

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: Second Round - Oregon vs Texas

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Austin, Texas, USA

Moody Center

Texas Longhorns

Vic Schaefer

Bryanna Preston

Jordan Lee

Media Conference

THE MODERATOR: We'll start with questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Coming off last night's performance how did you guys evaluate your performance? They seemed a little down in the post-game, but given 12 hours it react what did you guys think of how you played?

JORDAN LEE: I think little things are definitely important and those are some of the things that we need to sharpen up kind of going forward, specifically in tonight's matchup, we know they have got a prolific guard in No. 2, Katie Fiso, so we're going to be focused on our ball screen defense and a couple other small things that we could have done better offensively. Clean up our screens, etcetera. So, yeah, I would say those are our main two going into tomorrow's game.

BRYANNA PRESTON: I would say definitely like punching first, playing with pace out the gate, especially against an experienced team like Oregon. We got to make sure we come out and make sure that they don't, you know, they don't get the jump on us. I think that starts with our point guards, me and Rori just kind of setting that tempo for our team, get us going.

Q. You mentioned Katie Fiso, so I wanted to ask both of you, what does she bring to the court that makes her a challenge to defend that you anticipate and what's some of her skills that you guys are looking to try and defend?

JORDAN LEE: Another great representation of what the sophomore class looks like. She plays with pace,



three-level scorer, and commands her team at the 1 spot. So definitely all three of those things kind of come together and make her the player she is and just the focal part of their offense, for sure.

BRYANNA PRESTON: Yeah, she's definitely hunting basket, getting to her spots, nice hezi game. Teammates are, you know, playing really well around her as well. So making sure that Rori and I and Jordan as well kind of do our best to kind of shut her down.

Q. You obviously understand that Oregon is a team that's found a lot of its success against ranked teams on the road. They have three ranked wins all on the road at neutral sites. From what you've seen for the film, what makes this Oregon squad so dangerous and how do you guys make sure you maybe put a stop to what makes them have success on court?

JORDAN LEE: I've had a chance to watch like four or five games of the Big Ten season so far. I think Coach Graves just runs a great offensive system. They have four or five shooters that are shooting 33 percent or better in conference. That makes it difficult to get in help on pick-and-roll defense like we try to do. So we'll make sure our 5s are out hedging when they need to be and on track and also 35, you know, we're familiar with her family and she plays extremely hard and extremely well on both ends. So we'll just make sure we have attention to detail and knowing personnel on all five of the players that are on the court.

BRYANNA PRESTON: She covered it (laughing).

Q. Jordan, you've had a lot more responsibilities on the defensive end. What is the difference between being a freshman and playing defense for Vic, and then also just being a sophomore and Bry can you kind of answer that as well.

JORDAN LEE: I think it's your attention to detail is definitely expected to be at a different level. You've kind of gotten out of the way the freshman mistakes and some of the things that, not that you're allowed to get away with, but just mistakes that you are, it's natural to make as a

freshman. So going into your sophomore year now that you've been completely familiarized with a lot of the stuff that he does in his system and the things that he puts emphasis on, there's just more of an onus on that to pay attention to those things and make sure you're taking accountability for everything that you can do, whether it's off the ball or guarding the ball.

BRYANNA PRESTON: Definitely, I would say making sure I have ball pressure, since I'm guarding the point guards every game. Setting that tempo, starting that, starting off with that. So I feel if I, you know, apply ball pressure, going over screens, playing hard, because I know Coach Schaefer is kind of, you know, he gets upset with me sometimes when I go under ball screens because we lose ball pressure and that kind of messes up our 5s when their 5s roll. So just make sure I'm going over screens, just playing tough, I think that's been the difference this year from my freshman year, because I'm a little smaller, but I got bigger this year, so I can kind of get over them screens and help our 5s out.

Q. You mentioned number 35, which is Ehis, and I guess her sister is coming here. Has her sister given you guys any tips, because Ehis says straight up that her sister said she's rooting for Texas, sorry.

JORDAN LEE: No, she hasn't given us any tips.

Q. No scouting reports?

JORDAN LEE: No.

Q. Take her to her left?

JORDAN LEE: There's family loyalty I think, even despite a house divided.

Q. You guys earned the right to be here, obviously and play at home. But what is Oregon up for tomorrow with the fan base playing at home and a tournament environment, all your games I'm sure are rowdy, but the tournament sort of magnifies it. What's Oregon up against tomorrow?

