

Pac-12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 1, 2023

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

UCLA Bruins

Cori Close

Emily Bessoir

Charisma Osborne

Postgame Press Conference



CHARISMA OSBORNE: Yeah, I definitely think I was thinking like we're not losing this game right now. Just from past games like we have lost close games, and I think our team did a good job of being able to execute and know what we're looking for.

Really I was just thinking like, okay, how can I help my team and what do they need from me. I feel like actually I didn't do as great leading in the fourth quarter and I wanted to reset myself and I really just lead through talking and doing what I do.

CORI CLOSE: I think to answer that, I think Charisma, what she said about the reset is, that's something we work really hard at. In the fourth quarter she was frustrated and then in overtime I just heard her. She not only reset herself, she reset our whole team.

What's not going to show up in the stat sheets is not only did she get those six points, she also set both screens that got Emily those other six points on those two 3s. So it's about, it really is about making winning plays, and that doesn't happen if you don't have the right mindset.

Q. Speaking of winning plays, the importance of Camryn Brown, even though she fouled out, it seems like she makes a lot of those winning plays that kind of go unnoticed, the block she had and then the pass to Kiki Rice in transition. How important has she been in this game and then just in general in this season for you guys?

CORI CLOSE: Yeah, I wrote her a note this morning and I just said, you know, you are our quarterback out there when you're in between the lines. You talk, you think ahead, you anticipate, you have a great basketball IQ. I just kept saying, lead us, talk to us, make those plays.

This was our lowest passion play game in a long time, and I think it's because Cam wasn't out there as much. Obviously, we missed Lina in that category as well.

But Camryn Brown, her out-of-area rebounds, her ability to set, we call 'em assist screens that lead to open shots for a

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THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon. We'll start with an opening statement from coach and then take questions for the student athletes.

CORI CLOSE: Wasn't that nice of us to make a really exciting game for the media, to start off the tournament this way. We're all about the selflessness, taking one for the team.

In all seriousness, at this time of year we just found a way to win. We earned another game. That's all I care about. We earned another game. We took some things that we've learned in the past about mindset and when things don't go your way and you're frustrated and you're tempted to go into your self, how do we respond. And what leads to us getting shots, getting stops and rebounds when maybe you've had some disappointments, maybe some things haven't gone your way, maybe the other team's gone on a run.

At this time there's not time to unpack or be philosophical. We just got the chance to earn another game, and I'm going to enjoy that.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, coach. Questions?

Q. Charisma, in overtime, you seemed to say, This is my period of the game and put your stamp on it and you had eight points. I think you scored the first six for you guys. You had two big steals. What did you bring in that overtime, when did you know, like, I have to step up. This is my probably last PAC 12 tournament. I'm not going to go out on a loss in the first round. We got to at least advance to the next day?



teammate, she's a whatever it takes, she's a glue player. She's what makes you go from having talented individuals to a cohesive team that does something bigger together than they could do on their own. She deserves so much credit for what she brings to our team.

Q. Emily, you guys mentioned those really close games. What specifically were those lessons that you took from those games and what moments did you see them kind of show up today?

EMILY BESSOIR: Yeah. I think we analyzed a lot of those close games. We also talk a lot about what we do when we play well. It comes down to the fundamentals of our game, which is rebounding, passion plays, and defending. Just having those past games as experience we knew exactly who we're looking for and what we're looking for.

Like you guys said, Charisma took the ball and scored, but she also set great screens. We rebounded the ball really well in the end again. So I think just having that experience and having that mindset shift of like, okay, what do we need to do next? It's rebounding, it's passion play, it's defending, and I think that's what helped us.

CHARISMA OSBORNE: Can I add to that also? Because Cori talked about it in the locker room after the game, but even some of the games that we've lost, it's been on last-second shots, and Kiki was able to get the stop and block whoever, No. 2, I think, and I think that was just really big and that gave us a lot of confidence going into overtime.

Q. Emily, you hit some 3-pointers right at the start of the game, and then maybe not so much, but then you came on in overtime, and then you're ready to do it again. Was there any correlation between what you did at the beginning of the game and what you did at the end of the game?

EMILY BESSOIR: I don't know if there's a correlation, but I think it really helped to have the reset, the mental reset, and just instead of not, like not wanting to lose, being willing to win, if that makes sense. I think I was just ready to shoot those shots when I saw the opportunity.

