

Pac-12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 3, 2022

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Colorado Buffaloes

J.R. Payne

Mya Hollingshed

Kindyll Wetta

Postgame Press Conference

Colorado - 45, Arizona - 43

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

J.R. PAYNE: When we were walking out I said, Oh, I didn't even look at the box score yet. And I looked at it and said, Okay, we out-rebounded them, we turned it over, and we played defense, and I think that about sums up the game.

I'm proud of our team for how we played, how we battled. We were up. We were down. We came back up, came back down, definitely a defensive effort from both teams as we knew it would be. In the end I think we just handled our business. We talk about everything's a business trip and everyone has a job to do and we were able to do that tonight.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

Q. Your team in the first 15 minutes you committed 8 turnovers and shot under 25 percent from the field before you went on that run to take the lead at the end of the half. What was the conversation and the adjustment towards the end of the half that allowed you to make that switch?

J.R. PAYNE: Stop turning the ball over. That was -- I mean, we try to be really black and white with our team. We try to be really blunt. We try not to live in the gray areas. So I don't remember saying that, but I'm sure we did.

We just really wanted to prioritize making good decisions, keeping it simple, maybe we get to place where I start calling too many quick hits and I have to try to simplify it to allow to us just be comfortable in what we're running. But



we definitely turned up the defensive pressure and I think we were pretty disruptive in our zone today.

Q. For either of the players. That run, 10-0 run by Arizona where you struggled to get the ball inbounds, for me it like reminded me of Oregon last at end of regulation. What was that like, you guys going through that and were you able to regroup after that? Because it seemed like that might have been the turning point for Arizona.

MYA HOLLINGSLED: I think that was the key. We talked about how we been in this situation before and we needed to learn from the previous games and just slow it down. Coach talked about not catching it in the deep corner to set ourselves up to be trapped. We reiterated that in the huddles and timeouts and I think once we figured that out and we just kind of simplified it and not have everyone in the backcourt and kind of push a few people in the front court, it eliminated a few more defenders and allowed us to have more room to just clear out and get the ball up the floor.

Q. Coach, what were your changes? Without Reese on the floor, what did you do differently? That's my first. And second one is: You were in a zone for a long time, and they just couldn't make those threes. Were you just going to stay there until they proved they could shoot it?

J.R. PAYNE: Yeah. I mean, our zone defense is not really a defense that forces you to shoot threes. We try to pressure the ball in our zone and be disruptive as much as we can. They just ended up taking a lot of threes. That wasn't necessarily our game plan. That was just sort of what they ended up choosing to do offensively. There wasn't, Reese is a really great player, one of the best players in this conference, but there was no real adjustment on our behalf I would say offensively or defensively as it relates, because they take Cate Reese out and they add somebody else in that is also really good because they're very deep team. And so there wasn't any real adjustment on that, we just knew that we had to be the aggressor offensively and defensively and I think we did that.



Q. When they did what they did with their pressure defense and whatnot, it's hard to kind of regroup and maintain your poise and come out that have. Can you talk just about the fact that your team was able to do that, because sometimes Arizona does that to people and they don't recover. And then the other thing is, you might have heard Charli Turner Thorne is retiring today, the announcement's today, and I know you always had a lot of respect for her so if you could comment on that.

J.R. PAYNE: Wow, I didn't, I hadn't heard that yet. Handling their pressure with poise. As Brian just talked about, we have actually very recently been in the same situation, what you described happened in Tucson to us this year. We were up pretty big and their pressure was so disruptive that it, that we turned the ball over and we were not able to recover from that.

So we've been in that situation. I didn't really even have to do a lot, I think our team and our veterans, including these two, were able to communicate the changes that needed to be made and they were able to lean back on what happened last week and just, we just came together and made better decisions. Like Maya said, our spacing was better and things like that.

As it relates to Charlie Turner Thorne, I mean congratulations to Charli on an incredible career. She's been a trend setter for so many of us women in this business. She's always someone that we've looked up to. She's had tremendous success, on court and in the classroom and in their community. And she will definitely be missed.

Q. This is a neutral site game, what's it like for you guys as a team coming in and, I don't know if you noticed, but it was a pretty overwhelmingly towards the Arizona side. What's it like coming into a neutral environment and feeling like it's an away game?

KINDYLL WETTA: I actually at the beginning of the game was sitting there looking at all the different colors in the crowd and I was like, this is kind of cool.

But we obviously went to Arizona this year and played there and this gym was nothing like that because they had way more fans at the Arizona gym. So, yes, it's a little bit intimidating but at the end of the day we just know that we have to get what we needed to do done and handle our business.

Q. You guys twice tonight a couple Arizona runs that you guys stopped, you go on your own run. You guys

have really been good at doing that this year. What is it about this team you were able to stop runs from really getting other than in Tucson, of getting really out of hand?

KINDYLL WETTA: It's kind of the same thing that we've been talking about this entire day, but just our defense, that's something that we all take immense pride in and we know that if they hit a three we need to get a stop. We call a timeout and we say we need to get a stop, score/stop. And so that's something that we all know as a team that we can't relax on defense because that's what's going to keep us in all of the games.

Q. Going to the semi-finals. For Maya as a senior to be going to the semi-finals of this tournament can you talk about what this means and then J.R., first time in eight years your team is going there. What's that like for you?

MYA HOLLINGSBED: For me it definitely feels good. But like I talked about last season, it just, UFB, unfinished business and I think we have a lot more in our tank and we have a lot more to prove. We have a lot we're fighting for right now and it's great that we beat Arizona, but I feel like we should have did that the first time we were in Tucson, so it's nothing different that we expect from each other, I think now that we're on a roll and we're finally getting in a rhythm with our program I think we're just getting more comfortable with doing what we do and not really thinking about the other team.

We talk about it every day before a game, we're taking it one game at a time, we're not looking ahead we're not getting ahead of ourselves and the more that we do that and the more we stay in the present I think the farther we'll go.

J.R. PAYNE: Maya and I have been together so long now that we're going to have the same answer. We very much stay in the moment, no matter what is on the horizon or what potentially is on the horizon, our team does a great job of just looking into the job at hand. Today the job at hand was Arizona. And that was our sole focus. But we're very proud and excited to be where we are. I would say we expected it, but, you know, we don't even think that long term, I think we expect to be excellent every single day, we hold each other to that standard our players hold each other to that standard and so we have been excellent and we find ourself here. That's, we're just happy to be here.

Q. Can you talk a little bit about Frida Formann? She had eight points, but hit the big three that was the game sealer -- not someone that gets talked a lot about

on this team, but really stepped up today in that moment when you needed it?

J.R. PAYNE: Frida is someone that we all trust to take a big shot and knock it down. She, her entire -- she comes from a family of basketball players, her entire family has played, she grew up with a ball in her hands, she's comfortable and confident with the game on the line and it was a very big shot.

I would say that all of us expected that shot to go in as soon as it left her hand.

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