

Pac-12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

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Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Stanford Cardinal

Coach Tara VanDerveer

Cameron Brink

Anna Wilson

Postgame Press Conference

Stanford - 71, Colorado - 45

THE MODERATOR: Joining us are the Stanford Cardinal, coach Tara VanDerveer and student-athletes Anna Wilson and Cameron Brink.

COACH VANDERVEER: I'm just proud of our team, the way everyone stayed together kept playing hard. Our defense I thought was outstanding. Just, we struggled a little bit I think offensively. We weren't rebounding the way I thought we needed to. But people made big play after big play.

I loved the play where Anna chased down the ball. She came right, made a defensive play, I think, on Miller. I loved when she saw the shot clock was going down, she sized her up and hit the 3 off the screen.

Cam was unstoppable inside. She's really playing really well. She's so strong on the block. She can face up and hit the 3. Runs the floor, really working hard defensively.

I think, again, Haley stepped up in the second half. We had great defense from Lexie on 21, Hollingshed. They're definitely a NCAA team. They play hard. When we're not playing against them I'll be rooting for them.

Q. You obviously don't want to advocate any sort of skirmish, but they were playing you tough. Anna comes out, hits a 3. You're up by four. And then Cameron and Mya have a little tussle. It seemed to spark your team. From your standpoint, is it something, a little tenacity like that helped to spark? And, Cameron, did you feel that that ignited you, the team at that point?

COACH VANDERVEER: Well, I think, first of all, Cam is a



competitor and she's fearless. I don't think any of us want to have someone's hand in their face. But that, sometimes whatever it takes, got Cam going. And she responded to the challenge.

We don't like any type of non-basketball behavior happening on the court. And there was some non-basketball behavior. But I think the officials, they didn't throw people out of the game, which was -- I didn't want Cam leaving the game obviously.

But they just, we moved on from that point and I thought Cam played really, really well. And I don't think it sparked our team. I think our team was already sparking. But it might have been a little bit of a turning point.

CAMERON BRINK: I just thought it was a heated moment. But kind of, we use it as fuel.

Q. Anna, last year I feel the country got to learn what a tremendous defender you are. You're playing with a ton of confidence offensively right now. You look like you're having a lot of fun. Are you trying to change your identity, sick of being known as a defensive stopper?

ANNA WILSON: No, I don't think it's an insult to be a defensive stopper. I don't think it's an insult to be known as a defensive stopper. I think it's quite the compliment. And I think our team's identity is a lot on defense.

So I feel like if I'm a defensive stopper then I'm bringing something good to the team. I think if I can bring offense as well that's great too.

For me, honestly, I fed off Cam's energy. And she really inspired me to play harder and to take shots that are open. And I know I can take. Tara has trusted me to take shots. Just leaning into that more.

Q. When you look at this team, you're undefeated in conference play, the defending national champion. You look at this team, you're undefeated in conference play, defending national champion. You've got two players that can be conference player of the year on



your roster and your starting five. I know the national conversation trends towards being East Coast centric, but do you think a team this good is a little under appreciated nationally, especially in the age of NIL where the exposure helps your athletes further for things they want to do?

COACH VANDERVEER: I guess I'm just going to focus on kind of the people they are. And they're into playing basketball. They want to work hard. They want their team to win. It was a really fun locker room after the game when these guys were on TV. Then they came back in. People are really excited.

What I like about our team is not the what we don't have, the glass half EMT, but in fact what is so full. And the what's full is the fact that they're very unselfish and they're not about their own thing. They're about each other. And that is why we're doing so well.

And I just think that that's the type of player you want, the unselfish player. And NIL might encourage a selfish player. But we have players that have -- I don't keep track of it, but I'm sure they have great NIL deals. They're great representatives of Stanford.

And, yes, there is the East Coast bias, I agree with that. But they're going to get a Stanford degree and they're already playing on a regular-season Pac-12 championship team. And I think they're going to work really hard to get the conference tournament championship, too.

Q. 1,000 wins at Stanford tonight. Would you like to ruminate on that for a second?

COACH VANDERVEER: I wasn't thinking about it at all, but some little birdie brought that up in the locker room to me. It's a lot of games. And I love where I work. And I'm really -- I love coaching this team. So I hope we can get a thousand and one on Sunday.

Q. You guys were in a really close game the first quarter. The second quarter you started forcing a lot of turnovers, getting a lot of fast-break opportunities, spreading the game out. What changed in between the quarters to signify like an energy shift that really separated you guys in the game?

COACH VANDERVEER: I think some of it is our depth, honestly. I thought we had nine people score. I thought Kiki came in gave us great energy. Cam knows she can go hard and asked for a sub.

I thought Lexie and Lacie played really hard, especially defensively on Hollingshed. And Anna could go hard and

get a sub. Jenna came in and did a good job. Agnes came in. We could go with a lot of different people based on kind of what we needed and who we needed.

So I think the depth, what I like is that we won each quarter. I don't like to ride the roller coaster up here and down here. I'm proud of our team for doing that.

Q. Cameron and Anna, a year ago you were still in the midst of a really weird journey. You were here but I think only family, no fans. And just wondering if both of you could comment on what it's like to be in a pretty full arena and what -- is this more fun than it was a year ago? I know you can't really look ahead past Sunday, but going into the tournament, just are you expecting a different kind of experience and looking forward to that different experience?

ANNA WILSON: I would say throughout the season we played in tough places. We played in Zag and South Carolina and played at Oregon. We didn't play at Arizona. We played at Tennessee. So we've been in environments that prepared us for the NCAA Tournament, especially because when we go to those places there's more bias because that's at home for them. And so I think we really prepared ourselves.

