

# Pac-12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 6, 2024

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

**Colorado Buffaloes**

**Coach JR Payne**

**Frida Formann**

**Quay Miller**

Postgame Press Conference



Colorado - 79, Oregon - 30

THE MODERATOR: We welcome the University of Colorado Buffalo, head coach JR Payne, Quay Miller and Frida Formann.

JR PAYNE: I mean, I just am really happy with how we played, of course. We had a great week of practice. A lot of people keep asking us, well, how are you guys doing? My thought is we're in a great place. We're in as good a place as we've been.

Maybe we just like to be an underdog. We are the underdog now. We love that. That's comfortable. We feel good about how we played. We feel good about just where we are and excited to have a great tournament.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

**Q. For you at this point in your career just what does it mean to be able to beat someone like Kelly Graves who sat up here and talked about how much he loves and respects you? What does that mean to you?**

JR PAYNE: Well, someone asked me before the game, does it feel different to play Kelly than anyone else? The answer is, no, we're just trying to play great basketball and win a game.

But, yeah, Kelly is like my dad, so I love him. His team is always my other team as far as I'm always cheering for them when we're not playing against them. Yeah, in a lot of ways I am who I am as a coach because of Kelly.

So he's my family. We always are happy when our team wins when we play against each other, but it's always a little bit bittersweet. Yeah, it's always great to be with him.

**Q. You mentioned that underdog mentality. Quay talked about it too earlier this week. Did you feel a sense of freedom in the way that you guys played now that you are kind of back in that state?**

JR PAYNE: Yeah, I don't know if it's that's why, but man, we had a great week of practice. We are mission focused. We are locked in, and we feel really good about just where we are and what we can do.

**Q. What's the status with Charlotte Whittaker?**

JR PAYNE: Charlotte is fine. Yeah, I think she rolled her ankle, but she's one of the toughest gals you could ever meet, so she'll be fine.

**Q. Quay, we had kind of talked about a tough week -- you mentioned the tough week you had last year in this tournament. You set the tone today. You came out and hit your first three or four shots. How important was that for you today to get started for yourself, but also for this team?**

QUAY MILLER: I really just go out there and just try to have the best energy that I can. And I think that when my teammates see that type of energy, they feed off that, and that gets them going, but it also gets me going as well.

So to see light and joy and just the freeness in everybody's spirit today, I think that's what got me going, and that is what contributed to everyone's run. Just our spirit and synergy out there was really great.

**Q. Kind of keeping on that underdog mentality, the first time you guys took on Oregon State, you guys were obviously the favorite in those games. Now the roles have kind of been reversed. What is it about that matchup that has given you guys so much trouble, and how do you guys adjust for that in this game coming up tomorrow?**

JR PAYNE: Well, I can't give away all our secrets, right, because the game is tomorrow. No, I think a lot of it is what Quay is talking about. At this point in the season I



don't think anybody is doing anything different. We're not adding any new offense or defense, and neither are they.

Just being able to feel really good about who you are, what you can do, understanding strengths and weaknesses of both ball clubs and just playing very free and very loose. And really, really excited that we got a chance to play today like that.

**Q. You've got a veteran team, and you guys all know what the postseason is all about. What's the difference that you feel now that you've gotten to the postseason just in terms of this is go time?**

QUAY MILLER: I think this is something also that we touched on a little bit. We understand that our backs truly are against the wall. That's something that we have talked about, but I think that now knowing that we can lose one game and go home compared to having one game, going back to the chalkboard, talk about what we did wrong.

It's win or go home from now on, and I think that we play our best when we're under that type of -- I don't want to call it pressure, but I guess pressure because pressure is a privilege, so we get that being here.

**Q. When did Jaylyn break her nose?**

JR PAYNE: Last weekend.

**Q. Has she played with a mask for a while now?**

JR PAYNE: Yeah. A couple of games, although to be fair, she tore it off in the first minute of the last game we played. She just --

**Q. It didn't seem to impact her today. She wasn't that far from a triple-double. What I wondered was with Oregon State do you buy into that philosophy of it's hard to beat a team three times in one season? Does that give you an edge?**

JR PAYNE: I do not. I mean, Oregon could have said that about us today. But I think, like I said, everyone is playing really well right now. Everyone knows who they are.

I think the team that knows who they are and feels really good about who they are is a team that's very dangerous this time of year. And certainly we are that team or we showed that today.

Yeah, I don't -- I'm not a big metaphoric person. I'm not real touchy-feely like that. We just want to do our job, play great, stay together, be connected.

**Q. Frida, you knocked down the three 3s in the fourth quarter and gave a little shrug after the last one, which you have done before. How important is that for you? I know each day is a new day, but how big is that for you to kind of get in that zone before a big game tomorrow?**

FRIDA FORMANN: It's really great. I think just seeing the ball go through the net so many times and we've got a big game tomorrow. So I'm actually just happy we had this first game. And playing against a zone obviously you get a lot of catch-and-shoot 3s that you don't really have to move that much to get. The ball kind of does the work for you, and your teammates moving the ball does the work for you.

