

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

Friday, March 29, 2024

Portland, Oregon, USA

Moda Center

**Stanford Cardinal**

**Coach Tara VanDerveer**

**Cameron Brink**

**Kiki Iriafen**

**Hannah Jump**

Sweet 16 Postgame Media Conference



wanted to do so well in Portland, being from Portland. Got us off to a really good start. Last couple games we've struggled in the first half. She really got us going.

Cam is a phenomenal player, a phenomenal person. I'm really sad that this is her last game in a Stanford uniform.

For our whole team, I think we have a lot of young players that really I think would learn a lot of from this experience. I don't think that anyone on our staff or our team has to hang their head. We've had a great year. I'm really proud of everyone.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up to questions for the student-athletes.

**Q. Kiki, picking up a quick foul and going to the bench right away, then seeing your and Cam's minutes limited, what factor do you think that played in how this ultimately played out?**

KIKI IRIAFEN: Yeah, I think it's definitely tough when both of us are in foul trouble. But I think when I was on the bench, when Cam was on the bench, we did everything we could to still encourage our teammates, still be vocal from where we were at. I think we gave it our best. We just didn't get the outcome we wanted today, so...

**Q. Obviously we knew coming into this one it would be a battle between the guard play, the post play. Seemed as if the officiating and the fouls kind of took you out of that. Do you weigh in on that at all?**

KIKI IRIAFEN: I think the fouls definitely hurt us. We don't want to be talking to the ref, so kind of playing through the foul calls, just adjusting to the game, so...

**Q. Cameron, we can tell you're emotional right now. Can you walk me through what your feeling.**

CAMERON BRINK: Obviously sad. I'm just happy to have had such an amazing career here, to be coached by Tara, to play with these amazing girls.

I'm sad, but it's bittersweet, for sure.

THE MODERATOR: Joining us now is Stanford.

Coach, we'll open it up with your opening statement, please.

TARA VANDERVEER: Well, it's been an honor to be able to come to Portland and play in this Sweet 16. I thought we lost to a team that really had a great second half. I thought we played a very good first half. But I compliment NC State, how hard they played, the things that they did in the second half.

I am exceedingly proud of the three women to my right. Starting on the far right, Hannah Jump, we would not be here without Hannah. She had a fabulous grad year. On top of being an incredible shooter, her defense, she never had to come out of the game. Her conditioning, just how much she's improved, I'm really proud of you, Hannah. I have loved being your coach.

For Kiki, I don't know if there's anyone that has improved more than Kiki. You're a warrior out there every game. Today again, Kiki. Just really battled, stayed with it the whole 40 minutes.

Kind of where Kiki was last year at this time compared to where she is now is something that is incredible. I give you just a lot of credit for your hard work and your leadership.

It's really sad that Cam, this is her last game. I know she



**Q. Hannah, since you played all 40 minutes, you kind of experienced what it was like when Cam and Kiki were both on the floor, but when they were out. What changed the most for you, especially as it pertains to the guard play?**

HANNAH JUMP: Yeah, I mean, everyone knows Cam and Kiki are big assets to our team. Without them on the floor it definitely makes it tougher.

Stepping up the leadership, making sure we're huddling everyone up, getting everyone on the same page, that's something they do. Picking that up when they're not on the floor is a priority of mine.

**Q. Hannah, what are you going to miss most about the team and being in this team environment at Stanford? What are your next plans for your career?**

HANNAH JUMP: (Tearing up) I'm sorry, I promised not to cry.

This program means so much to me. These girls are my sisters. I don't have a sister, so these are literally my sisters. It's been an honor to represent Stanford beside them for the past five years.

I'm just so grateful that Tara gave me the opportunity to come back for one more.

My plans after, I want to continue playing basketball for as long as I can. Wherever that takes me, I'm going to try to play my best, do whatever I can wherever I go.

To play here has been truly an honor and a dream since I was a little girl. I'm just so grateful to finish my season with these girls, just honestly the best times have been on and off the court any minute we've spent together.

**Q. Cam, you've had a crazy career at Stanford, very high highs, some medium lows. It ends here in Portland for you and college. If you can reflect back on your time at Stanford and take a slight look ahead to the bright future you have, what would you say about it?**

CAMERON BRINK: I mean, gosh, I feel like these four years, they say it goes by fast and you don't believe them, then it really does. I feel like a freshman. I feel like I'm still a kid. I'm a kid at heart. Tara I'm sure is kicking me under the table saying that I am. I'm really going to be missed being coached by you, even though I know you're going to be in my corner the rest of my life.

Tara is the best. She's the best for a reason, because I don't think anyone works harder. I've had an absolutely amazing coaching staff. I played with some of the best players in the country, best shooters. I have lifelong friends that I will never waver from.

I'm just extremely lucky. While this is very sad, it's bittersweet. I love these girls. Like Hannah said, I want to play basketball for as long as I can, so I'm excited.

**Q. Cameron, you got to be announced in front of your family and friends in your home city. What was that experience like?**

CAMERON BRINK: It's amazing. If I have to lose anywhere, in front of family and friends, it's the way I want to do it. Playing in front of them my last college game ever really meant a lot to me. I think I'm really at peace with my career and how it went.

