

# Pac-12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Sunday, March 6, 2022

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

**Stanford Cardinal**

**Coach Tara VanDerveer**

**Cameron Brink**

**Haley Jones**

**Lexie Hull**

Postgame Press Conference

Stanford - 73, Utah - 48

THE MODERATOR: We've got Haley Jones, Lexie Hull, head coach Tara VanDerveer and Cameron Brink.

COACH VANDERVEER: I'm really proud of our team. It's been a long Pac-12 schedule. And to go undefeated and to win the championship and the tournament says a lot about these young ladies, how hard they play and how well they play together.

I also want to give a shout out to Utah and the great job that Lynne Roberts and her staff have done. They have a fantastic team and we wish them the absolute best in the NCAA Tournament.

And it's not ever easy. It's really challenging. At halftime, things didn't look good. We were fouling too much. And I think when we came out, we went to Cam. She really delivered. I thought Haley had a great game on both sides of the ball, playing defense, knocking her 3 down. And Lexie really stepped up in the second half, too.

We shot the ball better. I think our defense kicked in better. And it's a great team win. I'm really proud of our team.

**Q. Tara, defensively did you make a big change in what you were doing? They were shooting the ball pretty well and hitting 3s in the first half. I think they only got two 3s in the second half. And obviously they only shot 20-something percent in the second half.**

COACH VANDERVEER: I don't know that it was anything strategically different. I think it was just maybe a little



better concentration. Maybe a little -- they got together and talked about it and just said, hey, if we want to be the Pac-12 champions, we've got to play better.

It was also, I think, a team they played four games. They didn't seem to have their legs in the second half as much.

We were running better and we were knocking down shots. It helps your defense when your offense goes, too.

**Q. You've had a lot of incredible accomplishments over your career. Just while you were here you hit your thousandth win at Stanford. And I felt like when Cam and Anna directly addressed you, you got a little emotional when they were saying it's an honor to play for you. And I was thinking, you had a former player, Charli, retire. You've got another former player in Lindy coaching her team. What is it like to just continually come here, not just win, but know that you're impacting so many young women in the game?**

COACH VANDERVEER: You know, honestly, I learn more from them than they ever could learn from me. I'm up with the competitors, brilliant students and I watch them and I learn a lot from them.

They get a piece of my mind sometimes, but I'm the fortunate one to be around just incredible young ladies. It's not just their basketball but the people they are. And I'm so proud of them.

**Q. Lynne mentioned in here before you guys came in, she thinks you're the top team in the country and that you guys are pretty underappreciated nationally. And one of the things she said about you is you keep going and chopping wood and you don't let that kind of thing kind of bother you. And I'm curious, how do you kind of keep it so "here" all the time knowing how good this team is, how good these players are and there's still that kind of disparity of coverage? It feels like it would be different if you were in Storrs as opposed to Palo Alto, maybe?**

COACH VANDERVEER: I think when you coach the players I coach, Cam and Lexie and Lacie and Anna and



Haley, how could it be better than that? And living in Palo Alto, come on, I'm living my dream. And I don't get caught up, I don't do like Twitter and stuff. I don't get caught up in any of that. Although I have done a couple of TikToks. Right, Haley?

HALEY JONES: You killed it.

COACH VANDERVEER: I like to keep it real. And what's real is the grit that I saw today. What's real is just how they play for each other. And I can go in the locker room and I can be totally honest with our team. Just, hey, I love them, but it's like parents, I don't give them candy. They hear some things that they don't want to hear. But they respond. So I really don't care about the outside noise at all.

**Q. Haley, at the end of the third quarter it looked like you were in some pretty good pain and maybe you weren't going to be able to come back. And then two minutes later you're back on the court. What happened and how are you feeling now?**

HALEY JONES: Yeah, I rolled my ankle. And I went over and I got retaped. And I came back. That's really it. Yeah, I ran and I said, Tara, I'm good. And I went and subbed back in the game.

COACH VANDERVEER: I like that.

HALEY JONES: Thanks.

**Q. Somewhat in jest and somewhat seriously, do you ever get tired of celebrating?**

LEXIE HULL: No, it never gets old. I think Tara can attest to it. She loves it every time. We joke about it. Her best look is the backwards-hat Tara. The only way you get a backwards hat is if you win. We love celebrating.