Yeah, I think it was great. And we had a lot of people just scoring today and doing great. I think it was just good for all of our confidence and just feeling at peace with this court and the hoop and for tomorrow.

**Q. You guys obviously didn't finish the regular season the way you wanted to. Was it important to not only get a win, but to play like this? And as good as practice felt this week, was it important to do it in a game and just look like this again?**

FRIDA FORMANN: Yeah, for sure. I think it was important for all of us. We showed each other today that we're all there, we're all locked in, we're all ready. Like, everyone really contributed.

I think that was just important for our overall unity and synergy and stuff like that. I think we're super ready and connected for tomorrow and the rest of this tournament.

**Q. This is the last Pac-12 tournament, so I'm wondering what does it mean to you to be playing in your last Pac-12 tournament?**

QUAY MILLER: I feel old. I feel old because it's history, you know? When I talk to my dad about when he played, he would be, like -- it used to be the Pac-10. And I'm, like, that's crazy because now there's no Pac-12 now. I just feel old.

FRIDA FORMANN: I really wanted to play in the Pac-12 when I got recruited. That was a big thing for me. I remember watching Sabrina and those guys playing, and I was, like, oh, my God, I really want to play in a conference like that where they play like that.

It's bittersweet, but really happy to just have been a part of it and be part of this last tournament.

**Q. Coach, 22 or more assists all three times you**



**played the Ducks this season. What's allowed you to move the ball so effectively as you have against a team, particularly Oregon?**

JR PAYNE: I think the biggest thing for us is just that we have a lot of veterans on our team, so we're able to -- and a very unselfish group. We like to share the ball.

I think when you see a zone defense, which is mostly what they play, it kind of gives you the confidence to just move the ball and keep it moving until you find a great shot. So I think the veteran status allows us to be confident in doing that, knowing that different people can score in different ways and different places and just keep it moving until you get a great look. I think that's why the assist numbers are like that.

**Q. Sort of a two-part question for you, Coach. You're looking at trying to win four games in five days here. How important was it that you kept minutes off of the legs today, but also got some really nice contributions from Sara and Mikayla and a bunch of girls off the bench?**

JR PAYNE: I think it was huge. Frida and I were just talking about the fact that we're really happy we played today. It's really cool. We've experienced the court. We felt the balls. We've seen it go through the hoop. All of that is great.

With that being said, we didn't want to have to play anybody 40 minutes because then it sort of becomes a disadvantage. Yeah, really great.

I mean, the numbers were very low for a lot of key contributors. Like you said, a lot of good experience and minutes for Mikayla and Sara and Jadyn and Bri and lots of people that don't always get quite as many minutes. So really good for us.

**Q. Coach, you set some records today. Lowest amount of points allowed in Pac-12 tournament history. Lowest opposing field goal percentage in Pac-12 history. Do you guys pay that any mind? Does that make an impact going forward?**

JR PAYNE: I don't know that we paid that much attention. I think we all know we played pretty well, and so we feel good. We always say we just want to play great basketball, and I think we did that today. So regardless of the stats or things like that, we know we played well, and that feels good, and we want to keep that going.

Sort of to Quay's point or your point of being the last tournament, it's kind of cool to set a record in the last

Pac-12 tournament. We'll be proud of that in time. Right now we just want to rest and refocus for Oregon State.

**Q. You know Kelly really well. He has been under a lot of scrutiny this year. A lot of people have asked why do you think you can turn this program around? You know him. You know his staff. You know how he operates.**

JR PAYNE: Yeah.

**Q. Do you think he's going to be able to fix things and if so, why?**

JR PAYNE: Absolutely. Kelly to me is one of the greatest people I've ever known. He's one of the hardest-working coaches I've ever known. He's an incredible recruiter. He gives his players a lot of freedom to be able to play free and loose. And I have no doubt that they're going to sign some great players this spring and get back to where they've been.

How many programs -- he must have a world record for just building programs. So this is a little bit different in that he has built this one before and now they're not as great as they've been. He'll build it right back. I have absolutely no doubt.

**Q. Either of you can answer this. You guys both said the word "peace." You wanted to come into this game being at peace. Has that been a focus, and why is that important to you guys?**

FRIDA FORMANN: I think just we've been on a hard stretch, and we've all just really tried to think about things we can do better. Like really just trying to improve, and that's not a very peaceful process.

But I think we also know that to play well, we need to be confident. We need to believe in what we can do and our team philosophy, so I think that's what we mean by being at peace with who we are.

Of course, we always want to improve, but also knowing that what we have is good enough. And I think we all feel confident with that right now.

QUAY MILLER: Yeah, I don't know. Peace for me is something that I try to focus on every day just because when you are in a long basketball season, it gets repetitive. And being around the same people, like, you love them, but at some point you have to have a little bit of time to yourself so that you can have a good balance.

I don't know. When everybody is just feeling like peaceful



and get that time to themselves, it's nice to be around one another. Not that it's not when tensions are high, but I just feel like everyone needs to experience just having that "me" time so that they can re-feel themselves to be able to contribute to the energy or whatever we need each other to do.

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