

# Pac-12 Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 6, 2024

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Utah Utes

Coach Lynne Roberts

Ines Vieira

Alissa Pili

Postgame Press Conference



Utah - 71, Arizona State - 60

LYNNE ROBERTS: Thank you, guys, for being here. I know it's a long day, so I appreciate it. I'm proud of our team. I do want to give credit to Arizona State. I thought they came to compete, and they played really hard. They didn't make it easy on us, for sure. That's impressive from them, and I thought they played well.

I thought in the first half we were just kind of sputtering. Offensively we weren't executing very well. In the second half we were much better -- 17 assists on 26 baskets. We had too many turnovers. We have to clean that up and fast, but proud of our team.

Teams make it so hard on Liss, but I thought she rebounded with authority tonight, and that was huge. Defensively just pulled down big boards and then finished with 20 with being double-teamed and so physical in there. I'm proud of her.

Then Ines played with two fouls in 18 minutes there in the first half. But I trust her, and she's definitely our engine that makes us go. Proud of her for that.

I could go down the line. I thought everybody did a nice job. Four players in double figures. Yeah.

So now we move on. We've got UCLA tomorrow. We split with them during the regular season. Last time we played them we did not play well. I'm looking forward to playing better tomorrow night.

**Q. Lynne, just the timing of that end-of-the-third-quarter shot. That game is going back and forth at that point, but that opens it up a little bit. How important was that, that shot by Ines?**

LYNNE ROBERTS: Yeah, that was great. I mean, those are momentum shots. I've been on the other end of those. We do that actually in practice. It's not like we practice half-court shots, but we do a shooting drill where they have the first person to make a half court shot. I don't think Ines has made it all season, so she saved it today.

INES VIEIRA: When it matters.

LYNNE ROBERTS: Those are big momentum plays and got our fans back in it. I think that put us up seven or eight, something like that. It's nice to go into a timeout with a little momentum.

But tonight didn't seem like anything -- we could never really pull away, and I think part of that is because we turned it over too much.

**Q. Alissa, you didn't have -- you scored most of your points in the second half. How were you able to adjust to the way that ASU was playing you? Then, also, in that first half when you're not scoring as much, what are the other ways that you are able to contribute to your team and keep your mindset right in the game?**

ALISSA PILI: I think in the first half, just when teams are keying in on me like that, just to be a good distributor to my teammates when they're keying and because it leaves a lot of them open. Setting good screens has been a big thing, I think, just because, like, teams aren't helping off of me, so it opens a lane for my teammates.

Then, obviously, just rebounding and playing hard, you know, doing the controllable things when I may not be scoring as much.

So, yeah, I just kind of trusted my teammates and trusted the process. I wasn't going to force anything and kind of just take great shots and not force anything. I think that's -- I just let the game come to me and trusted my teammates to find me when I was open.

LYNNE ROBERTS: I also think we made a concerted effort to get her the dang ball in the second half. I said



something like that at halftime.

INES VIEIRA: Adding to that, I think it doesn't show on the stats, but Liss opens a lot to us, just her fighting in there. Same as Jenna. They don't get that -- what's the word?

ALISSA PILI: Recognition.

INES VIEIRA: Thanks. No, it helps a lot. At least for me. She sealed a lot, and that's how I got most of my points. And it doesn't show on the stats, only if you are watching the game.

**Q. Playing a team like ASU who although may have ended in the bottom part of the standings, but for them playing close and you saying how it's kind of tough for you to pull away, what does that kind of say about the gauntlet you've had to go through this year as far as the Pac-12 and its competition from top to bottom?**

LYNNE ROBERTS: Yeah, that's a great question, and I think the game tonight showed that. This league, it is a gauntlet. I have said that all year long. This is my ninth year in it. This is the best it's ever been top to bottom.

Washington, they're good. I don't know what they finished. I think ninth. Cal, those are good teams. Every game that we play in the Pac-12 every weekend is like an NCAA Tournament game, and that's why the record for -- I think the winning percentage in the Pac-12 in the last 10 years in the NCAA Tournament is 72%, which just crushes every other league in terms of winning percentage. And that's because we're playing NCAA Tournament type games every weekend.

It's hard. I've been in Arizona State's position where you're trying to build, and it's really hard to leap-frog people when everyone just keeps getting a little bit better. This league makes fools of us all at some point. That's certainly happened to us.

But the coaching is elite. The players are unbelievable. It's disappointing that it's going away, that this is the last one, but it's been an honor to coach in this league for sure.

**Q. You mentioned trying to build in this league was so hard. To see kind of where you came from when you started in the league until now, to be in this point at the end of the Pac-12, what does that mean to you?**

LYNNE ROBERTS: I'm a West Coast kid, so I grew up with the Pac-12 being big-time sports. When I took the job at Utah, we had some work to do, but I believed in what we were doing. And the league, you can recruit because the league is so appealing. People want to play -- kids wanted

to play in it.

Like I said, it's been an honor to coach in it. And I look at some of the coaches that I compete against, and it's legends, right? And the players that have come through this league since I've been here, it's just incredible.

I think it's fitting that the league finished on the note that we did. Like I said, I'm proud to be part of it.

**Q. You've talked about the challenge, Coach, and with UCLA the last time you faced them. What is it about them that makes them such a challenging team? And what are some adjustments you are looking forward to making to try and advance to the semifinal round?**

LYNNE ROBERTS: Well, from the last game we've got a lot of adjusting to do. But I think UCLA is a complete team. They've got a great point guard in Kiki Rice. They've got a shooter in Londynn Jones, who you cannot leave her open. They've got Charisma Osborne, who is maybe the best perimeter defender in the league, aside from Ines Vieira. Then they have good size with Dugalic and then, of course, Lauren Betts.

I think they're a complete team in terms of one through five. Cori Close does a tremendous job with them. They're well-coached. They execute their stuff. They're playing at a really high level right now.

We'll have a game plan ready, and we'll be ready to roll.

**Q. Ines, this is for you. You played 40 minutes and played really well. Played really fast, and you're still up here laughing. Seeming like you have a ton of energy. Just how do you keep that motor going all the time?**

INES VIEIRA: I don't know. I think I was just born like this. I have a lot of energy. I don't know. People ask me, but I don't know. I just --

LYNNE ROBERTS: She's in tremendous shape. The physical fitness piece is huge. You're in great shape.

INES VIEIRA: Thanks.

LYNNE ROBERTS: You're welcome.

**Q. I just wanted to know how you feel about making a 50-foot shot, banking one in. What are your emotions shooting it up and then seeing it go in?**

INES VIEIRA: First I was surprised. I don't know. I just throw the ball sometimes not thinking it's going to go in, but



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LYNNE ROBERTS: So true.

INES VIEIRA: Hopefully it went in, and then I was just happy for the team.

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