

# NCAA Women's 1st and 2nd Rounds: Stanford

Saturday, March 23, 2019  
Stanford, California



## Tara VanDerveer Kiana Williams Alanna Smith Stanford Cardinal

Stanford - 79, UC Davis - 54

TARA VANDERVEER: First of all, I'm really proud of our team. I thought we had a great effort. We've been off for two weeks, so I wasn't exactly sure what we were going to see, but our first quarter I thought really set the tone.

Davis has a great program. Jen Gross and her staff do a fabulous job. They I think had us really well scouted, but I thought our team came out with a lot of energy and made some big plays early. We're really excited to be moving on to the second round, and just make a note that all Pac-12 schools are doing that, and I think again, the Pac-12 competition has really gotten us ready for the NCAA Tournament.

I thought Kia had a great game for us, really running her offense, playing really hard defensively. Lana, what did she end up, 9 for 14, playing really within herself, scoring, rebounding, playing great defense. We needed everybody, and I was really proud of our bench, how Shannon Coffee came in and did a great job for us.

Some people maybe just were -- maybe didn't make some shots that they had but they took good shots, worked hard on the defensive end of the floor, and overall I thought it was an excellent team win for Stanford.

**Q. Kiana, do you feel you're raising your game now at this point in the year at the big dance? What's your attitude going into this game?**

KIANA WILLIAMS: I'd agree that it's another level of play because you lose, you're going home. I was talking with someone earlier, and I feel like I play my best during tournament time when stakes are on the line and stuff. Yeah, credit to my teammates. We're all playing at a high level. I still feel like we haven't peaked yet. There's still things would have done better feel game we have to lay our level of plays.

**Q. Alanna you were running a lot of different people at Morgan Bertsch. What was the strategy against her in this game?**

ALANNA SMITH: Obviously she's a very talented player, and it was just to try and keep her in front, and she's versatile. She uses a lot of fakes, and we just wanted to stay on our feet and not let her get anything easy. And I think Maya, Shannon, Alyssa, everybody who played her, even DiJonai was on her at one point, I think they gave it their all. Props to her, she's a very, very good player, but we threw what we had at her, and I think we did a pretty good job.

**Q. Kiana, you guys started off really well, 15-0 start, and then also up by 20 after one. You had a really good first half, and then of course Alanna 12 points in the third quarter. Did you guys kind of converse about who's going to take over?**

KIANA WILLIAMS: I think just our motto is just ride the hot hand, whether it's me, Di, Lacie had the hot hand a few games. So just whoever is making shots, playing well, we just try to ride them, and that just goes back to our depth. We count on our depth a lot, so with me, Di and Alanna, the big three, when we're not playing well, we can count on our other people.

ALANNA SMITH: And we did not discuss it, no.

**Q. Alanna, you've spoken about just keeping this special run going as long as possible and playing at Maples. How are you feeling right now about just moving on but getting one more home game, and how much did you want to come out in that third quarter? You scored the first nine, to really push the team forward in the third.**

ALANNA SMITH: Yeah, I think in games where you might be ahead by a lot, you kind of -- you might get complacent, and that's not what we want to do. We want to play to our best ability the whole game, and I think that was the message at halftime. We had a great first half; let's have an even better second half.

And that's what we want to have our motto be for this whole tournament. We had a great first game; let's have a better second game; let's come out even harder the next game. And yeah, like you said, keep this thing going, and as a senior, you know, there's just that little bit more sense of urgency. Yeah, I think Shannon and I

and Marta, as well, have that feeling, and it's pretty special to be able to sit up here and know that we're going to play again on Monday.

**Q. Alanna, are you ready to take on that 6'7" girl from BYU or are you going to leave that to Maya and Shannon?**

ALANNA SMITH: I think it's going to be another team effort, yeah, for sure. Like Ki said, we're deep. We rely on our depth, and I think Maya is going to give it her 100 percent, and then Shannon is going to give it her 100 percent, and if I'm playing her I'll give it 100 percent. But yeah, we know we can't just rely on one person.

But yeah, I don't know, I think Maya is -- will have a good shot on her. She's athletic. She's long. You know, we'll see how it goes. We'll watch film. But yeah, I think we're going to be ready for it.

**Q. Alanna, as a player, who's it like kind of running an offense that has Princeton kind of tendencies?**

ALANNA SMITH: Yeah, I really like our offense. We implemented it a couple years ago. Was it last year? Last year. And at the start it was rough, and we actually watched UC Davis because they run the same offense. So we watched their film and watched their games to see how well they run it because they're a very, very well-run offensive team.

So you know, I really, really enjoy it now. We've come a long, long way. Even from the start of season to now, we've come a really long way, and I think it's great because it's not just posts are just back to basket. You spread people out. You've got some posts on the perimeter. You've got your guards inside, you've got your posts inside and outside, and I think it really plays to the strengths of our team. We have versatile players. DiJonai is hard to guard on the perimeter, but then when you get her in the post, as well, it's like what are you going to do, she's a big strong body. And I think it's great that we've used this offense because it does play to our strengths.

