

# NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - Norfolk State vs Stanford

Thursday, March 21, 2024

Stanford, California, USA

Maples Pavilion

**Stanford Cardinal**

**Coach Tara VanDerveer**

**Brooke Demetre**

**Elena Bosgana**

**Chloe Clardy**

Media Conference

**Q. Chloe, you had a strong tournament in Vegas. How do you feel like your game has developed since the start of the year as a freshman, and how do you feel about your first tournament?**

CHLOE CLARDY: The tournament was a lot of fun. I feel like I just stay ready when my number is called, and my coaches and my teammates, they show a lot of confidence in me, and that helps drive me every day.

**Q. Brooke, just talk about your development as a three-point shooter. What's been the key to your growth in that realm over the course of the season?**

BROOKE DEMETRE: I think the main thing is just finding my shot within the offense when we need a bucket, putting it up and scoring. But just staying consistent and keep working on my shot, and then whenever the ball finds me, taking advantage of that.

**Q. We were just hearing from Tara a little bit about the balance of needing rest over the past week and finals and also get being back on the practice floor. How has that been in terms of getting everything done and getting ready for this and sort of regrouping from the Pac-12 tournament?**

ELENA BOSGANA: I think most of us are done right now with finals, which is good. It's challenging, but we are at Stanford, so we are very used to that.

I think we're all so excited for the tournament right now. I



don't think anyone is like too stressed for school.

**Q. Brooke, chip on the shoulder is maybe the wrong word, but is there extra motivation coming off the Pac-12 tournament and losing on the home floor a year ago here? It's a lot of people's final hurrah at Maples this weekend?**

BROOKE DEMETRE: Well, obviously none of us were happy with the way it ended last year, ended a little shorter than we wanted to. We wanted to make a longer run.

I think learning from that and applying it and just going as far as we can and we really all enjoyed playing with each other. Yeah, making that last as long as possible, especially with our seniors who are going to be gone next year.

**Q. Elena, what do you guys know about Norfolk State so far?**

ELENA BOSGANA: We know that they're very good, that they press a lot, that they're very aggressive. Tara says that we need to focus on us in every game, so that's what we're going to do. I think we're very well-prepared, and we're going to do our best tomorrow.

**Q. Chloe, I'm curious, what have you learned from Talana this year and how much do you guys work together in practice and feed off of each other's game?**

CHLOE CLARDY: Yes, I've learned a lot. She's been a great mentor and all the drills and with practice games she's always there to tell me if she sees something, so it's been a good help. It's obviously a big transition from high school to college, so just the fact that she did that last year and she started most of the games, it's been a confidence booster for me.

**Q. You talked about learning from the way the season ended last year on your home floor. Can you be a little more specific on what you did learn from that?**

BROOKE DEMETRE: I think the biggest thing that we learned and really tried to apply this year is play with joy



... when all is said, we're done.®

and have fun and just really enjoy playing with each other. I feel confident speaking for the team for this, and we really all do enjoy playing with each other very much, and I think you can tell when we're on the floor, and I think that has contributed to a lot of our success. So yeah, playing with joy.

ELENA BOSGANA: I completely agree with Brooke. I think last year we had the pressure that we had to prove ourselves. We still have that pressure, but I think we are so much better and having fun throughout the process, and yeah, playing with each other and for each other.

**Q. Going back to how Tara always talks about the journey, Elena, and the months in the lead-up to March and preparing every player and different rotations and she always tries to get everyone big-game experience from the get-go it seems, how much does that matter when March comes around where everybody has probably played with each other, been in different scenarios, different lineups, so everybody is ready to contribute on the big stage?**

BROOKE DEMETRE: Yeah, I think Tara does a really great job of lining us up for success and putting us in situations where we can be successful, so getting us that early experience earlier on in the season is really key.

No situation is ever going to be the same on the floor, so just always being ready, and we always try to drill it in practice whatever it may be.

But yeah, one thing I think Tara does a very good job is preparing us for those moments.

ELENA BOSGANA: I don't have anything to add. I feel it can be hard in the beginning of the season because we are many people together that maybe haven't played with each other before, like Chloe, I haven't played with her before. But right now we feel that we click together, and I think different lineups and different games and different people contributing in every game, we've seen that, and I think that's going to happen again in the tournament.