CORI CLOSE: I think that's, Tasha Brown on our staff deserves a lot of credit. She just kept saying every time, play free, have fun, play to win, go play to be us. We talk about other people prepared to beat us. We're competing to be us and to play to our identity and do our very best.

You hear that mindset work being referred to a lot, and Coach Tasha has really been a leader of that on our staff. She does a lot of, deserves a lot of credit for how our

players are sort of drawing on that tool that's in their toolbox now because of her teaching.

Q. Emily, obviously you weren't able to play in this tournament last year with your injury. What does it mean to you to come out here and really be the difference in overtime there with those two 3s to help your team survive?

EMILY BESSOIR: It was so much fun. I'm really grateful that I'm able to play again. I told this to Kiki before the game, but I remember last year when all our starters ran in and we high-fived them and I was just thinking, that's what I'm working for.

So I'm really glad that my team has my back or had my back the whole comeback. It's just so much fun and I'm glad to be out there again.

Q. Charisma had a plus 27, which led all the players in this game. You talk about the little things that she does, setting the screens. Just talk about in a game like this when the margins are super thin how valuable having someone like her who can do all those little things and contribute like she does in a game like this, just how big that is?

CORI CLOSE: Well, and I think that's an example of it. It's not about the individual stat line. The most important stat is when she was on the floor, did we get more stops and did we get more scores. It doesn't necessarily mean she got more stops or she got more scores.

I think that's what the game is all about. I love that you picked that out, plus 27 on her plus/minus. It's not about what you do for yourself. It's about what you do to help us win more possessions. That's what I've been saying about Charisma all year, is that people will point to a lot of different things that she can do and she has a lot of different skills, but bottom line is our team gets more stops and our team gets more scores, period.

Q. Cori, Charisma mentioned Kiki, huge play to tie the game and then the defensive stop. How have you seen her progress during her freshmen year?

CORI CLOSE: Wow, defensively. I think defensively and keeping her attack mentality. There was a lull in the middle of the PAC 12 tournament where she was just overthinking a lot. She is such an analytical player. She wants to do everything right. I think she got -- in the last couple weeks got her attack mentality back.

I just think that's part of the learning curve. It's just so much coming at you. You're processing more as a

basketball player in a more pressurized environment than you ever have in your entire life. I think she's really adjusting to that.

But I think I'm most proud today of how much better her defense got and how important that is for us, because that's been the thing that we've been really challenging her on. So without hesitation to be just -- her best thing is to get down hill, but she also didn't hesitate on her jump shot and she's going to shoot a higher percentage when she's a hunter, not a reactor. So I just think her, just development has been really fun to watch. But she will be the first to say that Charisma, Gina, those people have really walked by her side and have really been a great support to her and that's been one of the reasons her maturation process has been really good.

Q. I wanted to ask you more just about that one play on Jaddan Simmons. Because you had been getting a lot of foul calls on drives and various things under the basket. But she didn't commit a foul down there. So just, can you just -- because that could have been the game, like right there.

CORI CLOSE: I think there was a couple of plays, obviously refing these kind of games are really difficult. There's a lot on the line and those are really difficult positions.

I was fired up on a couple of those calls, but the reality is when it came down to it could you find a way to get a stop for your team. And that's really all that matters. You have to adjust to how the game's getting called. If they're able to get really deep on their dribble drive offense and some of the ways in which they were running their attacks, you're putting yourself in a position to have referees have an influence. To me she just found a way to make a play. We weren't going to rely on whether it was a foul or not a foul. We were going to get in there and make sure we got all ball, we were going to make a hard shot and we were going to come up with the rebound.

So I just think at this time of year you have to play to your identity and you got to put yourself in positions to not give away power. You can't give away power or energy to things that are out of your control. So that's on us if we do that.

So the reality is we have to have a maturity about us and that's what I was pleased about is that we put ourselves in a position to have control and to make the play we need to make.

And before we just close up, I always just want to acknowledge, this is such a great tournament, it's always

been so well run. The parity is better than it's ever been in this conference. It's an elite basketball conference. There's so many great stories to tell. But if you all aren't here, they don't get told. We need to just continue to build on the momentum. It's not about anybody other than these amazing young women on all these teams and great coaches that are working their tails off. And I appreciate you guys all being here to tell their stories and to continue to do that and that's what makes this conference great.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thank you.

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