JORDAN LEE: I think that's just a special part about being in Austin. There's nothing like starting off March in front of your home crowd. Obviously we'll take pride in representing that tomorrow on our home court. But I'm sure they're excited to play in that atmosphere as well. We feel like we've developed a great culture and a fan base and an atmosphere that is fully supportive of our women's basketball program here. So we're just excited to take the floor.

BRYANNA PRESTON: Yeah, definitely, I feel like we have a lot of energy to feed off of going into this game.

Q. Coach Graves has talked about one of his players Mia Jacobs being the X factor for this team. I think if you watched yesterday as game you kind of saw how she made an impact. Cuts her chin, finds a way to be able to come back in, just the grit and tenacity she brings. What makes her so difficult from what you've seen on film and how much of a difference maker do you feel like you guys have to be able to make sure she, that you're aware of while she's on the court, considering the impact that she can make?

JORDAN LEE: I think all of their players, including Mia are extremely versatile. That's something you see a little bit of in the SEC and sometimes you don't. So I think, again, knowing personnel will be key, and you always have to be aware of playing someone with that type of competitive spirit and toughness, especially in March. So we'll have emphasis on that and like I mentioned, personnel, specifically for different players and film.

BRYANNA PRESTON: Yeah, everybody can bring the ball up the court 1 through 5, so, yeah.

Q. We've heard from a lot of folks that you two are really into puzzles. Kind of wondering where that came from, what you all like about puzzles, is that something that you picked up at Texas or something y'all brought from home? Tell me about the puzzles.

JORDAN LEE: Well, I feel ashamed to admit we probably haven't done one in about six months. We're so deep into the season and just locked in and there's not too much free time, for some reason (laughing). Actually, Coach Conrad just gave me one, it's a nice, 1,000 piece bird puzzle. So whenever we get the chance we'll do it. But it's just an opportunity I feel like for to us unwind. We're together anyway, so it's a very, not as costly alternative to Legos and some other things that some of our teammates do. So that's just something we do quality time.

BRYANNA PRESTON: Yeah. That's basically what we started it in the dorms, like summer like we would have, we had no car, no nothing. We just had our scooters (laughing). So we were like, scooter 15 minutes around campus, find out what's around and stuff. Come back inside, blast music, and start building puzzles. Yeah, it was a vibe though, you know, very relaxing. Plus, you know, it was time for me and Jordan to really get to know each other.

Q. Do you have a favorite puzzle you guys have built together?

JORDAN LEE: We love food.

BRYANNA PRESTON: Yeah I was going to say, we probably.

JORDAN LEE: We don't a donut one. I think we've done three donut ones and then the hardest one was the flower one, I think.

BRYANNA PRESTON: Oh, yeah. The planets.

JORDAN LEE: The flowers and the planet one have been our most difficult. All a thousand piece. We got to that level.

BRYANNA PRESTON: Yeah, yeah, we're up there. (Laughing).

Q. As you look ahead to your future, are you ready for to be the starting point guard here at Texas next season and Jordan are you confident in Bry's ability to lead this team once Rori is no longer on the team?

BRYANNA PRESTON: Honestly, I'm definitely I want to be present where my feet are. Super excited, I've got to learn so much under Rori. So just taking everything that she's taught me and us being competitive every day in practice definitely gives me the confidence that I can lead us next year. So, yeah, what do you think, Jordan? (Laughing).

JORDAN LEE: I'm excited to see it. Particularly as a friend, Bry is very distinct in that she's supportive all the time. You can't put a value on someone that's like that for you in your life. So for her to kind of take that next step, I'm like ecstatic to see it. I know from the smallest thing, whether it's a deflection, her first deflection, whatever, first start, like I'm going to be thrilled to see it, for sure. Yeah, like she said, she's more than ready. There's nothing like the competitive atmosphere that we have and maintain in practice, so it will be exciting as she transitions to that role in her future, for sure.

THE MODERATOR: All right, thank you for your time.

(Pause.)

THE MODERATOR: We'll start with an opening statement from coach and then take questions.