**Q. A lot of talk about Tara and what you guys learned from her as a coach, but right alongside her, associate coach Kate Paye has been there for a long part of that journey, as well. I'm curious what you've learned from Kay and what you enjoy about her coaching and playing under her as well as Tara?**

ELENA BOSGANA: I really respect Kate and her work ethic. I remember from my freshman year she was always there when I wanted to work out, and she's always there when I need her.

I have so much love for her and respect for her and her work. She's always the one getting us going in practice, and I'm super grateful that she's my coach.

BROOKE DEMETRE: One word to describe her is intense, and she brings it every single time. We feed off of that when she's bringing her intensity.

**Q. Not that you're going to divulge any secrets, but Stanford has always been good at pretty much taking -- for the most part, taking the other team's top scorer out of the game and making them change the way they play. You've got a big challenge with Norfolk State coming up. Now that you've seen the film of Diamond and the way they play, what's the challenge going to be like?**

ELENA BOSGANA: I don't think we focus on a specific player in our scouting. I think we focus on the entire team. I think that's what we're going to do again.

We focus on every player. Every player is important. Just focusing on the entire team and how we can help ourselves win.

**Q. Brooke, kind of going back to sending out the seniors, what's sort of your observation of Cam and Hannah and how much they want to sort of make up for a shorter run last year and in their final chance?**

BROOKE DEMETRE: Yeah, as much as we want to make up for it, I think we're really focused on this year and we just want to go as far as we can. They're both great leaders and great teammates, and we all enjoy playing with them, they enjoy playing with us.

I think just really riding that high for as long as we can with them. We just want to make it as long as possible. I think that's our focus.

**Q. You all spoke about the joy. It does seem this year's group, the chemistry is maybe a little bit different. What can you point to? Is it just having gone through more time together or experience, or is it just something about this group that clicked?**

ELENA BOSGANA: I don't know. I don't want this year to end, honestly. I feel we know our roles very well, and Tara and the coaching staff have done a great job with that. I don't know, I'm rooting for my teammates. I love them. I think we all do that.

CHLOE CLARDY: I think just to add on, we really do enjoy playing with each other, and practice every day is fun. We

push each other hard but we still have fun with it. I think just having fun and working hard goes a long way.

**Q. There's a lot of basketball on in March. How much do you watch other tournament games when you're in this mode versus take a break from basketball when you're not doing film study or practice?**

CHLOE CLARDY: I think we watch film on the teams we're going to play, obviously, but I think you can find a good balance. You have all day, so I think you can watch some games, but also just enjoy it.

BROOKE DEMETRE: Yeah, I think we try to tune in when we can. Definitely going to be watching film to prepare us for our games, but for me personally, I'm always playing basketball and watching film, so I like to step away from it sometimes. But I don't know, I can't speak for everybody else.

ELENA BOSGANA: I try not to watch much if it's not for our team because I want a little break from basketball sometimes.

**Q. Now that you've watched a little bit more film on Norfolk State, what are your thoughts on them, and what have you seen from them?**

TARA VanDERVEER: They've had a great season. You asked about their mascot. I think they're the Spartans. They have really talented players. Obviously you pointed out Diamond Johnson. But they're really a complete team.

They play a different style than probably we've played against a lot. They press and play more of a three two zone. But they're very capable to mix it up.

We know that we're going to be very challenged, and we will have to play very well. Our team is really excited about the opportunity.

**Q. What is it about this group that you can just see how much they love each other? I'm not saying that it wasn't that way last year, but just something about all the different lineups. Something has worked with this group.**

TARA VanDERVEER: Well, I think it was very disappointing the last time I was sitting up here was not a fun time. It was very disappointing to not get out of Maples.

I think that we have learned from that. I was asked what have we learned. I think last spring, our staff and team worked really hard at understanding how we can have a

great year, and our mantra has been best year ever.

So every day coming to the gym, really working on connectivity with not just our staff but our team.

First of all, we have a very close staff, and you pointed out Kate Paye. She's phenomenal. But beyond Kate, Katy Steding, a Stanford grad, we brought back Tempie Brown, who's been outstanding, and we have Stanford grad Erica McCall Bird, who brings her pro experience and her love for Stanford back to this team.

