

Pac-12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 1, 2023

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

California Golden Bears

Charmin Smith

Mia Mastrov

Jayda Curry

Postgame Press Conference

Washington State - 61, Cal - 49

THE MODERATOR: All right. We welcome the Cal Bears. Coach, we'll let you open and then we'll take questions.

CHARMIN SMITH: Obviously disappointed with the outcome. I thought we had a solid game plan, it started off well, and then just struggled through the third and fourth quarter. Washington State's a good team. So just unfortunately wasn't meant to be for us today.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

Q. What do you kind of attribute that second half fall-off to? In particular, did anything stand out?

CHARMIN SMITH: I just thought we had moments where we had a good play, we had a good look, and didn't execute it. Then on the other end Charlisse was making plays. We tried to do some different things to try to stop her, tried different people on her. But they went from shooting, what, like 20-something percent in the first half to 72 percent in the third quarter. I think a lot of that was her and Bella. It was just tough for us to figure out how to slow them down, and we weren't taking advantage of our opportunities on the other end.

I think Leilani, I don't know, I kept looking for her. I don't know how long she was out. But that's a struggle for us as well. It makes it harder to free Jayda up at times. So that stretch was a little painful.

Q. One of the bright spots today was Mia, who came in in that first half and scored eight points and ended up with 10 points. Your bench really brought a lift for you guys today. Talk about her performance and where this came from because she hasn't had many big



games like this. But in a game like this for her to step up, especially in that first half when you guys were able to find some rhythm for her to have such a great start for you guys.

CHARMIN SMITH: Yeah, Mia's a competitor. She works extremely hard. The funny thing is I put her in thinking more defense, right? She's someone that is really good defensively. I wanted her to have some time on Charlisse.

But she's also a weapon for us and a threat offensively. She took advantage of the way that they were guarding her and those baseline drives and she finished at the basket. So it was great to see her get those looks and be able to finish and convert.

Q. Jayda, you played the entire game tonight. How are you able to pace yourself so you're able to give your 100 percent on each and every play?

JAYDA CURRY: I can't say that I tried to pace myself because I think this year I did get a lot more breaks. So I'm just expecting like, okay, at some point I'm going to come out.

But I think at the end of the day we're just playing to win, so whether I'm in there for 20 minutes, 30, 40 minutes, just playing hard and catching my breath on dead-ball possessions and stuff like that, on free throws, just taking a second drink of water while I'm in the game and stuff like that.

But you got to expect to stay in the whole time, so...

Q. In the first match matchup with the Cougars you were held scoreless. In this one you finished with 10 points and 5 rebounds. Could you talk about how you were able to impact this game?

MIA MASTROV: Yeah. Credit to my teammates, for sure. They were able to get me open and spacing the floor. They were rotating and giving me open looks and drives to the basket.

Then I'm just trying to do what I can to help win. So if that



be crashing for extra rebounds or just trying to get some boards and help out, I mean, I'm just doing what I can to help.

Q. Outside of Jayda, your other four starters really struggled to score. When they're struggling like that, you got good production from your bench. But how hard is it for you guys when again you really had a good first half, you're just struggling when the rest of those starters can't score to try to put offense together, when you rely on Jayda so much, you need someone else. But when those guys really struggle, how difficult does it make it?

CHARMIN SMITH: Yeah. I think that's been one of our strengths this year is that we've had multiple weapons, particularly in our starting lineup. So to not have that today, it did make it harder. It was a lot easier when you have more people scoring.

But they're a really good defensive team. The way that we like to attack in our offense, like we use ball screens a lot. They're really good defensively out of ball screen coverage and such. So I think at this time of the year a lot of it is about matchups, and defensively they did a good job. We didn't knock down shots, 1-7, 1-8, 1-6. That's tough.

Q. I know this literally just happened, but when you think about how you're going to reflect on the season, what do you think your main takeaway is going to be like when you think about the season as a whole?

CHARMIN SMITH: Yeah. I mean, what I think today is going to be different than what I think in April. But I just want it more for this group. We work so hard, we do. We work so hard and they, they're great young women. I just, I want them to be the ones that are happy jumping up and down celebrating.

But a good friend of mine, Angela Taylor, she told me, You can't skip steps in building it. And I shared that with the team. It's like, this is our journey, this is our process, we can't skip the steps, even the painful ones.

So I love this group. I really love coaching this team. I know that we're making steps. I've said, like this team that we have right now would murder last year's team. We're so much better, and next year we'll be even better. Just keep building it and stay with the process here.

Q. How would you two summarize the season and what will you take moving forward into next season?

MIA MASTROV: I would say just overall a lot of ups and downs. We were there for each other through everything,

the losses and the wins. I think that we can take a lot going forward. We had some great people come in, like Peanut, who provided a lot for this group overall, and we can take a lot from her and keep learning and growing.

And I think, like coach said, we're just going to keep getting better and better, and next year's a new year and we'll just be better than we were this year, like she said.

JAYDA CURRY: I think for me just reflecting on like the relationships that we built as a team off the court was probably my favorite part of this whole season. Obviously trying to figure things out with a new group, with new pieces, was kind of just a part of the process. Like Mia said, ups and downs throughout the season. But I do appreciate the group that we had this year. I think that both on and off the court we had just great relationships with each other and were able to laugh and have fun. And I think I can appreciate that during times where we're not winning every game and where we still need to be loose and not always like mad at each other because we're losing. I think we stayed together well this year, so...

Q. I wanted to ask you a little more about Charlissee. We saw what Rogers did at the end of the Oregon game. What Charlissee did today and has done on other occasions. When you have a player like that that's almost a pro-ready type player. How much does that really make a difference when you get into a situation like this in the second half?

CHARMIN SMITH: Almost a pro-ready type player? (Laughing.) I mean, we threw different things at her. We tried a box and one, we went some zone. We put big people on her, little people on her. She's a tough matchup. But I think it would have been okay if we were able to do some of the things that we needed to do offensively.

Like our goal was to keep them under 60 points. They scored 61. The problem is we scored 49. So Charlissee having 23, like, okay, that's what she does. But I think the problem in this game was us not scoring enough points. I've seen games where Charlissee, I think in Washington she possibly had 40 and they still lost the game. That's no disrespect to Charlissee. I think she's a phenomenal player, one of the best in our conference, one of the best in the country. But it takes a team and their team played better than our team today.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thank you.

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