

Stanford University Women's Basketball Media Conference

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Tara VanDerveer Press Conference

TARA VANDERVEER: Good to see everybody. I knew it was a big game when I saw all these faces around here. When Scott came, I said, oh, this is a big game.

I have to tease you, Scott, I'm sorry.

First of all, thank you very much for coming. I told our team before the game, I said, you know, I won't lie to you, this is a special game. But I hope that you know the 1000th win it will happen this year, so have fun, relax and play hard, and I thought our team really did that.

I thought USC played very inspired. They came out and worked really hard. The first half we didn't take care of the ball as well as we needed to, but I thought we did a better job in the second half. I just really wanted to try to get everybody in at the end of the game.

You know, it is really a little surreal for me. It's a little mind boggling. When I think back to starting out at Idaho and the times I was at Ohio State, and even beginning here at Stanford, it's been a really, really exciting and fun journey. So many of you have been a part of this journey in some way, shape, or form. The fans coming out, the signs, the video, you know, I'm working really hard to keep it all together.

So some of it is what makes it hard is my mom being here. I'm really excited that she was here. It's just I never started to think about winning 1,000 games. I never even thought about it ever, and then it started creeping up. And John would say, hey, you're at 9-something, like 990, and it was like, wow, this is going to happen.

So, it's really exciting, and I thank you all for covering it. It makes me feel very special.

Q. Tara, you made a reference to your mom in your pre -- game talk?

TARA VANDERVEER: I did. Well, I told them, I was teasing. I love my mom. We're very close, and she came out last week to go -- my mom's in the back right there -- she came out to go to a concert, and she



stayed with a friend, and her friend has to leave tomorrow to go to Atlanta for a family situation. So my mom was like well, I'm going to be staying with you until you get this 1,000, so I told our team, okay, let's get it. She's got things to do, and I have things to do (laughing).

So I started to make light of it, not just putting a lot of pressure on our team.

So, Mom, you can go home tomorrow.

Q. Tara, you said to me the other day that you weren't going to go all goo-goo, ga-ga over this. But when it was over and it was done, did the emotion hit you maybe a little harder than you thought?

TARA VANDERVEER: No, I think it does. I mean, I'm taking all this in. But when I was coaching in the Olympics with Carol Cowen, I felt like I don't want to say it's wasted on me, but I'm not really comfortable being in the spotlight. I'm not about me. I am about our team, our coaches, our players.

What really made it, what really kind of hit me was how excited our team was. I really thought they were going to hit me with water and it was confetti. I was like please, no. I know there are some pictures coming.

But, you know, I'm so fortunate to coach at Stanford, to have the great staff that I have. If it was all about the numbers, I probably wouldn't have coached the Olympic team because this would have happened before. For me, this is a team reward. This is something that I'm really excited to be able to share with this particular team.

You know, we have work to do, but I told our team, there will be bigger games than this this year, so let's have fun and enjoy it.

Q. Cynthia gave you a lot of praise. And when you first signed here at Stanford, she was still going to USC.

TARA VANDERVEER: I was giving her a lot of praise then too.

Q. How do you look at that enormity of how long time has gone by?

TARA VANDERVEER: You know, she's a great player, and they have a very talented young team. I appreciate all the support that I've gotten from all the coaches. Someone like Lindsay, I know she's in a lot of different articles that people have written. You know, I don't try to be anybody but me. I just want to be -- I think, my parents were both teachers and I want to teach the game of basketball. I want to be a great mentor and teacher. I see basketball one way, as a team sport, as a fundamental sport. I just am kind of rigid about that.

But I love to coach teams that work hard, that play hard for each other, and, you know this has been so fortunate at Stanford and to hear from so many people. I know my phone is blowing up right now and I'm going to get a copy of all the emails and all the text messages to be able to put them in a notebook and some day probably sit in my rocker and say, wow.

Q. When will that be?

TARA VANDERVEER: Not for a while I hope.

Q. What was your best coaching moment?

TARA VANDERVEER: I think probably the best things happen in practice. I watched so much of what they're doing. I think really in the second half we did a much better job of switching and getting on, not allowing enough penetration.

You know, we didn't set the world on fire with our offense at the end of the game, but that's a credit to USC and their defense and how hard they played. But my experience as a coach is preparation. My strength is trying to really get everyone to buy into this is how we're going to play, and maybe making some halftime adjustments and saying this is what we're doing. Trying to maximize people's strengths and minimize their weaknesses.