VIC SCHAEFER: First, I appreciate everybody being here. Excited about the opportunity. Again, really want to praise Missouri State and coach and her team and her staff. I thought they were really good, especially the second half. We watched film this morning, so much to take from there

that we probably could have done a lot better. I think the thing that this time of year and especially for our team right now is the reason we've been able to play as well as we played lately is because we've had an edge. And really have had an incredible competitive spirit. I'm not sure we had that yesterday. That's my job, that's my job as the coach, to make sure we got that. I think we got to find a way to make sure we've got that tomorrow. Oregon's really good. Super talented, got kids that can make shots all over the floor. They got a great inside player. Of course Fiso just really makes 'em go. She's so special. She's a smart, heady kid, and just makes all the right decisions. That's what you want out of a great point guard, and Oregon certainly has that. So between, you know, you always like to have that inside player and you always like to have that point guard, and they have got 'em both. Etute is really special, really smart kid, heady. So we're, today's going to be a real critical day for us in preparation and we're going to have to have a great day of prep, because they're really, really good. It's hard to believe they're 8-10 in the Big Ten. Of course when you look at their scores, and I think I figured it out last night, when you go through their losses, their losses, when you add 'em all up and you divide by 10, they haven't lost by very much over the course of the season. So we're going to have to play really well and this is a really good Oregon team and got really good players. So excited about the opportunity. I think our kids are as well. They know the task at hand.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions.

Q. You mentioned Katie Fiso a second ago. Can you elaborate a little bit more on how difficult she could be to deal with. One of the things that seems very special about her is her ability to get wherever she wants to get to and shoot from anywhere and a variety of different ways, step backs, all sorts of different things, can you talk about the challenges you guys fairways tomorrow?

VIC SCHAEFER: You know if you were talking about a baseball player you would talk about a five-tool player. She's five tool. We usually talk about three tool in basketball, right. Can finish at all three levels. She's just really, really special and can do so many things with the ball. You can tell she enjoys assists as much as a bucket. She has great court vision. She's got a great change of pace to her game. She creates a lot of problems. We're going to have to obviously do a great job handling her. To me she's the engine. She's what makes 'em go. So we'll have to do a great job with her, but just like most teams at Oregon, they all got a bunch of kids that can stand up there and beat new a horse game now. They can beat you, you don't guard somebody, you get in rotation, and they're out there making those threes left and right. So we got to

make sure that we're out there guarding them as well. So that makes handling the ball, no matter who it is, you got to handle the ball one-on-one.

Q. You talked about having to make sure that this team for you guys tomorrow that you guys have your edge at the start of the game. How important is that going to be considering how fast Oregon likes to move, especially out of the gates. I mean we saw yesterday how winded they were just because of how hard they were working in that first quarter, how important is it going to be for you guys to match that energy right out of the gates?

VIC SCHAEFER: Yeah, I think our team throughout the course of the year has done that. I think you go back to the SEC tournament, we jumped out of the gate pretty good. Yesterday we just had some rust. I had a lot of text messages and I bet you put in everyone of 'em, lots of rust tonight. So we had some rust and hopefully we get that knocked off last night and today. But we were kind of just, we didn't quite play with that sense of your begin see that we've had in our last eight games. Again, that's my job. I've got to make sure our kids are ready to go and that we're ready to go from the tip.

Q. I assume partially tomorrow some of the Katie responsibilities will go to Jordan. Kind of wondering, what is the difference between her being a sophomore and the way she's been asked to defend and being in your system for another year and this kind of applies to Bry as well, as to when they were freshmen and trying to figure it out.

VIC SCHAEFER: Yeah, I think that's just it, just what you said. Year older, year wiser. I think it's a confidence too. Jordan is really plays with a lot of confidence, and rightfully so. I think Bry's right there with her. I mean it's so hard, and it's so unfair when you're a freshman to have all these expectations heaped on you that you're supposed to be this, you're supposed to be that, and you got all these people on social media that say you're supposed to be this, you're supposed to be that, why aren't you playing this much, what's wrong, how come. It's just so unfair. I think those two kids, I think the thing that impressed me most about them, when they were freshmen, they were working while they were waiting. They didn't let all that other stuff, you know, influence them or their line of thinking. And near neither did their parents. Jordan was a top-10 recruit. But I think what Jordan did is she got better throughout the course of her freshman year. And it you will culminated in that Final Four game, right. She played really well, played with a lot of confidence, made shots. And it's just carried over into this year. I give both those kids a lot of credit as well as their parents because, again, in today's world,

these are kids, they're 18 years old. You have people putting a value on them with a dollar sign. I'll be damned if I was a parent I was going to let somebody put the value of my kid in a, in anywhere with a dollar sign. Like that's just, that don't work for me. This is supposed to be college. They're suppose to be figuring out life, figuring out how it to make an A in chemistry. Figuring out this level and how hard it is. So with those two especially I just, those two really have embraced the process, their families have embraced the process of, hey, man, my kid's competing, she's learning how to be a college kid, she's learning how to play at this level. She's working while she waits. So I think that's why they're where they are right now. Jordan's playing at a level with the confidence that she has because of the process. So many times -- nobody wants to go through the process, they just want it now. They want it given to 'em. They just, and this is our world. Not only on top of that y'all, you got people making decisions on their value that aren't even parents. I mean, make it make sense. So for me again I'm just I'm proud of those two in particular. Justice was another top-10 kid coming out of high school but was coming off that injury. All those kids as sophomores now have made, as you know, big impacts in our program this year. And so that's the process. That's part of being young and growing into your role on a team. This is a team. And I just, I really have a lot of admiration for them for being able to accept that.

