

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: Regional Semifinal: Missouri State vs Stanford

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San Antonio, Texas, USA

Alamodome - Alamo

Stanford Cardinal

Anna Wilson

Sweet 16 Postgame Media Conference

Stanford - 89, Missouri State - 62

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Anna Wilson.

Q. We've talked so much about you being a great defensive player. Are you trying to show all of us that we're wrong that we need to remember you can also be a great offensive player? You've really been tremendous at that end of the floor the last couple of games.

ANNA WILSON: Yeah, Haley and D, we did talk earlier this week. And I don't think I'm trying to prove anyone wrong. I think the offense -- Tara always talks about this -- she didn't recruit any of us for our defense. And so I think for me it's just trying to find time to be aggressive.

Obviously playing in the NCAA Tournament versus the Pac-12, the teams scout a little differently. And when you're on a team where you have such great offensive talent like Haley Jones and Lexie Hull and Kiana Williams and Cameron Brink, they get a lot of attention. And I've been able to just be open at times and maybe trying to get some things in transition.

Q. After Tuesday night's game, Tara said that you guys had deemed that a C performance -- not an A, not a B, not a C performance. And you still beat a Big 12 team by 11 points. How would you describe today's performance?

ANNA WILSON: Yeah, I still don't think we're playing our best basketball yet. We're playing really well. We're clicking in a lot of different ways than usual. But I think that each player has a lot more to give to the team. And I have more to give to the team. And I think that with the



trajectory that we're going in, I think that it will be good timing. We don't want to peak too early. We want to peak right at the right time.

So everyone's doing really, really well. But I think there's another gear that we can kind of get into. And, so, tonight I mean people were making a lot of 3s, making a lot of shots. And I think that we were playing pretty well, playing aggressive on offense, got some stops on defense. And our focus this game, though, was really our rebounding. And so moving forward, what's going to separate us from other teams in these next few games is going to be rebounding.

Q. There's conversations about, after the last game, about the effects of hand checking by opponents on you guys when you're on offense. Wondering your thoughts about, for defense, though, of maybe making an adjustment about what you're allowed to do on defense?

ANNA WILSON: What I think you're trying to ask is, like, how aggressive we should be allowed to be on defense and how teams have kind of been playing us. Hopefully that's what you're asking. I think for me, in terms of what am I allowed to do defensively, I don't feel like the hand-checking thing is a big change. I think that just being able to use your body in ways, for me, like, defensively I try and use my body in ways where it's not even close to being a foul. And I try to use my feet as much as possible rather than my hands and just trying to cut off angles and stuff.

Q. During the game, Holly Rowe reported that there is a pretty competitive table tennis tournament going on within the Stanford basketball team. How important is it during the tournament-bubble situation to have an outlet that's maybe still competitive but not basketball? And could you give us a quick rundown and scouting report the worst and best table tennis players on your team.

ANNA WILSON: To answer your first question about having fun in the bubble, we've been in on the road this entire time during the season. I think there was maybe a few weeks where we weren't on the road. When we were

on the road for this ten weeks our coaches really made it a priority for us to have some time outside of basketball. And they really, really did a really great job with that.

I didn't expect when we went on the road for the first three weeks that it was going to be what it was. And then it was better than what I expected and better than I could have imagined it being.

So being here, obviously there were a lot of restrictions and everything. And, so, our coaches have really done as much as possible to have fun. And we have like this fun committee. And so there's a few people on that.

And to answer your second question about the scouting report, Lexie Hull is very, very good. Hannah Jump, obviously you know her 3 is spectacular. Her hands, she has really big hands. I think the way she handles the paddles is the reason why she's so good. She has a great backhand and forehand.

And I think the sleeper might be Seal (phonetic). I think the championship game might be tonight. There might be two games tonight. I unfortunately had to drop out in the first round, unfortunately. But it's a really good tournament. It's fun to watch.

Q. The TV cameras caught some of Missouri State's players, the seniors, going over, hugging their coach, checking out for the last time. Wonder how much for you it's a motivating factor to just keep playing more games?

ANNA WILSON: Yeah, I think for me watching these games, especially the past few days, especially when the field of competition gets smaller, the margin of like the win and loss, how close the games have been, the margin has been really, really small. And so to see the drastic differences when a team wins, when a team loses, I don't want that experience of losing.

Our team has really gone through a lot this season. Every team has. But I've only experienced our team and the adversity we've kind of gone through with being on the road and everything and how close we've gotten as a team. So I think for me just seeing that emotion, I feel really great about this win. I feel really great about the last win, the win before that. But now we have to turn over and focus on the next game.

Q. So much has been made about the journey you guys have been on. And I think a lot of us have assumed that it's going to serve you well, the kind of chaotic nature of the way the season is. I'm wondering how do you feel that's playing out now that you've

been down there for about, what, I can't remember how long it's been? But you're in one place which is a little unusual for the way the season was. But also do you feel that everything you went through is serving your cause at this point?

ANNA WILSON: I definitely think so. I think that it helps in a lot of really small ways which I think will help in a lot of big ways. I think there's a little bit of differences obviously what you're saying being in the same place. We were kind of traveling a little bit for the away games but when we came back to Stanford we were always in the same place, we were always in Santa Cruz.

We come back to Stanford maybe a day and then go back to Santa Cruz, stay in the hotel for the rest of the week. But we were living out of suitcases for that entire ten weeks. And so I think the thing that's been probably beneficial is just the down time. Because obviously there's a lot of down time for these games as the field of competition gets smaller.

So being able to stay engaged with what's going on, being able to stay together and make sure that we're not just sitting in our room the entire time alone, I think that there's a lot of things that could have gone on this season especially around mental health and everything. So I think our team being able to do that for ten weeks has already served us really well within the time that we've been here. And it will moving forward as well.

Q. I think I lost count on the number of times we saw shots of your brother after you made a play. That said, when a game is out of reach like it is today, what is it that you guys tell yourselves to keep pushing and why does the system work?

ANNA WILSON: I think the biggest thing is for us we think about it quarter by quarter instead of the first half, the second half. And I think that by going quarter by quarter, you know, five minutes by five minutes, it really helps us stay engaged in the game and making sure that we really want to focus on this quarter. We want to win this quarter, want to win the next quarter.

And it's a competition for us to be our best selves. I think that even when the score has a large difference, we always want to be playing like we're down. Of course, there's momentum shifts and everything like that. But our focus is winning that quarter. So if we can do that, then we can put together a really great game.

Q. Stanford's been in the conversation for so long, but Tara has two championships. How much pressure do you guys feel to bring that championship home to her

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

this year? You have always been so close but it's been a while since you've actually won the whole thing?

ANNA WILSON: Pressure is a funny thing to talk about, I think. And I hope I don't get too deep on you. But I think looking back at this past year, this isn't really pressure. This is an opportunity for us to go and do something really special. Pressure is people who are, people who are struggling from this past year and just regular life, with COVID and all the other viruses that are in our world.

So I think for us it's really an opportunity to go out there and finish our season the way that we expect to finish it. I think it's also -- it's a rewarding thing because of how tough the season has been, how challenging the season has been with being on the road and not seeing our families and not having fans and experiencing basketball in such a way that's been so different than how we've ever experienced it.

I'm a fifth-year -- there's freshman on this team who never experienced basketball like this, who never have to get tested nine times or more a week to go out there and play basketball. It's really just an opportunity. And I think with that framework and perspective on it, it allows you to play much more loose and be in the moment. I was saying today be where your feet are. That's the most important thing, staying in the moment. We're having fun. It's just basketball.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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