**Q. Lexie, I talked to your sister last week and asked her if she was getting sentimental. You're a senior, there are a few seniors on this team. However long this lasts, it's going to be a last ride. I'm wondering if you're starting to feel it a little bit?**

LEXIE HULL: We felt it on senior night just thinking about a lot of laughs. And we love this team. And we love playing with each other. And I think we're just enjoying every moment. And that's all we can really do at this point.

**Q. Cam, Oregon high school girls basketball tournaments are starting up this week. If you go back to those high school days playing for Southridge, think about what you wanted when you came to Stanford for**

**the first time. Between everything that's happened in the last year and a half, is it safe to say that kind of all the boxes you've wanted have been checked off at this point?**

CAMERON BRINK: I knew I wanted to come to a great school like Stanford. I wanted to play for Tara. So far it's been a blast and I just want to keep going.

**Q. With South Carolina losing, does being the No. 1 seed in the tournament matter to you or how do you view that -- should you be number one in the polls or in the seeding for the tournament?**

COACH VANDERVEER: Personally, I leave the seeding and all that, bracketology to other people. And just really focus on our team and improving and staying healthy. And being happy playing with each other.

Seeds, like seeds we didn't even know we were the No. 1 last year. It doesn't matter. It's playing well. It's staying healthy and playing with each other. So to me it's irrelevant.

I do hope we go to Spokane, be in that regional and have a shot at going there just because for Lexie and Lacie. You have to win two games to get there. I'll bet they'll be going through their kneepads to get there. I wouldn't want to be a team playing Stanford having to go through the twins.

**Q. You're the first winner here in what's going to be ten tournaments across these two weeks in this city. You've been to a lot of events in a lot of cities. Has it amazed you to see the evolution of this place as a sports town and a sports destination? And what do you think of it in that regard?**

COACH VANDERVEER: I love it. I love the enthusiasm. When we're not playing, I like the halftimes. The enthusiasm for women's basketball, I think, is just growing. And the support, to have Mark Davis come out front row. A lot of the fans are basketball fans, not necessarily Stanford fans or Utah fans.

And I think we're just coming out of COVID. And it's going to be -- it's just a great tournament. So I'm very excited about being here.

**Q. Have you ever thought of yourself as a Vegas person?**

COACH VANDERVEER: I'm so far from a Vegas person. (Laughter) but I'm a Vegas basketball person.

**Q. Now because you said you like halftime, did you**



**see the striptease halftime the other day during the Utah game?**

COACH VANDERVEER: I saw the dancing. I didn't see that one.

**Q. Cam, you've done this twice now and it's really different. You got to have fans this year. Is it better? The same? Weird? Different?**

CAMERON BRINK: Yes, it's definitely better having all the fans and halftimes and stuff like that. It's fun. But it's completely different. COVID really made a lot of things different. But I wouldn't take back last year for anything because I think that's why our team is so close this year.

**Q. You were visibly upset after not getting a shot off in the halftime. Do you think how the first half ended had anything to do with how dominant you guys were in the second half for you guys?**

COACH VANDERVEER: I'm not sure I understand. What was the question?

**Q. You were upset after not getting a shot off at the end of that first half. Do you think that fueled the team in the second half in how they came out?**

COACH VANDERVEER: Probably not. I think that -- I don't want to say I'm a perfectionist; I don't think I'm that. But there's certain things in this point of the season that I think we should be doing better. I wasn't really excited about our first half because I thought we were fouling too much.

And obviously Haley had a really great first half shooting the ball, but we weren't doing what we needed to do. And so that was just maybe the cherry on the top of my frustration.

**Q. How would you describe the energy heading into the NCAA Tournament from inside the locker room?**

HALEY JONES: I think we're hyped. I think every year we go into this season with a lot of goals. And the first two goals -- I guess five. We wanted undefeated preseason. Didn't get that one, so our next two on the list were regular-season Pac-12 and tournament. So, we got both of those.

It's kind of fueling our fire to keep that competitive energy going into the tournament where we won last year and we have a target on our back, which I think we embrace as kind of motivation and the competitive spirit to get back out into the tournament this year and try to bring another one

home.

LEXIE HULL: We love playing with each other. And we know going into the tournament, it being a one-and-done type of game, that we just want to be with each other still. And we play for that next game so that we can still practice, still play. And we're just really excited, looking forward to it.

CAMERON BRINK: I'm really getting sad about our seniors. And, I mean, on senior night I was a mess.

LEXIE HULL: Love you, Cam.