Q. So your adjustments were just switching?

TARA VANDERVEER: I think sometimes our team will show video, will walk through things, but sometimes they have to just really see it. Then, look, you saw this is what they're doing now. We've got to adjust. This is every game to me is a piece puzzle to figure out the pieces together, who to play.

Karlie, I thought -- how many points did she have? I thought she was awesome. You know, knocking down threes. Bird got us going, and, you know, just our defense, I thought, was really exceptional.

Q. So did you run a box and one?

TARA VANDERVEER: No, we were all player the whole time, the whole game.

Q. How apropos that in your 1000th game, your two

seniors were in it?

TARA VANDERVEER: I love it. And Bri, her defense was great for us, so our senior leadership on this team is outstanding, our whole team. I think that, you know, in this particular game, I thought people were trying really hard, sometimes almost too hard. I think just relax and play. There is a sense of relief, like, you know, I told our team that when it was around 800, I told them the big numbers get attention, and we were at 800 and we lost and we lost, and then we had USF, thankfully.

But I'm really excited that it happened tonight. The support that I've received from this room, the interviews, the \$10 that I put in the bank, Mark. It's just it's a wonderful, wonderful journey for me, and this is a very big highlight of many highlights.

Q. Did you hear from anybody that surprised you today?

TARA VANDERVEER: You know, I've heard from a lot of different people. I heard from Shaka Smart. I said, how did he get my phone number? Just wonderful. Before the game, I said, Jerod, we need to coordinate a little bit and they were practicing. All the guys came down the hall, they're high-fiving me. Good luck, Coach. Get the thousand. I mean, they were really -- I just love Stanford and the camaraderie that we have. Not just our team, but the men's team too.

To me it was really special that Commissioner Scott was here. That meant a lot to me. Obviously, Jennifer and Ruthie Bolton, my olympic players. Kristy (indiscernible), Brooke Smith, Jane, they were all in the locker room. So it was really fun.

Q. How long did it take you to accept the Stanford job and why did it take so long? And you talked about the journey and you didn't think you would succeed here.

TARA VANDERVEER: Well, our Ohio State team quite honestly was loaded. It was really hard to leave Ohio State. I had great, great players there. I guess I wanted to challenge myself. And then I realized, wow, this is a challenge, but it's been a really fun journey. Quite honestly, I think probably I individually could have gotten the 1,000 faster at Ohio State, because we had it rolling, but I might not have grown as much as a coach or as a person.

Q. Is it a little strange to you that you got to 1,000, and your old pal Bobby Knight never did?

TARA VANDERVEER: You know, I started younger than he did. I started when I was 15. No, I started younger. I think in women's basketball, you've got Vivian Stringer who is really close, Sylvia Hatchell. So, for us, I think, we were able to maybe start a little bit

younger, and honestly, I think there's more games now too than what Coach Knight would have had.

But I wouldn't be sitting here without the great mentorship that he gave me and the opportunities he gave me to watch practice, take his coaching class and have his support.

Q. You've seen the growth of the game throughout your whole career. Can you talk about the pride still about your role in the game and also where it is now from when you started?

TARA VANDERVEER: Well, I didn't have good timing as a player. I tell my staff, I would have played at Stanford. They said you might have gotten in, but you're too slow. I never got a play. I never had a scholarship. I never went to basketball camp. We had like a nine-game regular season. So I felt a little, I don't want to say cheated, but I never got to play on the playing side.

So, my timing was good for coaching. I had great opportunities. I've had great mentors. At Idaho I was hired by Kathy Clark. At Ohio State I was hired by Phyllis Bailey, and at Stanford, that was really special to see Andy Geiger. People that believed in me.

So, it wasn't -- it's never been me. I've always had -- Amy Tucker has been part of all but 42 wins, and she is just a fantastic evaluator of talent. She's able to look out and say Jennifer Azzi, who wasn't recruited by Tennessee and she's from Oak Ridge. So Jennifer Azzi, Sonja Hennings, she's been the GM of this program.

Having a player coach like Kate Paye, and to have the great players that we've had and to see them on the Jumbotron, so I've been part of the Stanford growth, basketball growth, WNBA, but to me sometimes it's just timing. Being in the right place, and having great support.