I think right off the bat -- and obviously we've got John Cantalupi back, his hard work, and he's been fabulous.

I think just really reestablishing what is Stanford basketball. If we strayed away -- we're in a different time, whether it's with the portal or all the different things that are going on with collectives and NIL and to really navigate that maybe more successfully this year.

One thing that we've had that's been different, we've had the same starting lineup basically in every game except when Cam has been out with an injury. I think people really understand their roles. Maybe they're more specific roles this year, and I think that's helped someone like Kiki Iriafen know, hey, we're depending on me for 18 points a game and 10 rebounds. So that stability I think has been something really good.

So the connectivity, stability, the kind of reinvestment with our staff of getting people that really understand what Stanford has been and how we want to play.

Then our three freshmen have been phenomenal. I think Chloe did a great job, and she's playing really well. Understanding Courtney expressed this right from the beginning, I want to star in my role. Not be a star but star in my role. That was something that Steph Curry shared with our team right in the beginning, right over here in the APG.

Kind of a long answer, but this has been a really fun year. This has been a really -- just kind of why you coach. This type of team that is unselfish. Cam leading our team in assists sometimes. Here's an All-American that is really a facilitator a lot, Kiki getting honorable mention All-American, someone that's all-Pac-12, Hannah Jump having a great season, Talana, and bringing those young people along.

One other thing is I think our leadership has been more maybe intentional, and we've worked with a leadership specialist, and I think that's been a real big difference for our team, too.

**Q. It doesn't necessarily have to be an established starter, but is there someone that you've looked to specifically on the team that maybe practices dragging just a tad and not letting them have quite the joy that always gets things turned around for you?**

TARA VanDERVEER: I think that really everyone has done really well this year, but I would say Brooke Demetre, I kind of call her Ms. Steady Eddie. She is every day excited, every day.

I'll also say that one of the things that's really helped us this year, I think sometimes we had 15 players on our team, and this year obviously we have 12. I think having fewer players has allowed me to get to know them better. But we have had a fantastic core of male practice players, and they're not allowed to be here today, but yesterday as an example, they come every morning for our practice, and they all said to me, Tara, this is the highlight of my day. When you have five -- we'd have usually three or four of them coming, and they brought a lot of good energy, too.

I think this year has just been a lot of good energy and a lot of people saying, hey, we learned from maybe last year, and we want to have a great run. Whether it's the leadership or connectivity or the maturity of our staff and just getting it. That's why when I sit here today, I'm like, wow, we just want to play well.

One of the things I said with our team is do our best and forgive the rest. Let's just come out and give it our all. I think our team is in that place, and it's a great place to be.

**Q. Just thoughts on what has been the key to Kiki Iriafen's growth in the league? What have you seen from her from last year to now that has really allowed her to take the jump that she's taken?**

TARA VanDERVEER: Kiki might be one of the most improved players that I've ever coached, and I'm trying to think of some other players that have made the jump that she's made.

I think it's a combination of her opportunity and knowing I've got to get it done and the confidence that we have in her and her own confidence and her time that she puts in.

One of our men's basketball assistants said, Tara, Kiki is the one I see in the gym all the time. Well, that's how you get good. You put in the extra time.

She's paid her dues. A lot of times a lot of players want to be great as freshmen. Well, it takes them growing, and I think she's a great mentor for our young players to

encourage them to stay with things, to improve.

I think she's been really positive with -- another player that's improved a lot is Jzaniya Harriel. Jzaniya is giving us great minutes. Whether it's Kiki helping other young players, we've counted a lot on young players stepping up, and Kiki is a great example for all the rest of our players to say, look what can happen, be patient, keep working hard, and Elena, Chloe, they're all making those kind of big steps.

**Q. This week we saw a lot of coaches, longtime great coaches retire, Katie Meyer just announced her retirement, Lisa Stockton at Tulane, Bonnie Henrickson at Santa Barbara and you've mentioned some of the changes that have gone on in the sport. With all these changes, what are some of the positives and what among those things motivates you to continue --**

TARA VanDERVEER: Well, I reached out to the three women that have had great careers. A lot of the changes obviously are so obvious, whether it's the portal, the collectives, NIL, and obviously the new league.

