

GEICO Players Era Women's Championship

Wednesday, November 26, 2025

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

MGM Grand Garden Arena

Texas Longhorns

Coach Vic Schaefer

Rori Harmon

Jordan Lee

Women's Postgame Press Conference

Texas 76, UCLA 65

VIC SCHAEFER: First of all, I don't know that there's enough words to express how proud I am of my team. I think UCLA is really good. They obviously have a veteran team, an older team. They've obviously got a big aircraft carrier inside that does a great job for them. She's an All-American.

I thought our team did a great job in limiting her tonight. Then we did just enough with the rest of 'em. Our defense the first half was pretty special. I mean, kids played their guts out. Played so hard.

We're obviously down three players. We basically have a seven-player rotation. We're trying to play a four player out at the perimeter at three. I thought Justice did a good job the first half.

The difference in the halves is we had nine turnovers the second half. We only had one in the first half. We still forced them into 10 the second half. But the turnovers led to leak-outs and layups that we can't even defend. We just had some really bad decisions.

Then I think we had some kids that were tired. We couldn't run some things. They took us out of some things. They had a guard on our four player. We couldn't run anything through our four player.

But I thought down the stretch, Rori Harmon showed why she's the best point guard in the country. She wanted the ball. When I'm looking out there trying to figure out, Who wants it? We got to get a bucket. We got to make a good decision. I thought down the stretch Rori was really



special. She scored I think all her points in the fourth quarter somebody said.

But we made some really good pressure free throws. In the first half, I mean, we ran some great, great stuff. Book was 6 for 11. Really I thought was in her game, in her element. Rori was 4 for 7. Jordan was 4 for 10, 2 for 4 from three. We were really in transition.

We didn't turn the ball over. Thought Book got to her spots whenever she needed to or wanted to. It was a tale of two halves.

You know they were going to make a run. They're a good team, right? They're not No. 3 in the country for nothing. I thought our kids were great down the stretch. They were great in the huddles. They were very calm. When they cut it to four, we executed, got great shots, made free throws down the stretch. We did the things necessary that a championship team has to do to win in a game like this.

But I thought our defense obviously was the key in not allowing their big to really hurt us. It starts with our guards. It's hard to feed the post when you're out there running your offense 30 feet from the rim. I thought our guards, these three in particular, did a great, great job.

First half we had people step up. Second half we had some different people step up. That's what a great team does. So I'm awfully proud of 'em. I thought they played their guts out, played really hard. It's a good win. But it's November, y'all. We're not going to get too fired up or excited about anything. We knew we were behind the eight ball with the injuries that we have right now. Boy, these kids, man, they answer as I said the bell. I couldn't be prouder of a group. They played really, really hard tonight, so...

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. For any of the players, the first half, you really took it to them. Took them out of their game. Were you surprised at how intimidated they look, not in your play, y'all looked comfortable in doing what you do, but they were completely out of their game. Did that take you by surprise? Looked like they had no fight in them the first half, they were that taken out of their game.



RORI HARMON: I think that's what we harped on these few days of preparation. Pressure the ball, play team defense, which is limiting touches for Lauren Betts. Obviously our five players did a great job doing that.

That's team effort. We were trying to take away the turn of the floor, we had ball pressure. Just making them really uncomfortable so they can't run the offense they want to run. Now they have to result into just putting their heads down and driving or just setting a ball screen.

I thought we were just really prepared from the get. Whatever that was, if we were trying to press, turn them up the floor, denying the floor. Everything was perfect. The post player, I just thought we were all really locked in on that end.

Q. Rori, Vic mentioned as far as you being the best point guard in the country. Maybe your comment on Kiki. She was here a couple weeks ago for a couple of games. I asked her about being the type of person that takes over moments, not games. Can you talk about what makes it so difficult, what makes her a special point guard to play against.

RORI HARMON: She did do all of it. She's getting downhill. A really smart player. When you come across those really smart players, the angles, the reads of the paths, the cuts, everything they do is something I really have to pay attention to. Not that they just put their head down and go, but they're really smart about everything they do.

