

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: Regional 3 Semifinal - NC State vs Stanford

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Portland, Oregon, USA

Moda Center

Stanford Cardinal

Coach Tara VanDerveer

Kiki Iriafen

Hannah Jump

Cameron Brink

Sweet 16 Pregame Media Conference

THE MODERATOR: Joining us for Stanford is head coach Tara VanDerveer.

TARA VANDERVEER: We're very excited to be here. We're looking forward to the tournament. Just excited to get on the court and get the game going.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. When you recruited Cam, and the bond you have with her and her family, how sweet is it for her to come back through here on her final run?

TARA VANDERVEER: Great question.

We're really excited to be in this Portland regional. Not just for Cam, but for our fans on the West Coast. It is just great to be here.

To go full circle is really a fun thing. So it's great for her to be able to play her with her family and the support that she has in the Portland area.

Q. You've had a lot of really special front court combinations at Stanford. What is it about Cam and Kiki that sets them apart?

TARA VANDERVEER: Well, like you said, we've had Chiney Ogwumike and Nneka Ogwumike or Jayne Appel. I think for the most part our team, our program has had



great post players. Cam and Kiki are two of the best. They score. They rebound. They both defend.

I think the thing is that they have a really special bond. They're sisters from a different mother. They encourage each other, they support each other. They're really close. They warm up together down on the same side.

I think this year Cam has really helped Kiki and Kiki has really helped Cam. They've been each other's best support on the court and off the court.

Q. I want to ask you about Katy, your assistant coach. What do you remember about first recruiting her back in the '80s? What's been so impressive with her as a coach now?

TARA VANDERVEER: Well, Katy Steding played at Lake Oswego High School. When I came out from Ohio State, this was the end of the Trail Tournament, the first tournament I went to. I was kind of worried. We had some great, great players at Ohio State. I just thought, Well, I'm going to this little tournament.

I saw Katy and Trisha Stevens in the first game. I'm thinking, This is going to be okay. There were only 8 or 12 teams at the tournament at the time. It built up to hundreds and hundreds of teams.

Katy was our first player that we signed at Stanford. She set the record for the most three-pointers in the Final Four. It was broken last year by Caitlin Clark. She was an Olympian, someone that had a great career at Stanford, but went on to play professionally.

She's very, very intelligent woman. I call her the grinder. She works really hard. It's great to have her on our staff. She's also tremendously loyal, someone that I've known, what, almost 40 years.

We work really well together. I love having her on our staff.

Q. When you think about this NC State matchup, this was a team that was a little bit surprising in the ACC because of who they lost, what sticks out to you about



them and this matchup going into tomorrow?

TARA VANDERVEER: Well, I think they're a very balanced team. They have five people in double figures. They're a very well-coached team. Wes does a great job. They have an inside game, outside game. They like to run. We like to run, too.

I think it should be a high-scoring game, up-tempo game. Their athletic guards shoot the ball well. I think it should be a really great matchup.

I'm not surprised. They have a lot of talent on their team.

Q. Wes was kind of joking the other day about how he thought that this would be his trip to the West Coast. He hoped that it counted as his trip to the West Coast to play here next season. Is this game a preview of what's to come for ACC?

TARA VANDERVEER: We have played a couple ACC teams this year already. We played Duke. We played Florida State. In the past we have played Boston College, Notre Dame. We played Louisville in the tournament.

Anymore, basketball, there's conferences, but you play everybody. We've been in tournaments with NC State before. It doesn't feel like a conference game. It's an NCAA game, but we know it will be next year.

We're very excited to have that competition next year.

Q. If a units program came to the women's tournament in the near future, what would that mean for the sport overall?

TARA VANDERVEER: I've heard they're doing a retroactive units program. I think that would be wonderful (smiling).

I think that really show how far women's basketball has come. I'm someone that is in favor of that. I joked about it, but it would be fun to do the math of how many times we've been in the tournament, how far we've gone. If, in fact, that was a program, how much that would have benefited Stanford.

I think we're right there. It's evidenced by the support in this room, the national coverage of women's basketball, the ratings on television.

