really hard. I would agree with Coach Popovich. There might be -- I don't know why you wouldn't want to keep wearing masks when it's proven that it helps you stay healthy. You know, I'm not the governor, but we're wearing our masks.

**Q. Do you expect or do you know yet about fans and if you'll be able to have Stanford fans there?**

TARA VANDERVEER: Well, I think it would be similar to



here, the fans. Our team really has been very disciplined, and we know we've worked so hard to get to this point that even if fans are here, they are in their own separate world, their own separate bubble, their own hotel.

We don't mix with them at all. They don't come in our hotel, we don't meet up with them in restaurants, nothing. I think we're really trying to be focused on just playing well. It's great that we have fans to watch, but we don't want to take a chance that one of them could -- we test every day, two and three times a day sometimes. We don't want to test positive.

**Q. You talked about your team being confident. You were certainly confident from beyond the arc. You had 15 made threes, your season high, which is also a tournament record. Your thoughts on that and how well your team shot?**

TARA VANDERVEER: Well, it was really fun to see people knocking down their shots. We haven't played in this building. We hadn't practiced in this building. Sometimes when you come into a big arena, sometimes it can just -- you're using a different ball than we've used all season. It was great to see.

I think Hannah Jump got us going, Anna made a three, Lexie made two threes, Cam making her three. I mean, everyone really contributed. Ashten 2 for 5.

I think we've got weapons. We've got inside game and outside game. You know, I think it was fun to be able to spread it around.

**Q. Speaking of those weapons, it must be frustrating for other teams to look at your team and today even look at the stats and see that the bench led the way in points. Is that how you want other teams to look at you to say you're going to have to pick your poison and they don't really know who to concentrate on because it could be anyone?**

TARA VANDERVEER: You know, different people -- I use the analogy of an orchestra, that it's going to be a different solo every night. But we've all got to keep the beat and come out and play hard and play defense and rebound and do a lot of the grind things.

It's fun when different people step up, especially in a tournament. And for our young players to play in person for the first time in front of their parents, I think they really wanted to play well.

So we're playing another night, and we're very excited about that.

**Q. You talked a few games ago about inviting Oregon State to Maples. They didn't take you up on the invitation. Are you excited to get that game in? Is there any extra meaning for that game now?**

TARA VANDERVEER: Well, you know, they have an excellent, excellent team. It would have been fun to have the game at Maples, but just the make-up games didn't come to fruition the way I think maybe coaches thought they would early when we were planning this back in October.

We're excited to be playing in the tournament. Whoever we're playing, it doesn't matter to me who we're playing, whether it's Oregon, Oregon State.

The fact that we only played Oregon State once I think in some ways maybe -- I don't know, like if you beat a team twice and you had some close games, I think that that maybe gives a team a little bit of advantage.

We're going to have to play well. We know that. They have -- Scott does a great job with his team. They shoot the ball very well and they've got a great inside game. It's going to be a battle. Let's see what we can do.

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