

# Pac-12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 4, 2021

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

## Washington Huskies

## Coach Jody Wynn

### Postgame Press Conference



UCLA - 58, Washington - 46

COACH WYNN: UCLA's a phenomenal basketball team. They showed, you know, that they can score it in bunches and score from their defense. Very well coached. And one of the best teams in the nation.

And I'm so proud of our team going toe to toe with them and really giving 100 percent effort for 40 minutes. We rattled them and they responded, obviously.

But I just am really proud of our fight. I'm proud of the heart we showed. I'm proud of our camaraderie. We lost another teammate in today's game and a couple others went down throughout the game and our kids just kept battling. Another kid came in and they stepped up to the challenge.

Just overall I'm really proud of the fight and the grit and just the emotional toughness that we showed over the last two days.

**Q. You just kind of touched on it there, just the injury, if you will, with Haley. How did that change the team? And her injury specifically was what happened to her?**

COACH WYNN: She was battling for a rebound and I don't know. I'll have to see it. But a kid on UCLA was -- fought with her I believe and she hit her head pretty hard on the floor. Yeah, she was out. I'd have to see it. But, yeah, her head hit the floor pretty hard.

**Q. And obviously that's a big loss to lose your leading scorer, leading rebounder, somebody who is such a big presence on your team. It felt as if you guys became two dimensional. It was a lot of play, a lot of Tameiya at that time.**

COACH WYNN: Yeah, I mean Haley's led us all year long. She's led us from the moment she showed back up on campus in the fall with conditioning. She's one of our most

experienced players, and that was a big blow. When she went down and wasn't able to come back out on the court with us and fight with us on the court, you know, that kind of rattled us for a little bit. But at the same time it kind of brought us together.

And you saw a group of women that just kind of band together and said, we're not going to lay down. And it's unfortunate that Haley went down, but we're confident that she's going to be okay in time. She was pretty emotional. She is a great competitor and puts a lot of time into her game and developing her craft. And for it to get taken like that, you just feel for kids that just care so much about the game and put so much time. When those kind of players go down and get hurt, it's tough to see.

**Q. Even before Haley went down, in that first half it was a big half from Quay Miller. Just the things that you've been seeing from her lately. And if you could talk about her game tonight.**

COACH WYNN: I think something that isn't talked about is the fact that Quay Miller is turning into one of the best defensive post players in this conference. She not only scored the ball tonight and did a good job off the glass, but for back-to-back games she did a really nice job on two future WNBA draft choices.

And as a sophomore she's shown tremendous growth on both sides of the ball. And I'm just -- she just gave everything she could tonight. Yesterday she knocked down a couple of 3s. Today the 3-ball wasn't falling for us. Credit UCLA's aggressive defense. And we didn't have very many clean looks. When we did, they didn't fall. But Quay is playing on both sides of the ball. She's developing an inside game and outside game.

She has the ability to turn over her right shoulder now as well as her left. She's using her left hand as well as her right hand in the paint. She's just developing. And she's taking the coaching. She's matured so much from one year to the next.

She's a great teammate. She's very coachable. She's just an all-around great kid. And I couldn't be more happy for



an individual than I am for Quay Miller.

**Q. Just the things that you saw in that fourth quarter, you're down three, but they went on a 16-to-7 run?**

COACH WYNN: Turnovers. Quick shots, couple of ill-advised ones. They got the D board and went off to the races. So caught us scrambling, a couple of run-out lay-ups by them. A couple of help and recover situations because our defense wasn't able to get set, so, either from turnovers or couple of missed shots. And that was the difference in the game.

**Q. And just the like next steps for your team, I hear that this may not be your last game of the season?**

COACH WYNN: I hope not. Our team wants to play. They wanted to play, if we got knocked out they were the only team in this conference that opted in to keep playing if we could on Saturday. Or whatever day.

Our team -- they want to play. I know their bodies are hurting tonight. So I don't know, we'll have to reevaluate, right. But they love each other. They enjoy coming to practice. They enjoy working. They want to keep playing for as long as they can play. So, I'll rock with those women any day.