I think we still have some work to do to figure out... We've grown so fast that we haven't necessarily kept up with every single change. The landscape has changed so fast.

I think personally it would be nice to be spreading this regional out. This is my first time with eight teams. I think we're there. But the units program, it's something that would signify, it would signal women's basketball has arrived.

Q. As your time coaching Cameron wraps up, what are you going to miss the most about coaching her?

TARA VANDERVEER: Let's see. Where should I start?

Her blocked shots. Her fire coming into the game. Her competitiveness. Her skills. She is an incredible athlete. She runs the floor really well. She has great hands. She battles.

I think just she plays every aspect of the game. She plays offense, defense, rebounding. I think that she still has a really -- she is scratching the surface of how good she can be.

As she goes forward playing more perimeter, being a more consistent shooter, being a perimeter defender, just the absolute sky's the limit.

I think Cam has an incredible future. It's been fun to be part of her journey.

Q. Both Lindsay Gottlieb and Cori Close discussed after their games the other night, you sent a group text to the Pac-12 coaches, a one last virtual huddle with everybody. Can you talk about what your impetus for that was, share about what you got back?

TARA VANDERVEER: Whenever we go into the tournament, I try to text all the different coaches. We had so many times in the tournament, I just said, What the heck, I'm going to do one big one.

I just said, as we end our Pac-12 kind of family, just want to wish everyone best of luck in the tournament, going our separate ways, just that we've had a great and special thing.

The coaches in our Pac-12 responded like we're really a close sorority, fraternity. I feel like I can call any single coach, talk to them. We have a really close group.

It is incredibly sad to see the end of such a great conference that has the most teams in the Sweet 16. We had I think three other teams that played in another post-season tournament, whatever it was, WNIT or the new one.

It's not just the fact that our teams are successful, we have

worked together to make the Pac-12 successful. The coaches have worked together, administrators. We represent great universities.

If anything, it was kind of a best wishes, but remember how special it has been.

Q. There's been a lot of talk to your point about the game has improved so much, growing so much. The officiating has not really kept up with that. As someone who has been in the game a long time, now do you think officiating can get better overall? And a couple coaches have told me they would entertain the idea of getting one challenge like they do in college football. What do you think about that?

TARA VANDERVEER: Well, the first question just about -- I'm not one to be up screaming, hollering, getting a lot of technicals.

In my mind I want to say our officials are good people with integrity, they're working as hard as they can. We're partners in this game, coaches, players, officials. We're trying as hard as we can.

The role of an official is to make sure that basically it's fair. I know they're working as hard as they can. I try to give them that grace.

There are some times where it drives me crazy with some of the calls. I think that sometimes games, they let people beat people up. I've seen that during the year. I've seen Cam get some really incredible physical play. I also have seen some absolutely just heavy breathing calls.

I think if there's anything that would be helpful for coaches and players is the consistency so that going into a game you kind of know what to expect.

As far as the challenge, I don't know that I agree with that. They go to the monitor too much for me anyway. It slows the game down. I think the fact that you can review maybe the last minute or last two minutes, I think that's good enough for me.

It's hard to be an official. It's hard to be an official because of the poor sportsmanship we see demonstrated by coaches, by players, by fans. I think they are a part of the game that we need, and we need them to do well for our game to do well.

Q. I'm curious if you remember what any of those early conversations were like with Cameron when you were initially recruiting her, what you saw in her, how she's evolved not only as a player but as a person.

TARA VANDERVEER: Well, the first conversation I had, I wasn't in the room with actually. She came to summer camp, and my sister Heidi was at running camp. Cam thought Heidi was me. That's probably good because Heidi is nicer than me (smiling).

Amy Tucker basically offered her as an eighth grader. Cam I think thought she was offering her to come back to camp again, but she was offering her a scholarship.

I watched Cam play as a young player, and just knew she had such great potential. She has obviously realized that.

Q. This is our second year as a two-site regional format. We have two more years of this format. Your thoughts?

TARA VANDERVEER: Well, this is my first year in it. I think that women's basketball, sometimes we make decisions, making them for two, three and four years out, then we're not in that same place.