CAMERON BRINK: But I'm going to miss them. So I'm savoring our last moments.

**Q. Haley, you made six 3s all season. You came in today and made three. Was it something about the big game that made you feel your stroke was good, or you've just been shooting it better and you felt today was a good day to let it fly?**

HALEY JONES: That's a great question. I think every day's a good day to let it fly. Today it went in. That was great, I think. I've been working on it. Tara said if you want to shoot it in the game, a certain percentage, you've got to make 50 extra a day, which I've been doing. So, I guess it's working. It's paying off.

**Q. Haley, does it feel the defense of the NCAA title starts now? Obviously there's a lot of goals, but now it's here. And how important does it feel to you to defend that title?**

HALEY JONES: I think it started as soon as we won last year. I don't think it's just starting just now. I think that having that target on our back all season has led to really competitive practices, competitive scrimmages, whatever it may be, being ultra competitive in games, being gritty.

I think we know what it takes to get there. But we're going to have to work twice as hard because everybody's coming after us.

So I think I'm excited. We're all really excited. Lexie said we love playing with one another. So we want to stay together. And we love each other more than just teammates. We love each other as people. So we want to keep playing together. And I think that adds to this spirit to keep fighting, keep playing as long as we can.

**Q. I think about last year's team and how big a part Kiana played in that. You go into the beginning of the season, there's kind of learning how to play without**

**her being that kind of consistent guard for you. It seems like now this team is almost even more balanced than it was last year. How has that evolved this entire season getting used to really making it a collective effort the way it looks out on the floor?**

COACH VANDERVEER: Obviously Kiana was a huge part of our success in this Pac-12 Tournament and in the national championship. And I think early in the season, you know, you've got someone like Lacie who played maybe point guard for her team in the third grade, or Anna Wilson, who all of a sudden you're asking Anna to go from running back to quarterback. Like, her brother couldn't do that either. And both of them, I'm so proud of both of them for stepping up.

And I think also the development. I think Haley has said, hey, if you need me to handle. Lexie, the same thing. Everyone said I'll do whatever you need me to do to help our team be successful. I'll play whatever position.

But those two especially. And then also I think the unselfishness of someone like Jordan Hamilton who in games she's come in and helped us win games. And so has Jenna.

Everyone has been willing to do whatever they need to do. But those two especially had, I think, great improvement. And I know they're really excited about playing in the tournament.

**Q. Could you talk about Lacie and her evolution as a point guard? Early in the season, turned the ball over a lot as a team and just really was missing a true point guard, but now you've gotten it tightened down? What's it been like, especially for you, Lexie, to watch her evolve in that position?**

LEXIE HULL: I think she's such an unselfish player that she'll do whatever needs to be done, whatever role needs to be filled. And I think she's a really quick learner too.

Tara has taken her under her wing. Kate, the entire coaching staff being really helpful in making her feel like she could do it and gave her the opportunity to do so. Yeah, I love seeing her out there. I love seeing her do what she can do. She's a great leader as our point guard. And I think she's really stepping into that role really well.

**Q. Obviously it's been a tough week with Katie Meyers, but Anna said that you guys wanted to embody her spirit and carry that with you guys throughout the rest of this season. What does it mean for you guys to have won the tournament after such a tough week?**

LEXIE HULL: Katie was an incredible person in every way. And to be able to win, I know she would have been one of the biggest -- sorry.

HALEY JONES: I think Lexie can speak to Katie's character. But I think we all had such an individual relationship with her. And it was because of who she was. She was for women's sports. She was enthusiastic. She was so positive, so loving, so outgoing, so compassionate in everything she did.

So I think going into this tournament, we had very heavy hearts for her, ourselves, her family, the soccer team. But I think we tried to embody that spirit, like Anna said. We tried to be competitive, be gritty. She's one of the most enthusiastic players I've ever seen. Getting to watch her play in the soccer Final Four, we all went to their game.

So to be able to win and bring this home and kind of be with our Stanford family when we get back is going to be really special. But I think we did a really good job embodying that for her and for each other.

**Q. Tara, I assume that you get some sort of bonus because you won this. Are you going to go gamble at all?**

COACH VANDERVEER: If you think I gamble a lot, the bonus is a nice bonus, but I already lost \$20 in a slot machine. That's my limit. I got up to 30 and I should have cashed out but I didn't.

But just thank you all for your support of women's basketball and our team. And I hope to see everyone in the NCAA Tournament. Thank you very much.

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