

# NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: Second Round - Iowa State vs Stanford

Sunday, March 24, 2024

Stanford, California, USA

Maples Pavilion

## Iowa State Cyclones Coach Bill Fennelly

Emily Ryan

Addy Brown

Media Conference

Stanford 87, Iowa State 81 (OT)

**BILL FENNELLY:** First of all, certainly want to congratulate Stanford. That's an outstanding team. Thank you to all the people here who made our stay a great one. We appreciate that.

And certainly kind of like I've been saying all along with our team, I could not be more proud of the way they've carried themselves. It's been a great nine months, one the best seasons of my life coaching.

At this point in my career, you didn't know if you would get this chance, and these guys gave me that chance. Could not be more excited about what they did, how they did it. How they carried themselves. Certainly disappointed in the result, but celebrate what they did. The sad part for me is we don't have practice tomorrow.

But could not be more proud of the way that they represented their school.

**Q. Emily, you had to take over for the star player that didn't have the game she had last game. Then same thing was going on for Stanford where Kiki had to take over for Cam. At what point did you realize you're going to have to have one of those super games to keep this competitive?**

**EMILY RYAN:** Yeah, truly it's not really a mindset like that. It's more so we're just trying to make the right play each possession.

So I happened to be open and so I was just taking the



shots we were getting as a team. They went in, and unfortunately not quite enough of them went in tonight. Audi obviously drew a ton of attention and opened stuff up for us on the outside. Unfortunately just not quite enough tonight like I said.

**Q. Addy, you had that big three late in the game. As kind of regulation's closing down and you're heading into overtime, what's the mindset? How are you feeling about where things are?**

**ADDY BROWN:** I think we were excited to be in the game and going into overtime. We had them where we wanted them. We just couldn't finish it out in the last segment of overtime there.

But just we gave them everything we had, and so we can walk out at least knowing we gave it all we had.

**Q. For you Emily, how difficult is it to keep Kiki Iriaften contained?**

**EMILY RYAN:** Yeah, she's super talented and they have a lot of talent on their team, and she had one of those tonight. There wasn't much we could do to stop her. Every time we tried to do something she countered it with a strong move or something different.

Credit to her and the whole team and their coaching staff for putting themselves in positions to make the big plays down the stretch.

**Q. Emily, for you, what did you see maybe from their ball screen defense that allowed you to navigate it really well and obviously pick them apart? I think they got caught on the screens a lot of times, even though they were trying to fight over. Just talk about that for a little bit maybe.**

**EMILY RYAN:** Yeah, our bigs are setting really good screens tonight, and so just trying to pick off the initial defender and trying to make a read after that. I thought our bigs had good hands tonight and made big plays down low, and then the shooters were making them spread the floor so it opened more stuff up in the lane and driving lanes.



The whole team did their part in opening things up so I was able to just make the layups I guess.

**Q. For Addy, from your perspective, what was the key to your ability to keep punching back? Every time looked like Stanford might pull away, you guys responded. What was the key to your ability to keep responding and keep responding every blow they delivered your way?**

ADDY BROWN: Yeah, I think coach prepared us for that before the game even started. We heard it all season. Sometimes you got to keep your hands up and take the hits and stay on your feet. That was kind of our mindset.

Like we knew we could compete with that team, and you can't think about it for too long. It's next-play mentality. They make a shot, okay, fine. Next play. We're going to go down, run our offense, hit our shot as well. So just thinking about that.

**Q. Wondering what do you think about what this team was able to accomplish this season and what does that do for you guys going into next season?**

EMILY RYAN: Yeah, I couldn't be more proud of this team and everything we been through, and it's been -- sorry. It's been the most fulfilling season I've ever been a part of. It's just an honor to be able to play for Iowa State and represent this university and play with the teammates that I have and for the coaching staff that we get to play for.

And so there is only going to be one team at the end of the season this is ending with a win. As a competitor you understand that, but you just never want your season to end.

Like Coach Fenn said, the hardest part is knowing we don't get to come back to work tomorrow with this team. When you have something this special, you just never know if you'll be able to get it back.

So just kind of embracing what we did this year and all the moments we were able to share together. That's something I'll be able to cherish for every and I'm super lucky I was able to be a part of it.