I think that being able to play here empty last year and win just kind of is a testament to our team that no matter where we are we want to win with people there, with people not there.

And so I think it's just going to have a lot more energy and we'll feed off of that and we're really excited about it.

CAMERON BRINK: Just to add that, last year was just as much fun for me because I get to be with my teammates even though it was weird. But this year is great too. I'm excited to play with them.

Q. Tara and Cam, in that delay between the altercation and when play started, did you think you were going to be ejected?

CAMERON BRINK: No, I didn't. I didn't think I should have been.

COACH VANDERVEER: I really didn't see the play. I had to go over to the table and watch it on TV. And you couldn't even see on it the replay because of the angle.

But I'm glad that neither player was ejected. It shouldn't happen in basketball. But thankfully we were able to continue the game. But I've never had anyone really ejected like that. So I was not thinking it would happen.

Q. Coach talked about her getting win number 1,000 at Stanford. How did you guys react to Tara getting win number 1,000 at Stanford?

ANNA WILSON: Congrats.

CAMERON BRINK: Didn't know it.

ANNA WILSON: We actually did know because we were on the TV set and they told us. I've been here for 132 of them.

COACH VANDERVEER: Who's counting?

ANNA WILSON: They told me. Right, that's crazy. If I had more years to be here I probably would be here for more.

But I'm just really grateful to have been coached by Tara. She's a legend. She's the greatest of all time. So I'm just really grateful for that.

COACH VANDERVEER: Thank you.

CAMERON BRINK: It's an honor to learn from you every day. And you just make every day fun. You make us laugh all the time even though you don't really try to. And I mean --

COACH VANDERVEER: Why were you laughing --

CAMERON BRINK: [LAUGHTER]. Because you're funny. And just really thankful for you. And just congrats.

Q. Since December, you guys have done a good job getting a handle on this turnover issue that you had the first semester. Can you just talk a little bit about how that's gone for each of you and maybe the key things to getting to where you are right now?

COACH VANDERVEER: I really think our team is in the position we're in because of the improvement of Anna and Lacie, especially their improvement. It's not to say that other people haven't improved, but we needed them to improve so much. And they have.

They're so much more confident handling the ball. Anna took a little dip today with some turnovers but her assist-to-turnover ratio is incredible. It's like 5-to-1. She's so good with the ball.

And Lacie, today, had, what, five assists. They're playing with such confidence. And we're able to bring in -- actually Jordan Hamilton wasn't available today but she's helped us in the back court. Haley's helped us in the back court. And

so has Jana Van Gytenbeek.

And I'll give a shout out to assistant coaches Kate Paye and Britney Anderson have been working overtime with our guards and it's paid off. The improvement to me is really exciting.

ANNA WILSON: I think Lacie and I are just really competitive people. I think early on in the season it's an adjustment to learn a new position. But I think we're really just, I see Lacie all the time working in the gym on her handles and everything. Kudos to her.

But I think that it's just being really confident. We've been playing basketball all our lives. We know how to dribble a basketball. It's just a matter of being confident. And, so, yeah, I think that's how our adjustment has happened.

COACH VANDERVEER: I think also experience. Really, Anna and Lacie never really played point guard for us the whole time they've been at Stanford because we had Kiana or Marta before that. So they just needed to get some games under their belt.

Q. Cam, toward the end of the game you missed that baseline fade-away, grabbed your own rebound and kind of threw it in the general direction of the rim. Did you see how wide open Lacie was because you didn't get an assist. We were wondering if we thought you should?

CAMERON BRINK: For some reason I didn't think my shot hit the rim. And then I don't know what happened, honestly. I couldn't tell you what I was thinking.

ANNA WILSON: It was a great pass.

CAMERON BRINK: I'm glad Lacie scored. Tara talked to me about that one.

Q. What did you think?

COACH VANDERVEER: (Comment directed towards Brink) What was that?

Q. Anna, at the beginning of the press conference Tara mentioned the big shot at the end of the half. You closed the third quarter with nine points. But I agree with Tara, I feel like the chase down on the defensive play might have been the most definitive play of this program. Because you ladies were up by 16. In a sense you were in control of the game. Weren't going to let them come back. But does that sort of define what this team is about -- it doesn't matter the lead, we're never going to give up?

ANNA WILSON: I think I made a turnover kind of similar to that one right before. And I saw her dribbling, and I was, like, I think I can get there.

And I think for me, I'm just competitive. And I wasn't really sure if I was going to be able to get there to block it. I just wanted to make a play on the ball and that happened. So that was cool.

COACH VANDERVEER: I loved it.

Q. Anna, at the end of the third, when you hit the buzzer beater, you're usually level headed. I saw you get that smirk and look at your bench. Talk about that moment and having those last nine points in the third quarter. Seemed like you were, like someone said earlier, just playing with confidence on offense?

ANNA WILSON: My energy came from Cam's play after the altercation. And the I think that, for me, I just wanted to be really aggressive offensively. And it just happened to end that way at the end of the quarter. And my team has a lot of confidence in me. So when I made that shot I just kind of looked at them because I thought it would be kind of funny, but I am pretty stoic.

Q. Tara, just to kind of look ahead, maybe it could be Oregon. It could be Utah. Just reflect on the last time you played Oregon in Eugene. It was such a close game and you guys came back from 10 down in the fourth quarter, just to pull off the victory?

COACH VANDERVEER: I remember. (Laughter).

I think we improved a lot since then. We've played in some really tough games -- Washington State, Washington. This conference is just really strong top to bottom. And I think we've learned a lot. I think we're playing better. And we'll have to play better, if we play Oregon we'll have to play better than we did last time up there.

But I feel like our team is just playing its best basketball at the right time, and we'll be ready on Sunday for either Utah or Oregon.

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