

Pac-12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 1, 2023

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Oregon Ducks

Kelly Graves

Endyia Rogers

Te-Hina Paopao

Postgame Press Conference



University of Oregon - 52, University of Washington - 50

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

KELLY GRAVES: Well, first of all, I want to congratulate Washington on a great year. I think Coach Langley's done an amazing job. She has really resurrected that program. They've recruited well and that's a program that's going to be here to stay.

So we're very fortunate that we were able to win that game. It was a well-played game by both teams, exciting, anyway. But in the end, I'm really proud that we were the ones that showed the composure down the stretch, made the plays, executed really well offensively when we needed to, and then those last couple of stops defensively obviously proved to be the difference.

But just proud and at this point, you guys, we're just happy we're moving on. I don't know who we play tomorrow. Who do we play tomorrow? I'm just kidding. I know we're playing Stanford.

But anyway, yeah, this was a great Duck win.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

Q. Kelly, I want to go to that fourth quarter. Endyia comes off a curl screen, hits the jumper, and I think you ran that play about three to four more times in the final five minutes of the game. What about Endyia in these late moments, big shots, that you trust her, but just that you can run the same thing for her and she can find different ways to score and get you points when you need it down the stretch.

KELLY GRAVES: Yeah. Well, you know, you're not doing your job as a coach if you've got somebody that's riding a hot hand, and we have full confidence in Endyia that she's going to either make the play for herself or make the right play for someone else.

Te-Hina was a big part of that because she was the one that we had on top, so if it that curl wasn't open, the next option is to get her on a little rub cut, a two-man game. So you put your two best players in a position to succeed. When you're in a close game like that, that's who you have to rely on. They're veterans, experienced, they've been here before.

But Endyia's performance tonight, and I've seen some really good ones in this conference tournament, was as good as I've seen, and I'm really proud of her.

Q. A week ago you guys were sitting on a seven-game losing streak. What did you find in these last five, six days?

TE-HINA PAOPAO: We found heart. They say life struggles build character, and I think that's what we had to do is build character, and we came back stronger and trusted each other and believed in each other.

Q. Endyia, you don't tend to show a lot of emotion. When you're going through a stretch like that where your team needs you and you're making buckets, like does your heart rate get elevated, does your inner monologue? What's going through your head?

ENDYIA ROGERS: I think what was going through my head was we need to get a stop. That was most important, us getting a stop and then getting the best shot that we could.

TE-HINA PAOPAO: She was hooping. She was hooping.

KELLY GRAVES: I just now realized Endyia got 11 rebounds as well. That's incredible for someone 5-3.

Q. 41 of 52 of your points came from these two



tonight. It seems like over the past couple weeks they have been the two that have really willed you guys to wins. What did they give you tonight and what do they give you over the last couple weeks?

KELLY GRAVES: Well, one of the things I've been most proud of, we brought up that losing streak over there, if you are around our team on a daily basis, you would not have known if we were on a seven-game winning streak or a seven-game losing streak.

They stayed together, they practiced hard, the chemistry is excellent, and it starts with these two. They come to practice each and every day and show the way. They show great leadership. That's what they did today.

In the end, sure, we would like more contributors, but at this point in the season you don't really care. We just want to survive and then play another day. So I'm not very good at math, so I didn't realize that it was that significant for us to continue, especially in the next game against Stanford. We need more contributions from other people. The same contributions from these two, with some, a little bit more help.

Q. Te-Hina, you had a couple big stops and that big three and that run that sort of got you guys back in the game. What sort of sparked that run for you guys?

TE-HINA PAOPAO: Stops, transition, playing defense, boxing out, rebounding. That was our really big emphasis, in the fourth, we got a box and a rebound and got out in transition, and my teammates trust me when making that shot, so I had to make it for them.

Q. You had Grace back today. Obviously one of the best freshmen in the conference. How nice was it to have her back? What did you think of her performance? How could she help you in a game like tomorrow?

KELLY GRAVES: Well, for her and her situation it was just great to get her some minutes. She was on a minute restriction. We couldn't play her a ton. But just for her to get out and sweat and be back on the court with her teammates was really important.

Coming into this game rebounding was our number one focus. We didn't do a great job of it in the first half. Second half they had zero second-chance points. If you ask me, the key, you know, we've been such an offensive team over the years, I'm really proud of the way that we're playing defense. I think our defense has been a lot better in the last couple of months and it proved to be tonight.

So I don't know if you guys realize that, but no second-chance points in the second half. So good on them.

But Grace will be a little bit better tomorrow. It's always tough as a freshman in your first game anyway and she hasn't come off the bench at all this year and that's different. It can kind of throw you off a little bit. But I thought she did a really good job.

Q. Do you feel like this is enough now to get you into the NCAA tournament or do you, how do you think your team sits after this win?

KELLY GRAVES: 17-13. I don't know. I don't really worry about that. We're just going to try and do our best to win tomorrow. We'll control what we control and that's our effort and execution out on the basketball court.

Obviously if we can be fortunate enough to get another one at least in this tournament then I would say our chances look pretty good. But with a net rating of 18 going into this game, I'm not a math genius, I don't know how a team 16-13 can be 18th in the net. That's an aberration. But it also shows that we're playing good basketball.

So we'll see. I'll leave that to the committee. We're just going to worry about trying to win tomorrow.

Q. I think it was 2017 was the last time you played in the first round here. Was it a little weird? Because you guys have been able to ease your way into this a little bit the last several years.

KELLY GRAVES: Yeah. We've always had kind of that day off to walk around and get our bearings about us and then have an off day and kind of watch everybody else sweat it out, knowing that they got to come to us. A little bit different, flying in last night and then playing an afternoon game. We'll do our best to not play in this first day. But I'm just glad that we won and now we're playing the second day like the other ones. So it's all good.

Q. Obviously there's a lot to unpack with the Stanford team, but if you are in Oregon trying to scout Stanford really quickly here, one or two things that you know you have to do really well against them tomorrow?

KELLY GRAVES: Well, that's the thing about Stanford, it's not just one or two things you have to do well. You have to do well in about five or six. Because they are so talented, so confident in this tournament. And they're coming off a tough road trip. So I got a feeling they're going to be very, very prepared. They're certainly not going overlook us. The last time we played them in this tournament was in

2020 in the championship game.

So, I know Tara is a Hall of Famer for a reason. She's got that great team. But I think any time you play Stanford it starts with their height. We just got to somehow negate that height with our smaller team and keep 'em off the boards the best we can. They're a team that if you don't play to your scout, you're going to be in trouble. They will make you look bad.

I'm not going to list the five or six things right here, but just know it's a lot. We're going to do our best. We're going to go out, we have no pressure on us. So we can just go out and play free and hopefully make some shots. Let's make some shots tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thank you, everyone.

KELLY GRAVES: Thank you.

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