ADDY BROWN: Yeah, what she said. We didn't take a single day for granted. Coming into this season, you know, we were the underdogs. No one believed in us. So we really had to stick together, and we did throughout the whole season.

I think we showed that tonight, at the Big XII, throughout

our season. We finished fourth in a really good conference. No one ever thought that was going to happen or we were going to make it to this tournament.

So that part, proving ourselves right really is what it comes down to. Like Em said, just not wanting it to end because this team is never going to be the same. We're going to lose seniors and big pieces of the team. Even our managers. They do so much for us, and just to realize that we're not going to have them on the bench next year, it's hard.

So that's the biggest thing running through our heads right now.

**Q. For either of you guys, what was it like playing in kind of a buzz saw type of environment that's very much the road team's -- or you guys are very much in a road team environment in an arena that wants you to lose?**

EMILY RYAN: As a competitor it's really fun being able to have the opportunity to play in big games and environments like that. They earned that home-court advantage the way they played throughout regular season.

So that's something you work for throughout the entire season, is to have the opportunity and they earned that. But like I said, it's really fun to be in environments like that this time of the year in March to play at Stanford against Stanford university and Tara. It's something you dream of as a kid.

To have that opportunity and to do it at Iowa State is something I'll cherish forever.

**Q. Emily or Addy, how do you guys explain the resilience and versatility you guys had? Last game you were down by 20 in the first half and this time you take a No. 3 team to the, and like he said, the home team. How do you explain the versatility and the resilience of this squad?**

ADDY BROWN: I would just say like we have been in those situations before. I mean, I always go back to the West Virginia game at home. We were down 18 at half and just sitting there like, well, we can't give up. We got to keep going. We've got push for our fans and each other.

We came back and won that game.

So that was something in my mind. The Maryland game at halftime. We have been here. We've done this before. We just had to keep believing in each other and keep fighting.

It definitely shows a lot of resilience on this team and we don't ever give up.

**Q. For Emily, even though it was a losing result, to drop 36 points on Stanford at Maples Pavilion in the NCAA tournament, personally how much pride do you take in the effort you put in tonight, and is this a moment personally that you think in time you'll look back on and tell people, yeah, I dropped 36 on Tara?**

EMILY RYAN: Yeah, I mean, at the end of the day the only number that really matters is the final score on the scoreboard. That's the only one I focus on. I try to do whatever I can for the team to put us in a position to win.

Unfortunately didn't do quite enough tonight. It's 100% team effort and as a team we just weren't able to make quite enough plays. So we're going to take that into the off-season and use it as fire and remember this feeling, bottle it up, so on days we don't want to wake up at 6:00 a.m. to go do conditioning, we can find that extra motivation to push hard.

**Q. Is it fun to coach in a game like that?**

BILL FENNELLY: Yeah, it was a lot of fun. It really was. Both team played hard. Both teams made plays. I think it's -- you know, we talk about the growth of the sport, and I think to see two teams play the game out right way, play hard, a lot of skill, a lot of people that just kept doing things to impact success for their team.

So, yeah, it was fun. It's what this tournament is all about. It was fun to watch or kids compete and certainly not as much fun watch Stanford play as well as they did. That's the nature of that beast I guess.

Yeah, it was fun.

**Q. Did you have to change your strategy when Crooks kind of got into foul trouble and didn't get to go off like she did last game, and then Cam on the other side wasn't as factor as much? Did you change your strategy or did you just go with the flow?**

BILL FENNELLY: No, we had to change. Audi is our only really legitimate low post threat. Nelly doesn't score for us on the block. We had to change our offense a little bit and not try and go in the post defensively.

We were obviously with Audi in foul trouble a lot in second half and then fouling out early in the overtime, that's a problem.

But offensively was the biggest difference, because we run a lot of different stuff when Audi is in the game compared to Nelly. So we did have to make some changes there.

**Q. Bill, what does this do in terms of maybe expectations going into next season and excitement for what you have? I know you talked a lot about how rewarding it's been to coach this group. I'm wondering, compound that with what they accomplished.**

BILL FENNELLY: Yeah, like I said, I've been blessed to be at Iowa State so long time. I haven't had this much fun coaching a team in a long time. Collegiate world is so different.

