

Pac-12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Friday, March 4, 2022

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Oregon Ducks

Coach Kelly Graves

Te-Hina Paopao

Endyia Rogers

Postgame Press Conference



Utah - 80, Oregon - 73

COACH GRAVES: Disappointed, but this has been our season in a nutshell, to be honest with you. We're up and down, a roller coaster most of the year. We just never know what to expect.

I did a terrible job tonight coaching. Obviously lost my cool late. I can't comment, of course, on the reasons why because some people are protected.

But I just thought Utah was the more aggressive team tonight. And unfortunately we just didn't play our best basketball, but I always give them the credit.

I do want to congratulate Lynne. Lynne has been a friend of mine for a long time. I remember her when she was playing for my best friend. I'm really happy for her. I'm happy for Utah. But this is Lynne's first time in the NCAA Tournament. She's earned it. Her team's earned it. They're a very good team. They'll be here for a while.

They actually remind me of the team we had a few years ago when Ruthy and Samantha and Mallory McGuire were starting for us as freshman. We came in here and knocked off Kelsey Plum and those guys when they were freshmen.

And they got a nice team. They've got a nice team. But I'm proud of our team. We played hard and I'm proud of these two. We unfortunately didn't make enough plays tonight. Got off to a great start and we led up. And then we have to make a furious comeback. We've got to figure this out or the NCAA Tournament is going to be short.

But that being said, I think we have the opportunity and capability to win some games and go a ways in the tournament. I'm not giving up on the team, but we've got to

figure something out and be better.

I know it doesn't sound very happy. I apologize for that. But you guys know me, I'm always going to be honest with you.

Q. Obviously I know there's certain things you can't say about what happened on the technical foul. But what was it that you said?

COACH GRAVES: I didn't say anything. Didn't say a thing. There you go. That gets you a T these days.

And I'm not joking. You know how everybody saw -- I didn't say anything. I did not say a thing. That question needs to be asked of someone else.

Q. You bring up when you guys knocked off Plum a few years ago, Plum came into the press conference furious and said we're going to make up for this in the NCAA Tournament. So I guess especially for you two, I know you're really upset, Te-Hina, but how do you turn that into anger and make sure you stay in NCAA a long time?

TE-HINA PAOPAO: We just have to come together as a team and play better basketball. Today we didn't play the best basketball we can. We've just got to move on to the next.

Q. Not talking about this game in particular, or even the Pac-12 in particular, but when you have a talent like Nyara in the post, do you think she's officiated a little bit differently given how dynamic she is on both sides of the floor?

COACH GRAVES: Well, you and I can talk off the record. I, of course, can't say anything because of the rules. So I can't say anything. But you and I, we live in the same hometown. We can have a beer sometime and talk about it. You watched the game.

Q. Obviously this is not the result you were looking for. So you were out on outside looking in for the top 16 seeds earlier in the week. So, make the case, I



believe, just for being one of those -- do you think you should be one of those top 16?

COACH GRAVES: No, we had a chance to earn it. We didn't.

Q. What happened in the third quarter? That seemed to be where the whole thing turned around.

COACH GRAVES: It's been our worst quarter all year. Our worst quarter all year. Fourth quarter has been our best. And the third the worst.

They came out early, hit a couple of 3s, I think, in the first two possessions. And I think that set the tone. Then we're playing a little bit of catch-up. I've got to give my team a ton of credit. We battled back. Had a chance. We were down 10 or 11 and had a chance. That's when I made a stupid play.

I guess I gestured in the wrong way, breathed in the wrong way, something to that extent. And they made us pay. They got the -- I think the 3 from the 3-point shot. They made all those. One of the technicals. And then their basketball.

So it's a shame. Again, I let my emotions get to me. I usually, at that point, when I'm on the referees it's usually because I can't yell at my team. But we just needed to play with a little bit more intensity and heart and toughness. And we just didn't when it really counted. And they did.

I never want to take away from the other team. They did. They earned this game. And I'm happy for Utah. They deserved it. They deserved it. We did not.

Q. Endyia, for you as an upperclassmen, what do you do to get the locker room reset, refocused? I know there's recovery time before the tournament, but where do you see your role getting everybody up and ready for this tournament now?

ENDYIA ROGERS: Just stepping up and being a better leader. I mean, we know that last year when they came here they lost the first game and they still ended up making a deep run in the tournament. I mean that was the thing that was brought up in the locker room: Even though we lost, we can still go and make a deep run in the tournament even when it gets hard.

Q. You have almost two weeks before the NCAA Tournament. How much better do you think you can get in those two weeks?

COACH GRAVES: Well, I mean we've played some good

basketball this year. It just depends on what's going to show up. And I don't mean that in a negative way. It's just kind of been that kind of year. It's crazy.

We all experience just different groups each and every year. It's never the same. But honestly, if we get our minds right, we practice hard, we focus, we get ourselves back up -- it always feels bad now -- I think we have a chance to win a bunch of games. I really do. I do. So I'm looking forward to the experience and believe that we're going to do the Pac-12 proud.

The one thing I will say about the Pac-12, it prepares us for the NCAA Tournament. Over the last four, five years we have the best record of any conference in the tournament. That's not bullshit. That's real -- excuse me, BS -- and those real numbers. And so I think we will be prepared. And I anticipate that we're going to come out and we're going to play well.

We've got great guard play. These two really have to set the tone for us. NCAA, any postseason play comes down to guard play. I think we have really, really good guards. We didn't shoot it well tonight but we have really good guards. I really believe these two can help propel us to a really nice NCAA Tournament run.

Apologize for the cursing. If you only knew.

Q. Te-Hina, along that line, you're not done playing basketball. You're not sitting up there right now knowing that the season's over. Obviously, there's more to the season. How do you regroup mentally and help your teammates do that?

TE-HINA PAOPAO: We have the next couple of days off, and I just think the mental health is an important thing. And that we have to really consider that mental health is a real thing.

And these next couple days are going to help a lot. We'll probably stay away from basketball a little just to get our minds off it. And then when we come back together we've got to get right and play some more basketball.

Q. In the third quarter you were 1-for-12, 8 percent from the field. Fourth quarter it improved to 52 percent from the field. I was wondering, what changed?

COACH GRAVES: I'm no mathematician, but we made more baskets. I mean, I don't think we took bad shots. It's not like we suddenly just threw half court hook shots up. We didn't make enough baskets. We had opportunities around the basket and I thought we had some pretty good looks. I just think we lost a little bit of intensity in that third



quarter.

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