

Pac-12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 3, 2022

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Arizona Wildcats

Adia Barnes

Taylor Chavez

Sam Thomas

Lauren Ware

Postgame Press Conference



Colorado - 45, Arizona - 43 is.

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

ADIA BARNES: First, I would like to say great job by Colorado. I think they did a tremendous job of putting us in tough situations and exploiting some of our weaknesses and staying in that zone for a long time and we just weren't able to hit shots.

I think that's how it goes sometimes. But credit to them. They did a great job. And I think they came here and they beat us. So just credit to JR and her staff for doing a tremendous job today.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

Q. This was an extremely low scoring game, each team was extremely physical on the defensive end. Can you just speak a little bit to that and how it affected the game?

ADIA BARNES: Yeah. So not great game for women's basketball, right? No one wants to see 20-20 or 10-10 for 10 minutes. But I think we both are very defensive-oriented teams and both were not hitting the three. So if you look, for the game, it was like 7-40 or whatever. Yeah, like 7-40 almost for threes.

So not a pretty game for our game, for basketball. But they made us shoot threes and normally we don't have -- the thing is I told the team, You guys all can't be cold at the same time. At least if one person is cold, someone else hit some shots.

I'm not mad at our team because we had really good looks. We had open looks against a zone and we could not convert on them. It was one of those things in the game, you feel like the next one's going to fall, and you're waiting, okay, that one's going to fall and they just didn't fall. And I think that's just the way it is sometimes. So it is what it is.

You never want to let a team sit in a zone for 37 minutes and we didn't have, we didn't find a way to penetrate the zone, but then it's like there was nowhere to penetrate because they were so packed. They were inside and we weren't hitting shots. So that's difficult. We just got to play better and definitely shoot the ball better to win.

Q. The complications that arise when Cate can't play, what you have to do differently, and how that affects your game.

ADIA BARNES: Yeah. So that's definitely a difficult situation. I think that when you're a team and, we've had success all year long. I think no one thought we would have success. If you look at our personnel we have some really good players, but we're not a team with All Stars and a lot of different stars, but we're a team with really good players.

I think we were getting to a point where we had a lot of momentum and we worked really hard throughout the season to put ourself in a great situation. And then things happen. It's basketball. And then one of you are best players gets hurt.

But I think that what a good team does is they rally and find a way to step up and I think we have been doing that. We've been finding ways to win and it's hard. Cate is our leading scorer and one of our leading rebounders and it takes a, it takes, it's by committee.

And I think Lauren's been doing a really good job of stepping up and our team has, but it looks different, it feels different. Cate's extremely aggressive and just, we're used to playing with her. So I think it's been a big adjustment and it's been difficult, especially this time of year when everybody needs wins, and there's a little bit more



pressure and the stakes are a little bit higher.

The good thing is we'll get her back and we knew we were going to get her back for the tournament, and then we'll just find a way to figure it out. And the good thing is we have more time to figure it out. It's been less than two weeks right now. And that was Cate's first injury.

But I think if Lauren continues to play the way she plays inside and then Cate comes back, I think that we'll win some games. So the great thing I told our team is, if you look at the positive side, is we're not done. There's a lot of teams that lose, that loss yesterday and today, and they will be done and we're not done so we still have a chance to play and we have time to adjust and get better.

And so I'm optimistic about that, that we'll still have some success and I feel like we'll win some more games.

Q. Sam, can you talk about, we had a chance to chat with your family beforehand, and being a native of Las Vegas I know it's tough for you to go out in one game, but can you talk about what it meant for at least being able to play in front of your home crowd, especially considering the fact that last year because of COVID 19 it wasn't a full crowd?

SAM THOMAS: Yeah. It was obviously great to play in front of my family. They were in Tucson last week for Senior Night. So it was great to have them here and then my little sister who plays at the UNLV was able to come because she wasn't able to be there for Senior Night, so this was probably like the last game she will get to see me play.

Super happy, but it also felt like a home game just because of all the Tucson fans that came up, made this drive, flew down here. So just really appreciative of them that they were able to come support us.

Q. Lauren, I wanted to ask you about stepping up these last few games, especially on rebounding, you've been a lot more aggressive. How do you keep that when Cate's back?

LAUREN WARE: I mean, that's just something I think I should be doing all the time. I think, but now with Cate out, obviously we have a big deficit in those two areas of like scoring and rebounding. So the coaches have kind of put that on me to be more aggressive and take more good shots and be more aggressive on the offensive end, and the defensive end as well, with rebounding on both ends and I think I've done a better job of that.

ADIA BARNES: For a big girl to play 37 minutes, that's a

lot. So it's probably better we didn't have a game right now so she can rest her body. But she's been great.