It's changing, but one of the things I think that's changing in a real positive way is just the attention for women's basketball. The fact that you're all here, the fact that we're set up like this, and the enthusiasm -- I'm reading about women's basketball in the New York Times or in the Atlantic. Obviously you all have done a great job of covering our team and women's teams, but Cameron Brink and Caitlin Clark, Juju Watkins, Hannah Hidalgo, they're household names. That's what's really exciting. We're really just on the edge of explosion of women's basketball, and the TV coverage, the NCAA games being on ABC, just the excitement and enthusiasm, the fans. When I'm watching -- if I'm watching teams that we're playing, seeing the great fans that are in the stands watching all these teams.

It's a real exciting time to be part of women's basketball.

**Q. Could you maybe share some of the things you said to some of those coaches that you've known over the years and what they've contributed to the game?**

TARA VanDERVEER: Well, most of the coaches I've played against. I've known and -- someone like Katie Meyer was the coach in the ACC that reached out to me about, hey, coming to the ACC. I thought that was really classy.

I've known Lisa Stockton. I've known Bonnie Henrickson. We've had parallel careers. Whether I've seen them



recruiting or talked to them about all kinds of different things, they're my colleagues and friends.

**Q. You just mentioned Jzaniya a little bit ago, and you've mentioned your confidence in her as grown a little bit in the latter half of the season. For a young player like her, we saw Talana seize her role last year. What are you looking for from someone like Jzaniya to earn a regular rotation role?**

TARA VanDERVEER: Well, thanks for asking about Jzaniya because I think she's one of the unsung heroes, heroines of her team this year. Talana was out in a couple games and Jzaniya stepped in as a starter and had great games. She's come in in some very big games. When Cam was out, she had a great game against Oregon State here at Maples.

She's someone that, again, like Kiki, has paid her dues, and she works very hard in practice. Right from the beginning I saw her playing against -- when we would scrimmage the guys, she's fearless. She comes out, she attacks the basket. She has an excellent three-point shot, and a lot of it is getting opportunity. When you're playing on a team with Lexie and Lacie two years ago and Anna Wilson, you're not going to beat them out. She's paid her dues and put in her time, and now it's her chance to get out there, and she's doing very, very well.

**Q. I want to get your thoughts on the men's basketball program, your thoughts on that program and what you think perhaps they need to do to get to the level you feel like they can get to?**

TARA VanDERVEER: Well, you know, I've known obviously Jerod and other coaches that have been at Stanford, and I don't know that anyone works as hard as Jerod has. He really worked really hard, and he was totally, totally committed to Stanford basketball. I know that his team worked hard for him.

Sometimes things like this year, they lost some games early that had they gone the other way, maybe it would have impacted the season differently. But I have nothing but respect and admiration for the work that he's done and hope that whoever comes in will be successful.

We want to have Maples rocking for both men's and women's basketball, and obviously football, too.

But the challenges at Stanford are hard and they're real, and we're in a new era in sports, and we have to figure out how we can evolve to be successful like we have been. So I think that's where we're at right now, and we're trying to really figure this out.

The importance of -- you look at USC, three graduate students from Ivy League schools in their starting lineup. You look at just any of the programs, just the transfer portal. Stanford, we are not necessarily new basketball landscape friendly, and we have to figure out how we can be relevant.

Obviously we want to continue the great tradition of both men's and women's basketball at Stanford.

**Q. It's Chiney Ogwumike's birthday today. How much do you remember about her last game here when Stanford won in the Elite 8 to go to the Final Four in her last game as a senior?**

TARA VanDERVEER: I need to text Chiney, too, and I knew it was her birthday. We played in Norfolk with Chiney and she actually got hurt, but she had a fabulous career. I think that Kiki and Cam are trying to walk in those same shoes, be a double-double machine, which Chiney was, and Chiney led us to the Final Four in her senior year and really was a fearless, fearless competitor. I wondered when Nneka graduated how Chiney was going to step up. I didn't have to worry. She was a monster. Loved coaching her and love her and her family.

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