I think that four teams here would be great. I don't know that we have it figured out yet, what is best for women's basketball. But when we figure it out now, it might be different in two or three years. I think that's a little bit of a dilemma.

I think we have to decide for women's basketball are we going to keep playing home sites, are we going to go to one site, go to Vegas? Are we going to go to four sites? Those are for the powers to be.

THE MODERATOR: We are out of time, Coach VanDerveer.

TARA VANDERVEER: Thank you very much. Great to see everyone.

THE MODERATOR: Joining us are the student-athletes from Stanford. We'll open the floor to questions.

Q. Cam, how sweet is this basketball life that on your last run here as a Cardinal that you're coming back to your hometown?

CAMERON BRINK: It's amazing. It's so great to be home. I live 15 minutes from here. I got to see my parents last night, my grandma, my dog.

Life is good. I'm just soaking it all in, for sure.

Q. Cam, you got to see your dog, your grandma. Did you get to eat anywhere? Where are you



recommending that your teammates go to get food in this wonderful food city?

CAMERON BRINK: Is it called Jake's, the seafood place? Jake's is good. El Gaucho is a really good steakhouse. Last night I had my grandma's pot roast, so I'm very happy (smiling).

Q. Cameron, you played in Eugene and Corvallis many times. How many times have you played in the Moda Center? Have you played here?

CAMERON BRINK: Maybe once when I was younger, but never before. I watched my godbrothers Steph and Seth play here a lot. It's really cool to be in this arena. It's a great arena. I think we're all really excited to be here.

Q. Kiki, coming off of your big game on Sunday, how do you level your expectations in terms of what you do when you go out there in the next game?

KIKI IRIAFEN: Yeah, I think just honing in on my scout. I'm more focused defensively. I know my offense will come. Making sure we keep those guards in front of us, boxing out, rebounding. Offensively, the game will come to us.

Q. Cameron, how does it feel knowing that this could be the last time you're playing in your hometown for a very long time, possibly ever?

CAMERON BRINK: Honestly, I'm at peace with it. I think to play my last potential game in front of family in Portland at home is bittersweet. But it's really wonderful. I'm just really happy to be here. I just have a great sense of peace, honestly, being here. I just love Portland. I feel at home.

Q. Hannah, Tara was up here talking about the guards that NC State has, how athletic they are. What have you seen in the scout about the problems that they pose but also the ways you can also threaten them on the other end?

HANNAH JUMP: We spent the last two games honing in on the scout. I think they're a really quick team. Getting back in transition will be huge for us. Just making sure we're boxing out with people in front of us.

Got to guard them, too. We have a big inside presence that they're going to have to find a way to guard. I think that's going to be kind of the positive for us coming in tomorrow.

Q. Kiki and Hannah, did you also get some of

grandma's pot roast, or was that only the Brink family?

HANNAH JUMP: Just Cam (smiling).

Q. Hannah, Kiki and Cam are an incredible 1-2 punch in the paint. What is this like as a guard knowing if you take a shot, if this doesn't go in, I have someone that can get an offensive rebound? How fun is it to play with two All-Americans?

HANNAH JUMP: Yeah, it's a lot of fun. Tara always says we play inside-out. If they're getting double-teamed, they're going to find a way to kick it out to the guards, and we're going to hit our shots.

Yeah, I think we pose a lot of challenges for our opponents. See what they can do with it. But I think we're super excited about where we are, excited to play tomorrow.

Q. Cameron, Tara mentioned when you were first being recruited by Stanford as an eighth grader, you were at a camp and you mixed up her sister with her. What do you remember about your recruiting experience, then coming up through the high school ranks in Oregon knowing that Stanford was somewhere you wanted to be?

CAMERON BRINK: Yeah, I mean, I remember I was going into the eighth grade. I thought Heidi was Tara. She's great, I love Heidi.

It was honestly a dream to be offered that soon. It sets my sights clearly. I needed to focus on school. We know it's hard to get in, even if you're a student-athlete.