She's just a great player. I've seen her game grow over time. I really happy to see that, obviously. Yeah, I think in our odds today, we did a little bit better. She's still growing as a player herself, so yeah.

Q. Jordan, last year everybody was talking about how Texas needed shooters. I was talking to your coach in preseason, he said you were really going to embrace a bigger role. He believed in you. You've been looking great this season. What do you do to kind of make that happen? What kind of advice have you gotten?

JORDAN LEE: We have an amazing coaching staff. They're very selfless, pretty much 24/7. Whenever we need them, they're available. As long as we're willing to put in the work, they kind of do whatever we need to support that and support that growth, as well.

Q. Coach, you talked about how Rori is the best point guard in the country. Down the stretch when she was scoring when you needed it, can you speak to her

instincts. It seems like she's constantly making the right play.

VIC SCHAEFER: She was tonight, no doubt. I just think, again, this time last year Rori is coming off that injury and she spent that summer trying to get healthy.

This summer she was able to work more on her skill set and her game. Again, you're looking at three kids, they're in the gym every day doing extra. Like, it's why they're as good as they are.

I mean, Booker is an All-American because she puts in the work. Rori has put in the work. Jordan is in every day putting in the work. These kids, we have a saying, The game's real fair. You get out of what you put into it.

That's why they're who they are. Again, I think Rori will be different this year. Obviously tonight she was very different. Again, that's the Rori that was playing two years ago when she got hurt.

She got the ball to the right people, the right place. She's playing with some really good players. She really doesn't have to do that sometimes. Tonight she had to.

There's them nights where she can have 12 assists and no turnovers, she's going to be finding Booker and Jordan and the rest of our team.

She's in a great position. She's obviously really good at what she does. She's got help. That's the beautiful thing about it. I mean, people are going to make adjustments. The first person on everybody's scouting report is Madison. They're going to come to Rori. Then they're probably going to go to our inside players.

People make adjustments during the game. They really made it hard on Book the second half. There wasn't a lot of room for her to operate. Seemed like every time she caught one, there was a hand in, somebody bumping her. It was really hard. She had some really tough contested shots she had to take there in the second half.

Then, okay, who else is going to step up? Tonight it was Rori. Tomorrow it might be Jordan. It might be our five players. Who knows. But I thought this is what a team looks like. We had kids step up the first half that were special. Then the second half, we had some others step up. The others didn't stop playing.

Y'all, that's hard to go out there and play. I think Jordan came out for one minute. Book played 40. Rori played 40. It ain't like we're standing around in a two-three zone playing "hope you miss" defense.



These kids, I'm trying to get out of here and get them in a cold tub up to their ears so they can get ready to play tomorrow.

Q. Rori, in your mind -- and you've been special for the entirety of your career, but in your mind what made you special in particular tonight?

RORI HARMON: I think coach answered that pretty well in the last question.

Like he said, we had so much firepower in the beginning, in the first quarter. We have so many options. Everyone on the court is a great option. You don't know who to choose. Just because maybe you may be off one night, we need a shot here with seconds counting down, I feel it's my responsibility to take a shot with maybe five seconds down sometimes.

I think we just have so many options. Whoever's night it is, it's whoever's night. Like he said, if your shot is not falling that one time, you can be a good assist player, what are you doing on defense, are you getting all the rebounding.

I like that we all have something to give in the game. Doesn't mean it has to be a bucket or has to be there. We have all worked on so much, whether it's Maddie on fire, Jordan on fire. We have all understood what's at stake for the game to get a W.

Q. You mentioned obviously you're not at full health right now. Kids got tired in the second half. What does a game like this tell you about the potential of your group when you are fully healthy?

VIC SCHAEFER: Again, I got a lot of confidence in this team. They're great teammates, number one. They're fun to be around. But they're competitors. To see them go out and compete tonight, to be up 20 on the No. 3 team in the country at halftime. Y'all, that's hard to do.