Q. I know it's been awhile but you kind of have a coaching history against Kelly Graves-coached teams. What do you remember about those matchups? I know it's been awhile. And what are the hall marks of a Kelly Graves-coached team?

VIC SCHAEFER: Yeah, I think probably the biggest I don't know if disappointment is the word, but being sent out to out West with the best team I've ever had, that Elite 8 team that got sent out there is as the No. 1 seed, to play Oregon as the two seed? That's the best team I've had. It's not -- the two teams before that played for the National Championship, that 33-3 team was special. But part of the NCAA tournament, and my media has heard me say this before, you got to get hot and you got to have a little luck. We were unlucky. We had to go out there and play in front of 13,000 Ducks and play his best team ever, and got beat 88-84. You can count on one finger how many games I've lost when my teams have scored 84 points. And it was that night. And Ionescu was so special. But he had a full team full of special players. So but again, we've played in other games too, and we've had some really well-played games by both of our teams. So always know that they got really a lot of good players and a lot of good players that can make shots. Great players. And great players that can make shots. You can't leave 'em open, because they can, they will absolutely hurt you. So it's a system that has

worked a long time for him and again, we're going to have to play really well tomorrow.

Q. You talked earlier in your opening statement about Ehis. She's a forward that's not the biggest forward obviously in the country. I think she's only 6 foot, 6-1, and yet she finds so much success down low against people that will be three, four, five inches taller than her. How from what you've seen on film how does she do it and how do you adjust and attack that, knowing that she finds a way to find the crease and get a bucket even when she's double teamed by people that are taller than her?

VIC SCHAEFER: Yeah, well, it's hard to double team her when you got all those shooters on the perimeter. I just think the kid is really crafty. I think that's the word I like it use when you see somebody like her. She's really crafty. Smart, heady, she's real patient. So you really, again, it's why she's as good as she is, and she's really good. Smart. Look, I've got film right here of her bringing -- she's bringing it 94 feet. Coast to coast. So she's got handles. But again, another just smart, heady kid, but crafty. That's kind of probably the biggest compliment I can give somebody. Her and Fiso, they're just crafty kids. That he encompasses it all. They're smart, heady, they see the floor, they read, they feel defenses. I think both those kids can really feel a defense and then attack it where it's weak.

Q. You mentioned special players you've had. This is Rori's last home game. I realize we're up against some time constraints but maybe if you could just summarize what she has meant to your team over the last few years through it all. I mean the rise of the resurgence of the program, the injury, the leadership, what has she meant to you?

VIC SCHAEFER: Yeah, I think when you, first of all, she moved into the top 10 yesterday in all-time assists in her game. But she's the only player in the history of our game with points, rebounds, I can't even remember 'em, but it's 1,500 points, I think. 900 assists. 350 steals. 600 rebounds. I mean, and it's counting, right. No other player in the history of our game has those numbers. I mean, think about that. But for me, being around her every day for five years, I mean she's like my own daughter. I seen her as much as I've seen my own daughter. She's just, she's been a part of me for almost as long as I've been here. So you get comfortable and the thing that I think you can say about Rori is she's been really reliable. Night-in and night-out I knew what I was going to get. An incredible competitor, tough as nails, was always going to give me her best defensively. She knew the game plan, was going to run our team, was going to really compete. Man, what a player. What a great kid though. I'm going to tell you, her

parents, they get all the credit. You talk about two of the most wonderful people in the world, supportive, I can go on and on and probably get pretty emotional. Rori's just, she's meant a lot to my career. I've learned a lot coaching her. I'm a better coach, I'm a better father, I'm a better husband because of Rori Harmon. And I hope we're not done tomorrow. We'll be done here, for sure, but man, she's just meant really everything to our program. That first recruiting class, I've said this a lot, I spent a lot of Mississippi State money flying from Starkville, Mississippi on the school plane to Houston, Texas recruiting her. And then when I left there to come here, you know, I was just hoping, man, we've gone from 10 and a half hours to two and a half hours from home, maybe we can get her. So it's really been special for me.

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