I think especially playing in the state of Oregon, it's a great state. We have Nike. My parents worked for Nike for 20-plus years. I've been surrounded by an amazing basketball culture. I wouldn't rather grow up anywhere else. It was wonderful.

Yeah, I think it worked out wonderfully.

Q. Kiki and Cam, Tara was saying she thinks the way you support each other and are pushing each other but also each other's best support has helped you guys on the court. Do you remember a moment or a time when your relationship off the court really started to flourish? Was it this year? Did it date back earlier?

KIKI IRIAFEN: Yeah, I can remember a moment in the spring, so still last school year. Cameron took me out to lunch. We went to Gott's. It was just her and I. We just talked, not even about basketball, but really getting to know

each other.

I feel like prior to then we were competitors. Now I get to know Cameron as a person, she gets to know me as a person. That laid the foundation for the season we have now. We really just got to know each other. We truly love each other, so I think that's been really helpful for us on the court.

Q. Hannah, you've been shooting well the past two games. For you is the basket bigger? Do you feel confident letting it go?

HANNAH JUMP: Yeah, I mean, I'm just trying to let the game come to me, kind of play within the offense. Once they're getting doubled, kick it out, focus on my shot. Focus on things, defensive scout, kind of being a leader out there. Once I focus more on that, then my shot comes.

Q. Cam, what is the family ticket situation like? How many family members are you anticipating for this game?

CAMERON BRINK: Honestly, as many tickets as I can get. I feel like I've had to beg all, especially the Greek girl Stavi: Please, if you have any extra.

Yeah, I'm so lucky to have such an amazing support system here. I just love everyone in Oregon: family, friends, everybody. They've made a huge impact in my life. To have them present for potentially my last few games as a college basketball player is really special.

Q. Cam, you made mention multiple times about this being a great basketball city. What are your thoughts when you saw the WNBA did fall apart for this city, if you think this city deserves a WNBA franchise?

CAMERON BRINK: I mean, I really think that Portland deserves a franchise here. I think people would really rally behind a team here and they would support us.

I think I was sad about it. Obviously the Bay is a good second for me, because at Stanford we're close by. Hopefully one day. I think the way people are supporting women's basketball now as a whole, there's only more room for expansion. We have so much talent. The fact there's so few roster spots is a shame.

Hopefully there's more expansion, and I feel like this would be a great place to go next.

Q. Cameron, there's been a lot of really good talent coming out of the state for a few years. How excited are you for the girl's basketball scene from your home

state right now?

HANNAH JUMP: We were just up at Oregon State. I went up to Kennedie and Donovyn. I was like, You guys are putting it on for Oregon basketball. I'm so proud. Jazzy is an amazing player. I remember growing up playing against the likes of Evina Westbrook.

I think it's a great state. I think we all support each other as women's basketball players. I'm really proud to be a part of that legacy, for sure.

Q. Cam and Kiki, I think we all saw that TikTok that you posted with Tara. Any future ones planned?

CAMERON BRINK: She keeps saying we had to win to learn more dances, so... Now we have to hold her to it and do another one. I guess I have to scroll and find another one.

KIKI IRIAFEN: I think we keep on winning, we'll have more dances coming, so stay tuned (laughter).

Q. Tara is known for a lot of things. Fashion is not one of them. There are people on the sideline wearing crazy outfits. Tara is focused on the scouting report. Have you ever made any sort of bet with her that if you won a certain game, you guys would get to dress her for the next game?

CAMERON BRINK: Should we do that now (smiling)?

Q. One thousand percent. What is your ideal outfit for her to wear?

KIKI IRIAFEN: I want to see Tara in a dress.

CAMERON BRINK: A dress.

KIKI IRIAFEN: And some heels.

CAMERON BRINK: Yeah (laughter).

So we got her a necklace for breaking that record. She wears it for every game. I think it is really sweet. She keeps it simple. She wears her little joggers and her running shoes. I think once COVID hit, she said she would never go back to fancy wear for games. Maybe we have to hold her for that.

THE MODERATOR: All right, thank you very much for your time. Best of luck tomorrow.

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