Q. Along with the legacy of wins, you also have this legacy of the players wanting to come together and win for you. Nneka said it as well. What are your thoughts on how you see that?

TARA VANDERVEER: You know, I think today was a day that was some kind of a player change. They didn't show it to me also. But, whether I coached players in the Olympics or Idaho or Ohio State, sometimes during the process of coaching, you know, it's challenging for them. I am demanding. I don't know any other way to be. You know, I can be very direct.

But what I felt today from our team is they felt the love that I have for the game and also for them. It's great

when they see someone like Jane or Candace Wiggins, or Nneka, or Chiney or Jennifer and all these players saying thank you to me. They're like, they know they're part of something special.

Q. Jane wants you to coach another thousand.

TARA VANDERVEER: I'm almost for sure that wouldn't happen.

Q. At what point did your daddy side you wouldn't be sticking around in the basement?

TARA VANDERVEER: You know, I'm not sure that he ever -- he was a worrier. He could not even watch our team play. If he was even in the gym, he would be pacing. He didn't come to the Olympics, but he only liked games where we were up by 30 with five minutes to go. He never played basketball, but he had all kinds of ideas on how it should be played. But your parents are always going to be your parents.

What I got from my dad, my mom, they just, be a teacher. My very first job was coaching my sister, Marie, not Heidi, but Marie. I just remember what had happened. I went home after graduating. It was Christmas, I went home, so I was hanging around in the basement. I was sleeping in late, and my dad was like you're going to go coach your sister's team. They had just lost the night before 99-11 and I'm like, no. And he said, yes, you are. And I went down and I really loved it.

But I'd also come home and my parents would be like well, how come you didn't play Marie more? And I was like, mom, she can't dribble. She can't shoot. So I understood right away coaching. Every player is someone's initiative. Every player is someone's daughter, and parents sometimes are -- they just have their tunnel vision, but that was a good lesson to start out with.

I don't think he ever rented out the basement and none of the other kids came home either, so I think they did a good job.

Q. You said earlier that you may not have grown as much if yo hadn't come here. What is the area that you're grown the most? What's the area that we don't see? What has changed the most? Because a lot of things probably had to change.

TARA VANDERVEER: Well, I think that so much has also changed, technology. Like I'm not going to tell you I'm a Techie, but technology is for me. Having my hard drive. Watching the warriors play and watching USC-UCLA game. Watching Stanford men and watching maybe -- so having that little hard drive and being able to break down film. I'm kind of maybe a visual learner, and I think a lot of our players are. So that has

changed me a lot, the use of film.

I was teased, being called quote, video VanDerveer, but they should see me now with my hard drive, Trixy. But what's changed about me, I definitely know -- I mean, I would pick a fight with Mike Montgomery if they went like 30 seconds over practice. I've mellowed a lot. And Mike and I are good friends and great supporters of each other.

You know, I think even our other team, like sometimes it might just be a little bit harder. You know, I'm just like Karlie, you know, kind of throwing the ball over to Roz. Like Roz doesn't have a Stanford uniform on anymore. You know, I thought all right, let's move on. Let's just keep playing.

My mom had a saying, be like a duck and let it roll off your back. I think I've grown at Stanford through having a big heart. And it's not easy to recruit and go to Stanford. It's a challenge. It's the ultimate challenge in my mind.

Q. I don't want to break the mood, but depends on how you interpret it. But how sweet is it to get to this plateau and her not being around?

TARA VANDERVEER: You know, that was -- I went to the celebration of life, and I was in communication with Pat, going to the celebration, but going back and playing it hit me. That's where I'm like, like in the big scheme of things it's not about winning games. The big scheme of things is the relationship you have with people and enjoy the day.

So that, for me, I'm enjoying the day. I'm not focused on, yes, I've got to get ready for UCLA and I will, but enjoying the people that are in your life today because you don't know how long you're going to have it.

So, I learned that at Stanford when our team we were ranked number one and we were rolling, and Vanessa got hurt and Krista got hurt, and all during that year everyone said to me, What are you going to be seeded and how can you do it? And I was buying in.

I'm an enjoy-the-moment person. I'm enjoying today, and it's an honor to be in her company, and in Coach Krzyzewski's company as well. All right.