We knew they'd make a run. I knew they'd make a run. I think for us it was uncharacteristic that we helped them a little bit. We turned the ball over, made some bad decisions. If we don't do that, I think it may be a little bit different.

Again, give them credit. You have to give your opponent credit. At the same time I know they got tired. Like, I got it. But when I think about our other options, we're very limited right now.

These kids work like this every day. This is nothing for them. They practice hard. They work hard every single

day. They really I think thrive and embrace that environment. When it got hard down the stretch, like they were really tight in the huddle. They were really talking. They were confident. They had some really good switches on sideline out of bounds plays. We've practiced that a little bit, but not a lot. Man, they were really special.

Again, you got to realize now, junior, fifth-year senior, and I call her maybe the most cerebral kid on our team, she's so smart and heady. They know what's going on out there.

Q. Is there any update on the status of the three players who didn't play tonight for you?

VIC SCHAEFER: No update. Won't play tomorrow.

Q. Jordan, you led the team in steals tonight. Coach mentioned at the beginning the importance of the perimeter, what that does in stopping down low. From your perspective, what were you seeing in your defensive aggression to stop what Lauren Betts could get down low?

JORDAN LEE: One of our main emphasis on defense is in the passing lanes. And UCLA runs a lot of stuff four out with Betts inside, down screens, flares. If you're physical and you are where you're supposed to be, you're able to get your hand on a couple of those balls. We communicated well on switches.

We were in the right spot, and our communication was key in that regard, knowing where each other were going to be, knowing their personnel and some of their sets to be able to make them out of that stuff.

Q. Can you talk about your plan on Betts a little bit more.

VIC SCHAEFER: Yeah, again, we talk about playing post defense 30 feet from the basket. While it was Brea and Ky down there, it is really hard to have an inside game when your guards are out there 30, 35 feet from the rim, they got somebody pretty close.

I thought our guards did a really nice job that first half of basically making it really hard to enter the ball inside. We held the kid to eight points. She's really good, by the way (smiling).

Again, we talked about this as a team. It's not just Ky and Brea. You can't leave them on an island down there. Book, to begin the second half, she had a really good dig-in and a steal. Brea and Kyla aren't making her catch it where we want to catch it, we ain't making that play.

It was a total team effort to deal with her. Again, she's so talented, so good. They run so many things for her. It took all of us. But I thought my team was really engaged in the game planning how to deal with her.

When you go against great players, boy, you better figure out what it takes to deal with them. You can't just go out there and think it's one on one. Like, it's not. Some guards to have to take away their space. Some guards you got to keep 'em from catching. Some guards you absolutely don't let them catch and shoot it.

We lost Kneepkens tonight a couple times in the second half. Shouldn't have lost her. We did a really good job on her in the first half.

I just think it's a total team effort. Our guards, again, were really special in making it difficult to make the entry pass. Then our post players were really special down there, Kyla and Brea. Those are two tough hombres. They're pretty good now.

Q. Vic, there's a new proposal on the table for the transfer portal for men's and women's basketball which shortens to 15 days, wouldn't open until after the men's and women's Final Fours. Your thoughts?

VIC SCHAEFER: It sounds good to me. There were teams in my league that had a brand-new starting five and we were still playing in the Final Four.

I don't think penalizing a team because they're still playing, which for me, my conscience won't let me go recruiting or talk on the phone when I have kids that need my undivided attention because they're still playing, right?

I think that's fair and it's equitable. You say you're helping other teams catch up. Well, why are you penalizing me? Because my kids are good? We're going to get penalized?

Again, for a team that might be still playing, but they have six seniors, now you've really penalized them because they're behind in recruiting trying to maintain a status that they have.

If that's what they decide, I think it's certainly more than probably fair and equitable. Again, kids, trust me, know where they're going or what they're doing long before that thing even opens, so...

Who needs 15 or 30? Who needs 30 or 45 days? Like, those kids know, so...

Praise the Lord and Hook 'em Horns.