

Pac-12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 2, 2023

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Oregon Ducks

Kelly Graves

Endyia Rogers

Te-Hina Paopao

Postgame Press Conference

Stanford - 76, Oregon - 65

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Oregon. Coach, we'll start with an opening statement and then we'll take some questions.

KELLY GRAVES: Well, congratulations to Stanford. They deserved the win today. That's obviously one of the best basketball teams in the country. They're going to be great representatives as they move on, not only in the rest of this tournament, but then the NCAA tournament. I certainly feel like they're the kind of team that can win it all. I mean, they truly do have everything that you need.

I'll use this moment to say that I hope we're a team that's included in that field. I think with a net rating of 18 going into this tournament and playing Stanford relatively close isn't going to change that. Plus with a win hopefully we've done enough. I've never been one of those guys that watches and prays and, you know, if we make it, we make it. I think we're good enough. This is by far the toughest conference in the country.

But tonight we just didn't have enough. Two areas we didn't shoot it well. I thought we had some pretty good looks, actually. Just didn't shoot it like we normally do. Then the rebounds, you know, the second-chance points, I think those were the two areas that just really killed us.

But other than that, I thought we had a pretty good game plan going in. I was really proud of our team. I thought we played really hard. We did what we could tonight. But nothing to hang our heads over. Just going to learn from it and build in the future.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. We'll start in the back here.



Q. Tara came up and said you guys deserve to be in. She thinks that eight teams from the PAC should get in. First, what's your response to that? And two, you guys fought so hard down to the very end. How much of that obviously was just trying to get back into this game solely, but how much of was that also trying to bolster that final résumé before that selection committee decides?

KELLY GRAVES: I wasn't worried about a résumé during the game. I mean, you play to win the game.

Well, Tara, you know, she's a pretty smart lady. She's won a few games, championships, Hall of Famer. I hope she's also a seer, you know? But I agree with her. I think we're the type of team that people are not going to want to play. We're going to go in. I think the PAC 12, like no other conference, prepares us for a an NCAA Tournament.

Look at how well the PAC 12 has done in the NCAA tournament over the last six, eight, 10 years. We lap the second best conference because teams, you go through this gauntlet, because we have no weak sisters, and you're going to be ready.

So I've really come to appreciate Tara too. She's an amazing person. Obviously an amazing coach. We align on a lot of things. Maybe it's because we're two of the elder statesmen in the conference. But hopefully she's right on this one. Again, I congratulate them.

Q. Endyia, rough shooting in the first half, but you were able to bounce back in the second half. Would you talk about managing the highs and lows of today's game.

ENDYIA ROGERS: You just got to stay positive, stay into it, encourage my teammates. Obviously, I kept shooting regardless of a rough first half because, I mean, I missed shots that I typically make today. I actually don't have an answer for that. But you just got to keep going.

Q. Given the way the first half went, losing on the boards and not getting a lot of shots to fall, what was



the process of kind of regrouping at halftime? What did you think of the way things played out, any adjustments you made, or whatever that was?

TE-HINA PAOPAO: Yeah, we talked about effort, something you can't coach. So I had to tell the team and get on their butts a little, like, We got to get rebounds, we got to fight, we got to want it more than they do. So I think that's, our halftime talk was very needed and it showed in the second half.

Q. If you're not in the NCAA tournament, would you accept a WNIT berth?

KELLY GRAVES: Well, my philosophy has always been, if somebody wants us to play, we're going to play. So, yes. That's a yes.

And, you know, I think the team would rather play. I've never understood why people turn things down like that on some kind of principle. It's not like they're just going to go home and eat Cheetos and drink Pepsi or beer. I don't know, you guys are both of age.

They're going to be in the gym working out. I think they, most kids would rather be practicing and getting in the gym and working on their games a little bit.

I tell you what, though, I'm really proud of this one, well and Endyia too. I know Endyia, tonight wasn't her night shooting the ball, but we don't get to tonight if she doesn't have the game she had last night. That's the way it works.

But I'm just really proud of Te-Hina, and what she's done down the stretch for us has been absolutely incredible. Incredible. Never hung her head, never blamed anybody, kept to the grind. I know she's taken a lot of this on herself. But I'm really proud of her. She's been an inspiration to me all year. Both of these players are going to be players that I'll remember forever. A big part of our family.

Q. You guys in that third quarter started playing a little more aggressively on offense, started pushing the ball, and you cut the lead down to six. What did you guys do in that stretch to get that down to six? And then what did Stanford do to respond? Because then they had the 7-0 run to close the third and push it back to 13. What were the changes that worked and what sort of slipped away there?

TE-HINA PAOPAO: We got stops in that stretch. Once we get stops that's when our offense starts flowing, that's when we start playing with pace. So when we play defense and box out, we get rebounds and then we get to run with the ball.

So I think that's what changed to cut down the lead to six. And then we kind of lost that aggressiveness to where they had that 7-0 run.

Q. Te-Hina, can't take anything for granted in this day and age with college athletics, but you do have a lot of young players, a lot of players who will be back on a stage like this. What are the biggest lessons that you want some of those young players to take from this that they can learn and grow from?

TE-HINA PAOPAO: Always bring great attitude no matter what life brings you. I know they have learned a lot from us upperclassmen, just keeping the head up high and always bring great attitude to life. I mean, basketball is just part of life.

But you have to also be grateful and blessed to have opportunities like that. So definitely have to -- if I had to tell them one thing, it's probably just have fun, be grateful, be blessed with the people you're surrounded with because not a lot of people get the opportunities that we get.

KELLY GRAVES: I'm glad you brought up the decor. That's, you know, Grace and Chance are not a hundred percent. They're not anywhere close right now. But they're still out there competing. Phillipina has shown that she continues to get better and better. Obviously Te-Hina and what she gives us has been enormous. We've got a good, I think a really good solid core that can come back. Who knows. I'll tell you, who knows, but I think a good class is coming in. Our program's not going anywhere, that's for sure.

Q. Te-Hina, you had a career high 28 points today. Assuming you make the tournament, how do you continue your offensive flow that you found these past few weeks?

TE-HINA PAOPAO: Just keep building on it, stay in the gym, just stay aggressive. That's it.

Q. So Stanford doesn't lose very often, but when you have to be the team that plays them after a loss, how much more difficult does that make it with a caliber of team that they have?

KELLY GRAVES: I couldn't even tell you when we played 'em after a loss. I do remember the last time we played 'em in this tournament was in the championship in 2020. That happened to be the last game of the season that year.

After a loss, after a win, they're tough any time. They just have so many good players. I mean, yeah, they just, you

know, they're well coached, they have great athletes, they have a great system, they have got marquee players, they have got pros. They really have everything that you need to be as good as they are. They have a chance to go win a championship.

So, sure, I'm sure they were duly motivated coming off a loss, but I don't think that had a whole lot to do with the game tonight. That's personal. You would have to ask them.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thank you.

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