Q. I don't know if you saw the news, but Charli's going to be stepping down over at Arizona State?

ADIA BARNES: I did not see that.

Q. You were playing at the U of A when she started coaching at ASU. She's been here all that time since. Just your initial thoughts on her and her time at ASU a cross-town rival of yours?

ADIA BARNES: I really respect Charli. She's a really good coach and she's a trailblazer in our profession. I love the fact that she does so many other things. Like, she's a mom and she's successful. She represents our game so well. She's been a WBCA president, so she's very involved in our game. Sad to see her go for sure, but I think she's had a great career.

I love it when coaches go out on a high note, not necessarily winning a championship, but having success year after year, and kind of good go out on your terms.

So although, I'm surprised. I thought she had a couple more years in her, but you know, this is a hard job. It's extremely stressful. I definitely have aged more this year than I have in awhile. So it's a hard job. It's a blessing to be able to do this job, but it's a lot. It's never, it never ends. You're never in the off-season. So it will be good for her to have a chance to spend some time with her family. So congrats on a great career, Charli.

Q. You put that full press on with about six and a half minutes to go and sort of took over basically. Did you feel that sort of was going to give you the momentum you needed to carry it through?

ADIA BARNES: Yeah. I should have probably done that before. Yeah, I did. I think that that's a really aggressive press we have. With playing kind of a limited bench a little bit and having people out of positions some of our presses and stuff are a little bit harder to play today, just because Sam played a little bit of 4. So the rotation is a little different. I thought we should have done that a little bit earlier because we did turn them over. And there was a time I felt in the first half that we were going to kind of pull away and just, but then we never could quite do it. So they made some big plays or there was a call that didn't go our way or something, some factors happened, where we could never pull away.

So it's credit to them for a good job. And then when we did make those steals in our press, then we would come back

and turn it over or miss the shot or the layup. So I think with experience and just your team has to be able to get those stops and then convert. We call it in practice stop and score. But we were able to get those stops but then we would have a turnover or miss the layup. So the margin of error is very slim at this time of year.

I always say it's never down to the last shot or the last play. It's the missed layup in the first quarter. It's the missed box out or the and one. It's those things that they accumulate at the end of the game and then you lose by two points.

So just getting better with our experience. We're a pretty new team with a lot of new players and just we have to figure out a way, and our toughness shows at times, and it showed during that press. But we have to have that sense of urgency the whole game and we're figuring that out without one of our starters.

Q. If you could make your plea to the NCAA tournament committee about getting that 4 seed, especially when they take into consideration injured players and such, what would you tell them about getting that No. 4 seed so Arizona can get potentially a couple of home games in the NCAA tournament?

ADIA BARNES: I would say we deserve that 4th seed. We're not healthy right now, but we put our work in the whole year. We have an incredible environment where I would be shocked if we didn't sell out, which is really good for our game.

We're a good team. We have had some bad losses lately, but we've beat some really good teams throughout the year. I think the first one I can name is Louisville, but there's a list of them. So we deserve to be in the tournament. We deserve a seed. And we're going to have Cate back.

We knew that. I could have pressed as a coach and had Cate back this week, but it wouldn't be constructive and it wouldn't be productive for the tournament. So, honestly, the NCAA tournament's more important than the PAC 12 tournament. Sorry PAC 12. I love you, but it is what it is.

Like, if I had to choose, you know, if maybe we went to the finals to have Cate back, but the NCAA is what we need and need to be successful in. So we will have Cate back. We deserve a good seed and we deserve to play at home and I think the committee will recognize that and see that and those are some really smart people, so I think they know what to do and they will do the right thing.

Q. More with Cate. She didn't have her sling on for the

first time --

ADIA BARNES: She hasn't had it on in a while. See, I could have played her. Sometimes I look to the bench, like, oh, dang, you know. She didn't. She's doing well.

But I mean, it's not, like doing well, it's like we're talking like 10 days since it happened. So that's not, that, the time is a good thing.

But the positive thing for us is there is time. We wouldn't play for another three weeks, almost, two and a half weeks, so that's a lot of time for people to get better and she will be better by then. She already started shooting and stuff, so we were all happy about that. So we'll be full force soon.

Q. Taylor, it seemed like both teams had trouble shooting the ball and a lot of the shots were way off the mark. Was there something about just shooting in this arena that was different or what was that like?

TAYLOR CHAVEZ: Honestly, I feel like it was just one of those days for us. We all, the majority of us especially Sam and I, played here last year, I don't think we shot that poorly in our pass, but some days just go like that. I don't think there will ever be a time at least throughout Maddy's career being here for the next three years where the top 3 point specialists go 2-24 or what did we combine for, I think 1-16, that won't happen again.

ADIA BARNES: Yeah, I hope not.

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