

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - California Baptist vs UCLA

Saturday, March 23, 2024

Los Angeles, California, USA

Pauley Pavilion

California Baptist Lancers

Coach Jarrod Olson

Kinsley Barrington

Calhoun Nae Nae

Media Conference

UCLA 84, CBU 55

JARROD OLSON: Just want to thank all you guys for coming. Pretty awesome experience for us. I said the other day, like this is the first time we've been to the NCAA tournament, and it wasn't just our team that was here, it was our whole community.

Just having so many fans, so many students, and just people here supporting us was pretty amazing. We didn't win the game, but we showed what CBU is capable of both on the court and off.

I just really proud to be a Lancer and be a part of the night where we brought so many people to the game and we were playing at Pauley Pavilion against UCLA, just the journey our school has been on I've talked about the last week or so. It was just really cool. Thank you for coming and covering us. Just a great night for us even though we did lose.

Q. Kinsley and Nae Nae, you got on a 9-0 run to get within three there late in the second quarter, and then how much of a momentum buster was it that run that they made late in the half and going double digits into the locker room?

KINSLEY BARRINGTON: I think, yeah, like obviously sucked but I think we're just like a really resilient team and we don't think the game is over until the last buzzer buzzes. Things happen during the game.

Momentums swing back and forth between teams. We're not going to stop until the game is over.



JARROD OLSON: We did make UCLA call two timeouts.

Q. I guess what did you guys think of UCLA, how far do you think this team could go?

NAE NAE CALHOUN: If I'm being honest, maybe next round, the round after that. I think we did a really good job exploiting their defense, and then they weren't hitting shots on the perimeter. That was the game plan and was successful until they started to get the hustle plays with Gabriela Jarquez. She started to get the momentum for them. So maybe next round after that.

JARROD OLSON: I used to work at Creighton. Flanery is one of my good friends, so I'm going to say they're going to lose next. He probably won't be glad I said that.

Q. I know you guys were kind of excited to just show the world CBU basketball. What do you think you showed the world tonight?

NAE NAE CALHOUN: CBU basketball and that we're great at it and we can play Power 5, non-Power 5. We been doing this the entire year, and I think we showed great resiliency. Even though we were down a lot we still played hard until we seen 00:00 and the buzzer went off.

Q. Kind of picking off what coach said, it wasn't just about your program, it was about the student body and the whole community. I know sometimes when you get on the court it's like white noise, but was it? Did you feel an energy and what it meant for you to have that kind of showing out there tonight?

NAE NAE CALHOUN: Yeah. I think the fans were the sixth player, especially today. It definitely hurt them. Had their energy when we went on runs and that kept the momentum going. So definitely for the community and we felt it.

KINSLEY BARRINGTON: I think our community is pretty tight knit and I think them coming out tonight showed that. Just felt so thankful and blessed that they all took the drive even though it's down the road. That's just awesome to be

there to support us.

It goes show like how much of an impact you can make not even on the court, but those around you as well. So really thankful for that.

Q. Nae Nae, is ESPN going to hire you to do some halftime analysis?

NAE NAE CALHOUN: I'm ready. If they call me, I'm here. (Smiling.)

JARROD OLSON: She's on ESPN+ about 24/7, so...

KINSLEY BARRINGTON: You would be great at it.

NAE NAE CALHOUN: Thank you. I appreciate that. ESPN?

Q. I know there were no players from that 2021 team on the roster on this year's, but for both of you, what does it feel like getting this program into the NCAA tournament and kind of building off what they did?

NAE NAE CALHOUN: I think it means everything, JO is a great coach, so every year he emphasizes the same things, same goals, same values, so with that just helps us get better on the court and off the court and have a closer bond with each other.

KINSLEY BARRINGTON: I would say from last year to this year there has been a great jump from just like character and really installing our values. Not just hearing them and be like, that's what we believe in, but that's what we are and that's all we know.

I think just the people around us made it so every game is -- you're not playing for yourself, you're playing for the girls around you. Whether it's coaches, your teammates, there is just no greater feeling than being on this team this year and I'm just very thankful.

NAE NAE CALHOUN: Expect to see us back next year.