**Q. You had 19 opponent turnovers. So basically you turned UCLA over about eight more times than they usually are turned over, which is pretty impressive. I think it looks like your team imposed its will defensively. That game, the style that it was played, it was not a UCLA-type style of game; it was a Washington style of game. And I think it was like that the last game but this was even more pronounced. So do you consider this tournament performance kind of a breakthrough for your team? I know you have the reputation from the Long Beach State program, that's how you actually would win games and cause people problems was imposing your will, are we getting closer to that being something that basically is an expectation from your team now?**

COACH WYNN: We're a really young team. Lexi and Khayla are the only two seniors. And their roles have dramatically changed this year compared to their prior three years, previous three years.

So outside of that, you've got Darcy Rees is a junior and Haley Van Dyke a junior, but very different roles, because gone are Mai-Loni and Amber, who were our leaders for three years.

As a young team, you're trying to find your identity each

and every season. Through this year, we weren't able to press as much as we probably anticipated being able to do so because of kids in and out of practice and injuries and just at times lack of depth. I think we played Stanford with seven kids or whatever. It was just a low number. And so we didn't have the practice time. We didn't have our male practice players to go up against because we didn't always have 10 bodies.

We just couldn't really put in some of the things that we normally do as our season progresses. But I'm a pretty competitive person, as my coaching staff is as well and very passionate about what we do every day.

And our team was kind of taking on that identity as the year progressed. And I thought we played our best basketball down the stretch these last few weeks. And they're receptive. They're great kids. They're going to do whatever we're asking them to do. And I'm just proud of their growth as the season progressed.

**Q. You mentioned at the start obviously how deep UCLA is. There was a point late in the third quarter and Natalie Chou comes off the bench. She recorded three steals in less than two minutes real late. Only one resulted in a bucket. But it sort of thwarted any sort of rhythm or run that you were on. I don't know if you picked up on that or noticed that or remember that period of time. Was that a sort of -- you even cut it to three twice after that. But it still -- those three steals just stood out to me as key points in the game. Can you comment on those?**

COACH WYNN: You know, I thought Natalie's length on the perimeter bothered some of our smaller guards. And we just didn't have clean passes today. I think their defensive intensity, their physicality, bothered us from time to time. And Natalie's length. I mean, she's a pretty long kid.

People might think she's not a great defensive player, she's not this super athlete, but she's so smart. And so her length bothered us and caused three turnovers like you mentioned. And I think they just picked up the intensity defensively. We were trying to find our way without Haley on the floor in that third quarter as another playmaker for us and a longer guard, if you will.

And I think that was kind of the theme of the game in the second half was just them generating offensive possessions through our turnovers, whether it's a steal or what have you. And Natalie's length on the perimeter and her IQ showed.

**Q. In the first quarter, you guys had a slow start and**



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**had trouble with UCLA's defense. But in the second you went on a 13-0 run, got it within two. Can you explain the change between the quarters, like schematically and just in general?**

COACH WYNN: Yeah, we got stops defensively. I thought we picked it up defensively. I thought we kind of settled in as well offensively. And we started moving the ball better, quite frankly. I think we played a lot of one-on-one ball to start. And their athleticism kind of bothered us and kind of took us off of what we were trying to accomplish early on.

And we got the ball to Quay. Tameiya obviously did a great job of creating and we were able to make that 13-0 run because we got stops and we generated offensive possessions without turning the ball over in that second quarter.

**Q. How important are games like this, not from a moral stance but from a performance perspective to play in big games like this for the program to grow?**

COACH WYNN: Yeah, I mean, this is why you come to Washington. This is why you come to the Pac-12, right, to play in great arenas. Usually it's packed. But on a stage like this, right? And with high stakes. And where anybody can beat anybody on any given night. It's the number one women's basketball conference in the country. So skilled. Great coaches. So there's never an easy night. There's never a day off. There's never a quarter where you can rest.

And you want to play your best come late February and into March. And I know that our record isn't getting us into the NCAA Tournament now, but I thought we played our best basketball down the stretch, and I thought we grew as a team.

And I thought we have a lot to build on now going into whatever this offseason holds for us. So, yeah, I think this is why you come to the Pac and come to Washington, to be on this stage.

And proud of how our women grew as a unit and individually throughout a very, very tough conference.

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