

Pac-12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 3, 2022

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Stanford Cardinal

Coach Tara VanDerveer

Haley Jones

Anna Wilson

Postgame Press Conference



Stanford - 57, Oregon State - 44

THE MODERATOR: We welcome the Stanford Cardinal, head coach Tara VanDerveer and student-athletes Haley Jones and Anna Wilson.

COACH VAN DERVEER: I thought it was a little bit like a heavyweight fight. These are two teams that know each other really well. They're very talented. And I think we just had to step up defensively, which we did.

And I think Anna really got it going defensively and helped us in the first half, and Haley really got her offense going in the second half. We got out in transition. She knocked down shots that are great shots for her. And we had a lot of different contributions from different people.

I thought Cam played really well. I thought that Agnes came in and gave us some good minutes, Kiki came in and gave us good minutes. But a lot of it was about who was playing defense.

Q. Anna, as Tara mentioned, in the first quarter, how important was it to establish that defensive prowess? The team outscored Oregon State 16-2. And Haley in the third quarter is when you sort of caught fire, scored 12 of your points in that quarter.

ANNA WILSON: I think our team is really focused on how to play Talia. And so she's a tremendous player. And there was a lot of communication, especially when she was in the sort of down screens or any sort of screens. And everyone switched really well and communicated really well. It was just kind of a team effort on the defensive end.

HALEY JONES: I think about the third quarter. Tara said at halftime that the shots I was taking the first half were

good shots. So I just kind of had to have confidence in that. And my teammates instilled a lot of confidence in me that those are shots that are makeable and within the flow of the offense. I think things just started getting going in the third quarter.

Q. It's been a rough couple of days for the Stanford athletic community with the loss of that woman's soccer player. Just wondered how you made sure you checked in on the girls and that they were doing okay while balancing getting ready for a big game?

COACH VAN DERVEER: It has been a really difficult past couple of days, as you said. And I know our team, and I express our condolences to the Meyer family, to friends, and our team is really supportive of women's soccer. And they know all the women on the soccer team and they come and support us.

But I think the best thing that we could do is come out and play really hard for and with each other today. I'm really proud of our team how we did that because it has been really rough.

And it's just something that, again, I think our team really stepped up, the leadership of on your team, both Anna and Haley are captains. They honored Katie's life with their shirts and the things that they've done in the past few days.

And they played hard for each other and knowing that it was tough. But I'm really proud of our team for how they came out. They're very resilient and they're a very, very close team.

Q. The last few conference games, the 3-point shot wasn't necessarily falling. Games were a little bit tight. To hit eight today, how much confidence when you guys are shooting the 3 well does that give you for the rest of the game? It obviously is something that you guys -- when you win bigger, you win after having hit a good amount of 3s.

ANNA WILSON: Cam hit her 3s in the corner. She got the green light from there. I think that just being able to knock down shots is always going to boost your confidence. So



to see other people and a wide variety of people hit 3s, especially in the first quarter, it definitely gives you that confidence to keep shooting. And obviously we know Haley will turn it on when it needs to be turned on. So yeah, she's awesome.

HALEY JONES: I think 3-point shooting is definitely a pillar of our offense. She mentioned Cam. I like when you're hitting your 3 out there in the first half. She was going crazy.

I think when we start hitting our 3s it opens up more driving lanes, more room for Cam, Kiki, Fran, whoever is inside. We're able to keep that 3-point shot going throughout the game, like it did today, because we were able to play that tag-team basketball that Tara likes. So we keep those fresh legs coming in, able to shoot the 3. I think it definitely makes us more dangerous when that stuff is going in.

Q. Haley, just to go back to the earlier point on the shirts and support of the soccer team, from a player leadership perspective, what was the decision in conversation to not only wearing those but the support you guys have lend to the team in the last few days?

HALEY JONES: I think Tara said it. Women's soccer and us are really close teams. I think that also we have, each and every one of us had individual relationships with Katie just because of the type of person she was. So it hit everybody in a different way.

So over the past few days we've had time as a team to talk about it, talk to everybody back at campus. We did something last night just for us to kind of all release emotionally, talking.

I think the shirts is just one thing that we can do to show our support to the rest of the world, I suppose. And some people wrote it on their shoes. Wrote different things on wrist bands. I think it was just our way to let everybody back at home know that she was loved and that we're still with them even though we're here in Vegas and not at home with them at home in Stanford.

Q. Anna and Haley, I don't mean to belabor this point but it's certainly an emotional time, could you talk about how you decided to come up with those specific support messages? And was it difficult to actually get motivated to go out and -- obviously you guys have played games in difficult circumstances, but this seems particularly difficult.

ANNA WILSON: There was definitely a conversation among the team about what we would be comfortable with, what we think would be a way to support the women's

soccer team, her family and the entire Stanford community.

I really think that, as Haley said it's a really small way of showing support. But to get motivated for the game, I don't think it's necessarily hard, but I think that it's something that we know that her spirit is here when we're playing and her energy.

If anyone here got to see her play ever, she's most definitely the most energetic goalie/player/teammate I've ever seen. So I think we just wanted to embody her spirit while playing. So I think we'll carry that through the rest of the season.

Q. Those first 13 minutes of the game, how close to perfect would you say that was defensively for you guys?

COACH VAN DERVEER: The first quarter was awesome. And, again, I thought people were really locked in defensively. And it helps our defense when our offense scores. So Anna making her 3, Cam, Lexie. I think it helps motivate our defense when we score.

So getting out to a 16-2 lead and then I'm not sure what the biggest lead was. I know in the second half it was 20-something. But I was glad that our team just didn't really relax and think the game was over because it's a 40-minute game.

Q. Coach and Haley, you guys face Colorado tomorrow. They've been a very difficult matchup the last few years. All those games the last two, three years have been really close. Give me your thoughts on facing Colorado and kind of what's made them a difficult matchup for Stanford over the last few years?

COACH VAN DERVEER: I think Colorado, JR Payne and her staff have done a great job. And they hang their hat on defense too. And they're a very aggressive team. They're a very athletic team.

I think the one thing that we did really well today we took care of the basketball. We only had three turnovers. When we played them in Colorado we had 13 in the first quarter. So number one thing is we will have to take care of the basketball.

And we have to just play our game. I think that, again, when you play against top teams like we do in this conference I think it just makes us better. And I would like to say that our team has improved more than Colorado since the last time we played.

Q. While you were talking, I think Charli Turner Thorne

is still doing a press conference announcing her retirement. I know that you -- she's been around this league for a long time and she played for you. I just wanted your thoughts on Charli's retirement?

COACH VAN DERVEER: Thanks for asking the question. First of all, I coached Charli for three years. And there's not any player that I've ever coached that is any more competitive than Charli. She's a great competitor. And it's kind of a little bit serendipitous that it's at the Pac-12 Tournament. They won the first Pac-12 Tournament against us.

She's had a great career at ASU. She's been a great competitor, a friend, someone that I really admire how hard she works and the teams that she's put on the floor.

There's a side of me that just thinks, wow, I mean, I think of her as my player. Like, what are you doing? Keep coaching. But I'm really happy for her and wish her the absolute best in retirement.

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