Q. Jarrod, obviously you scout Gabriela Jaquez before coming into the game. With her at the 4, doing a lot of different things, just how much of a difference was she in this game?

JARROD OLSON: Looked like her older brother, which was a bad thing for us. She played great. I mean, it wasn't -- we were not surprised by that. I mean, we kind of prepared all week for bigger lineups. We were not going to complain that Betts didn't play. Obviously that was something we looked and we were like, oh, that's good for

us.

But Jaquez played great. Like I said, seen her play since she was a sophomore in high school because she's from the area. We knew she was capable of doing great things. She has such a good motor and you could just see it.

Nae said it, just the hustle plays and she really sparked them. Just defensively she's really tough, especially because we're not super big either.

So being a little smaller for us, they probably matched up slightly a little bit better. But, yeah, that's a -- you just added another elite defender to an elite defensive team, so it was a tough night for us in that way.

Q. Was there any point pregame or maybe even during the game you just kind of looked out and were like, we're here?

JARROD OLSON: Yeah, I definitely think that happened. I know when I was watching the game before, Creighton was playing UNLV and you could feel the crowd starting to come in. Wasn't quite all the way there. I was sitting with two of my assistants, Brittany and Kamille, that have played for me when were Division II. I said we were not in Van Dyne Gym anymore.

We used to play in a 1000-seat gym that was super small. You're looking around and you're at Pauley Pavilion and it's a typical LA coming-in-late crowd. Had all the feelings of like a game you would watch on TV.

It was just really cool. Then right before the game, Angie and one ever my other assistants who has been with me for ten years, her and Kamille and Brit were sitting there and I walked down the line, and this is no disrespect to holy names, but they used to be in our conference, I said, guys, that is not Holy Names over there, that is UCLA. It was just one of those moments where you're like, here we are, this is pretty cool.

I was just really glad to be able to share it with them because we have come a long ways. Then just like -- sorry, I'm going to be rambling here for a couple minutes. Just looking across the way, like we were scouting the game before. You guys probably don't know this, but I used to work at Creighton and the lady who got me my first job, Connie Yori, she is an assistant coach there.

I was an assistant coach for Flanery for four years. I helped recruit Cheve, one of his assistance. I also Coach Cheve and Jenny Burns, I shared an office with her for two years. Seeing all those people across the way from me as I'm doing my job over here. The sports information director

for there used to be my roommate on the road.

It just kind of like was a pretty awesome experience for me to connect all those people with the current group of people that I'm connected with with CBU. To me it was a great full circle moment.

To do it in potential the most iconic venue on the west coast, it was a great night for me. Good as you can feel losing by 29 points. It was great.

Q. You kind of touched on this already, but when you realized that Lauren Betts wasn't going to be playing tonight, did that affect anything that you were planning on?

JARROD OLSON: Sadly -- and I guess it did a little bit. We had spent all week working on double teaming her because she's such a great player and obviously we hope she comes back soon. You want to see the best players out there.

All we did was, all right, we're just going to play regular defense now. Weren't going to double team in the post. But I don't think it would've -- they won by 29 points still. I don't know if that would've made that much of a difference.

Yeah, she's great, so hopefully she'll come back soon.

Q. Hate to be a downer here, but you have an NCAA tournament team.

JARROD OLSON: Yeah.

Q. With the transfer portal and everything, obviously bigger programs are going to look. Just what's the task of keeping this roster together but also what makes it appealing that somebody might look at you guys now?

JARROD OLSON: Yeah, I mean, I think CBU is -- we've lost kids for the last couple years. You know, we've had kids transfer to Power 5 schools. We also have some good transfers. Nae and Kinsley are both transfers. Kind of goes both ways.

I think the one thing in general that that makes you do is just really appreciate and cherish the team you have currently. You don't always know that's going to be the team that comes back. So I'm just really appreciative of the girls I was able to coach this year. I think my No. 1 goal at the beginning of the year was just to enjoy the season.

The last two years have been tough on me personally just

coaching, but this team really let me coach them. I think that when I mentioned the transfer portal, that's the one thing this gets missed. With people just being able to get out when they want, you don't have to stick. I think a lot of coaches don't get the opportunity to coach their team in the best way they can.

This team let me do it. I'm just really appreciative and very thankful to them and I won't forget that.

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