I wish I could answer your question. I'm not avoiding it, but I don't know what our roster is going to be like. I'm being honest. Who knows what's going to happen?

My approach right now is celebrate what our team did, help them through the disappointment of tonight, and we will get back home and evaluate where we are.

Certainly there is a lot of things very positive to look forward to hopefully, and it starts with Emily Ryan. I think you saw tonight the difference she makes on our team. She's the kind of kid that this sport is about, and knowing that she's going to be back leading our team again, she's a great place to start.

**Q. You know, just from my vantage point of the court is seemed like the post play was very physical tonight. What did you see there from both sides defensively?**

BILL FENNELLY: No, it was very physical. Yeah, I don't think anyone would disagree with that. You know, we just don't have enough bodes to sustain that. When a due got to foul trouble, that's a problem. That's the way college basketball is going. The game is way too physical.

That's just me. No one cares what I think.

But it is what it is. We have to play through it better, coach it better. But that's the nature of the NCAA tournament especially.

So we've got make some adjustments moving forward probably.

**Q. How is Arianna doing? What happened with her?**

BILL FENNELLY: Yeah, she fell, hit her chin. Acted like she could maybe go back in the game, but she didn't look right. She fell and split her chin open, so I don't know if

they were going to give her stitches. They were discussing it.

So she's okay. Just pretty shook up. I mean, that was a pretty hard fall.

**Q. Coach, how difficult is it to guard Iriafen when she has the mid-range and the post up game working for her? Kind of feel like choose how you die in that case?**

BILL FENNELLY: No, you're right. They went to her a lot. She got 30 shots off. We tried to double team a couple times. We tried a lot of different things. But she's so skilled.

Like you said, she is physical going to the basket. She has a little mid-range shot that's hard to guard.

But just she's one of those kids that in person was much better than on video. Just a tremendous talent. Just another in the long line of outstanding post players to play here.

**Q. Just talk about, again, Emily's performance. Was there anything from the Stanford defense that you saw she was able to exploit or what was defensively happening that allowed her to really go off the way she did?**

BILL FENNELLY: I think changed their ball screen coverage once in a while. Emily is very smart. What we try to get her to do is use the ball screen and just keep her dribble, probe the defense. When they come to help, kick it. Couple times I think they got confused and she dribbled to the three-point line.

She's really good at that. Really good at just not panicking and keeping her dribble. It's probably not -- people look at it as not normal. She's the best ball handler we have on our team that can handle the stress and the pressure of the on-ball defense.

So we just try to put her in different angles, different ball screen situations, and I thought she handled it great.

**Q. Coach, saved this one for kind of the end of the season but also wanted to ask it after the right game. What's Emily Ryan mean to you and how big is it for that team to have her coming back for her fifth year?**

BILL FENNELLY: Emily Ryan has been a true blessing to me, blessing to our university. In a world where so many kids are consumed by what's good for them, she is the exact opposite.

Everything about her is about her team, her team, her team. She was raised that way. She shows up and does what every single day. Her performance tonight was phenomenal.

But it's not something that we don't see in her every day in how she leads the team. Her coming back changes a lot of things and certainly changes the way I view the world and my job.

But I've been blessed to have so many phenomenal players. The way she leads is the most unique I've ever been around. Ever.

**Q. How does this performance by Emily tonight and then Audi the other night out here at Stanford, how does that propel the attention they get nationally? And of course in your state where there is another player that gets a lot of attention in the state of Iowa.**

BILL FENNELLY: Yes.

**Q. How do you feel about your two players?**

BILL FENNELLY: No, I think it's great. We talk about the growth of women's basketball a lot. We live in a state where women's basketball has always been important. As you mentioned, there is another player in our state that's had a phenomenal career.

I think Audi is one of those people that could be next in how people view her, per personality, the way she carries herself, the way she plays the game. Similar to Emily Ryan.

So I think they're both outstanding -- not just great players, they're really good people. They represent their school the right way. I think that they can have an impact, they certainly have in our state. People are drawn to them and I think they'll just continue.

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