I think we just came up short today. I just feel really lucky. I'm sitting here feeling really lucky and really blessed.

**Q. Kiki, I asked Hannah what she's going to miss about the program. What are you going to miss the most about having Hannah and Cam around?**

KIKI IRIAFEN: Yeah, I think it's just like we'll never have this group of people again. I think that's something that I'm realizing. But we've had a great season. I love these girls. I would just like to say we were ranked like 15 at the beginning of the season. Nobody believed in us but ourselves and our families.

Although this loss is very disappointing, as Tara said, we have nothing to hang our heads on. We were a No. 2 seed, we were in the top of the polls all season. I'm proud of us, the growth we've had, the way we've stuck together. I think I'm just going to miss seeing my sisters every day, so...

**Q. Kiki, this is going to be your team next year. What do you hope you can take from this experience both this year but also this post-season when it's your turn to lead the team?**

KIKI IRIAFEN: Yeah, I think just being dominant from the beginning. We had that, but how do we close out games. Some games are too close. Even our Iowa State game was too close. Also making sure that everybody is continually working on their craft so we're always improving throughout the season. Making sure we're all bought in.

We have a lot of promise next year. It will be exciting to see where we go, so...

THE MODERATOR: To our student-athletes, thank you very much for your time. We'll continue with questions for Coach VanDerveer.

**Q. You've been doing this for a very long time. Won a lot of games. What do you think caused the demise of this game specifically?**

TARA VANDERVEER: You know, I think you pointed out a little bit, we are not going to be successful with Cam and Kiki on the bench. For Cam to play like 23 minutes and 35 seconds, Kiki playing 22 minutes, we're not going to beat a team that is that good.

On top of that, we did not do our job in keeping our best players on the court. On top of that, we need more help offensively from the perimeter. I think that Talana had some really good looks. She's really been struggling with her knee, has been in pain, hasn't been able to practice. Hopefully she can get surgery and get in the gym and really work.

What I'm hopeful about is that seeing the improvement that Kiki made, we need Talana, Elena, Courtney, Nunu, Chloe to make that same improvement. Brooke. To understand, Wow, we can do this, too.

I think the question for Kiki was great. She's the leader. We have great kids coming back and great kids coming in.

**Q. The third quarter you got outscored 28-10. Their guards got more assertive. Do you think that was a factor also?**

TARA VANDERVEER: I think they pretty much opened the floor up. When they were able to really spread the floor, you had No. 2 hitting a three, then you got to be out on her, you have everyone away from that, they're just going right by people.

Again, a lot of NCAA tournament success is about your matchups. This is a tough matchup for us in terms of our guards keeping their guards in front. They're very quick and very athletic. It was a very tough matchup for us.

I applaud our team's effort. I thought people played hard. They stayed with things. We didn't get it done.

**Q. Tara, you hit on it about some of the younger players, but you lose Cam and Hannah. You're going to a new conference. More roadblocks in the portal than some other teams. How challenging is this upcoming off-season for you guys?**

TARA VANDERVEER: Every off-season is always challenging. We've lost great players because we've had great players to lose. When you lose Jayne Appel or Nneka Ogwumike or Chiney Ogwumike or Candice Wiggins, I think Kiki is just the bright light, the leader, the inspiration for all of our young players to say, What did she do last year? Well, we weren't in this game, so what did she do in the tournament?

She just got in the gym and worked. That's what we need our other players to do. That's the only way you get better. We had some good open looks. We need people to knock 'em down. We need people to get healthy and be committed.

I pointed out to our team, as an example, Oregon State won 13 games last year, won four Pac-12 games last year, and their kids stuck together, they got in the gym and got better. That's what we need to do.

**Q. In the second quarter you got a lot of good looks. What did you see there that maybe allowed you to get those looks, what did NC State do in the third quarter to stop you from getting those?**

TARA VANDERVEER: Well, it was very challenging when you have people fouling so quickly, you don't really get any continuity in substituting. You have to take people out because of fouls. It's hard to figure out what to do offensively, what to run.

We didn't do a good enough job defensively.

Again, I thought we had a really good first half, but we just did not get the job done in the second half. We turned the ball over. We fouled them. We didn't get to the free-throw line. This is a team that I thought we did a fairly good job of getting back, but in the second half we're not getting back. No. 10 is wide open.

We didn't do what we needed to do in the second half.

**Q. With Cam fouling out in back-to-back games, she hasn't done that since her freshman year, do you take any stock, see anything happen in those instances? Do you take it as two different games, different situations?**

TARA VANDERVEER: I didn't agree with all the calls. There's probably times where she did foul and didn't get called either.

Before she got caught on a foul, she got totally knocked down, I mean, run into. When you're a senior, I mean, I think you just have to figure out how to stay in the game.

That's very disappointing to have that happen.

Other people just tried as hard as they could to make plays, hit some shots down the stretch. Again, Kiki stepped up big. Knowing that we did win without Cam the game before, I think they felt confident that we could do it again.

Thank you all very much.

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