

# Pac-12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Colorado Buffaloes

J.R. Payne

Mya Hollingshed

JaQuaya Miller

Sirena Tuitele

Postgame Press Conference

Colorado - 64, Washington - 52

THE MODERATOR: We'll start with an opening statement from the coach.

J.R. PAYNE: Thank you for being here. It's wonderful to see so many people supporting women's basketball and the PAC 12 conference.

Really proud of our ball club tonight. We knew that it wouldn't be the prettiest game. Going in we knew that and expected that. Just a lot of jitters and post-season play and all of those things. But I'm unbelievably proud of our resiliency and how we were able to really stick together and find a way to win the basketball game.

Before we go any further, I just would like everyone to keep Tameiya Sadler in their prayers. She is with her dad and our trainer and she's getting great care and being taken care of. But if you're the praying sort, please remember Tam because she's a very special part of our family and we know that she will be back on the floor soon. But thank you guys again for being here. So we'll take questions.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please?

**Q. Going off of that, can you give any more on like what happened to her, what's going on with her?**

J.R. PAYNE: No, I don't know. I haven't seen any film or seen anything yet. I just know that our team physician is here and thank goodness her family is here and she's with them and just getting good care right now.

**Q. Mya, I'll ask you. Off of that, it was a very tight**



**game at that point and then it seemed like after that there was obviously a big break and then you guys came out and kind of took the game over at that point. Did that break change anything for the outcome of this game?**

MYA HOLLINGSLED: I think it just kind of allowed us to settle into the game more than when we should have. We were trying to do that early on in the game, we really just hadn't, and I think when that moment happened we just all came together. And I know a couple of us were like we're just going to finish this game and finish it for Tam.

**Q. Peanut, you had four points in the first half and then you had a big second half. You had some big offensive rebounds. You hit that big three in the corner off of your missed free throws. What was the difference in the second half versus the first half? Was it a change in energy? What changed for you?**

SIRENA TUIELE: I think I was just playing a little more loose. It's the jitters and post game and T talked to me and he was like, Why are you playing so tight? And I'm like, I don't know, dude.

So he let, you know, just playing loose, and our players finding me and just letting the ball go. I think once I first saw it go in that's when I just started doing my game and doing my thing.

**Q. Sirena, this is your first time winning in this tournament. It took four years. But talking to Jaylyn this week she said anything happens in this tournament. Just tell me the relief you feel finally getting a victory in this event.**

SIRENA TUIELE: It's a great relief, but I'm incredibly proud because it was a team win. You know, three years straight not winning the first game is hard on you.

But we came in this week. We had a really good week of practice. We talked about it and when it's unpredicted and I'm glad that we came out on top and we got this win.

**Q. Do you think that the veterans that you have on this**



**team really that it really shows up in a game like this when you're playing with a lot on the line and that just the experience you have playing together helps to carry you through?**

SIRENA TUI TELE: Yeah, most definitely. Our veterans, we all rely on each other and we hold the team to a very high standard and I'm grateful for the veterans we had because we know what it's like losing. We got tired of it and we came together as a team and we're like, we're going to do our game. We're going to play great basketball. We're going to execute on defense, and defense is what got us here.

So, yeah, our veterans have done a great job of holding this team to a high standard and accountability.

**Q. Can you talk about Kindyll Wetta? She kind of kept you guys going on offense in the first half plus 17. She had a couple of big steals. What about her, she's All PAC 12 Defensive team. What has allowed her to be so successful in her first year?**

J.R. PAYNE: Her success has come, I would say, solely from who Kindyll Wetta is. She is one of the hardest working, toughest, most disciplined young ladies I've ever had the opportunity to coach. She's very level-headed. She never gets too high or too low. She's very coachable, off the court on the court. She stays locked into the moment. So I really appreciate her levelheadedness because there were times throughout this game that if you emotionally got too high or too low really could have rocked and been disruptive to what we were trying to do. But Kindyll is one that helps us just stay calm and not just with her emotions but also with her play, she allows us to just do what we're supposed to do. Which is a, as a coach, it's very predictable and coaches always want that. So she's a great player and she's going to continue to be a great player.

**Q. Quay, first off, you were in this game last year and got the win in this game last year as well.**

J.R. PAYNE: We don't talk about that game.

**Q. I know, but I need to ask her. How different was it being on this side of it where you were the favorite and there was a little more pressure on the team you're on this year?**

JAQUAYA MILLER: I wouldn't say there was pressure on my team because they were, they're a better team than they were last year. Last year's game was, I don't know, but I just think that there was no, there is no feelings towards me being in the game, I'm at home and I just feel

it's a different vibe that I get playing with this team and I really didn't pay too much attention to UW, to be honest.

**Q. I wanted to ask you your emotions, you're very close to Tameiya, what were your emotions seeing her get injured and going through that towards the end of the game?**

JAQUAYA MILLER: I just thought, say a prayer, because there's nothing we can do, but leave it up to Him.

**Q. Apparently Arizona's Reese is not going to be back tomorrow. What difference does that make when you go against them again and just generally how do you feel about that game?**

J.R. PAYNE: Yeah, I mean we will prepare as if Reese will play and until the ball goes up on the opening tip and if she's not out there, then we'll believe it. But Arizona's a great team, they are a very balanced team. Cate Reese is a great player for them, but they have a lot of weapons and they pose a lot of problems for most teams.

We only played them one time this year, so that's a little bit of a different preparation and honestly we were just completely focused on Washington. I haven't watched any Arizona film, I've got all afternoon to do that and get us ready. But our focus was completely on Washington. But we love the opportunity to play against a great team like Arizona, and feel like it will be two very good teams that play tomorrow.

**Q. Can you talk about the start of the first half throwing up shots, not really getting anything to fall and defensively sticking, sticking with it, but not really getting any separation and then to close out in the second half like you did.**

J.R. PAYNE: Yeah, our shots were definitely not falling, luckily no one's were really falling for the majority of the first half.

It's different, it's different for us with a player like Mulkey in the game because she is so much bigger in the paint than we're used to seeing. So when your shots aren't falling you want to be able to do different things in the paint but that was a challenge for us. We, Jaylyn talked about it a lot in our timeouts, Mya talked about it, we're a team that's built on defense and defense has gotten us to this point of the season and when -- they say defense travels and so we locked into that, we really believed that if we just stuck to our principles defensively we would continue to get good looks offensively and we did that.

**Q. Mya, it was a struggle for you shooting early in this**

**game and then there was that stretch where both teams were just 3, 3, 3 and it was you hitting three of them in a row. Obviously you guys needed the points, but how big was that for you to get your offense going again?**

MYA HOLLINGSLED: It was great because we were able to get our team going offensively, we were seeing the ball go through the net and I think that kind of energized everybody. We knew we needed to get some stops we weren't really as lucky during that run of just going back and forth, but it just is good to see the ball go through the net even when we aren't shooting well it just makes the basket get a little bit better, so it's always good.

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