**Q. Coach, knowing that you're a humble woman, you've influenced so many Stanford athletes, but you had a young lady for the other team, Morgan, that admired your program as a kid and got emotional just thinking about the fact that she ended her career here in your presence. How do you feel about how much you've affected a lot of other players?**

TARA VANDERVEER: Morgan is a terrific talent, and it's really exciting to see how much she's improved. We have a really close relationship with UC Davis, and honestly, I wish they had played in other bracket so I could be cheering for them. But I think that if the young

women like Alanna and Ki and Di are good role models for the community, then I think that's great. We want them to be that, so it's great that Morgan felt that growing up with -- I don't know what players it would have been at her age, but I'm glad that she felt that way. We're thankful for that.

**Q. How do you feel about an 8:00 start for Monday?**

TARA VANDERVEER: Love it. We're excited. We're glad to be playing in the game. So I'm -- we know we'll have to play well. Our kids are done with finals. They stay up late. It's going to be the coaches that are going to have to prod a little bit. Players will be fine.

**Q. Well, nobody asked us in the media.**

TARA VANDERVEER: I know.

**Q. How does it feel to be able to rest your players? Is that a big deal in a game like this, or does that not even matter at this point?**

TARA VANDERVEER: You know, I think it is a very big deal. Not only -- I think that looking at Alanna playing 20 minutes, being able to really -- it's not being able to rest them, it's getting experience for other people and getting them confident coming in. I thought our bench was fabulous. Alyssa Jerome came in, did some good things, Anna Wilson, her defense, I think very aggressive. Did we miss some shots? Yes, we did miss some shots. But Lexie, Shannon Coffee, again, with the mask did it. She got it going. But we're able to go 10 deep. Jenna had some contributions for us, and not only are they resting but they're not being exposed to being hurt, either. So I think it was a great team effort.

**Q. DiJonai seems to have a moment like this in a lot of different games. In this game she stole the ball from Morgan and went behind her back to avoid one defender and then came basically the length of the court and dropped a pass to Maya for a lay-up.**

TARA VANDERVEER: That was nice. She kind of got up in the air. I wasn't sure what she was going to do, but she did make that nice pass.

**Q. What about her game, and especially at this time of year, she's obviously so strong, but can you talk a little bit about her play at this point?**

TARA VANDERVEER: Well, I think DiJonai is one of our most improved players in that you remember last year in this game, there were maybe some passes instead of going to Maya went to the 10th row. She really has improved, and she's extremely coachable. She works hard at both ends of the floor. She really got us going, I thought, with her finishes, her free throws, finishes at the other end, and unfortunately she got a couple fouls so she had to sit a little bit. But her

rebounding, her -- she's a real -- she's kind of the engine of this train. She really is an emotional leader. She's doing a great job as a captain.

I don't know that last year sitting here I could think that I would be saying what I'm saying about her this year. She's really bought into playing at a higher level, and I'm really proud of her.

**Q. Looking around the stands, you had Ruthie Bolton was on one side and she has played for you, former Auburn star, you had Steve Young, you had Russell Wilson. To have all those big names cheering women's basketball, does that mean a lot to you?**

TARA VANDERVEER: Well, I guess I really don't look in the stands much, so I didn't know who was there. But you know, I think it was a great game, and I was really excited about -- I thought we had a really good turnout. Both fans for us and for Davis were loud and enthusiastic. I thought a very well-played game and an exciting game to watch.

Whether it's Russell or Hall of Fame football quarterbacks or Hall of Fame women's basketball players, they know a good thing when they see it, and more power to the people coming out and watching. But I thought it was a fun game. It was a very exciting game and very well-played game.

**Q. When you look at your say top seven players, is this one of the best balanced teams you've had because they can shoot from outside and they can all drive, a lot of them? It's one of your better balanced teams, isn't it?**

TARA VANDERVEER: Well, let's see. I mean, we've had some pretty good teams, so I don't know that comparing the teams, but I like this team, and I talked to our team after the game. They really play hard for each other. I think they get it. They are very unselfish. They play hard for each other. They enjoy other people's success. They're cheering for each other the whole game. Whether they make shots or whether they're doing the right thing, I think we also have some really good leadership. Shannon, her play, is so underrated but so subtle, just her passing, her screening, her defense. I think she's just really blossomed for us, and Tom, you wrote a really nice article about her, and she's really a big key to why we're being so successful. Maya coming back, Maya had some great plays. But you need it all. You need the rebounding. You need people that can create shots. You need people that can knock down open shots.

I think everyone is feeling confident in a good way, and we're going to be challenged. BYU is going to be a

real challenge for us, and we're going to have to play very well to beat them and move on.

**Q. Seeing how efficient the offense was, especially in the first quarter and even in the first half and start of the third quarter, is that kind of what you were hoping for or looking for when you went to Jennifer Gross and talked to her about the Princeton offense and that kind of stuff in the off-season?**

TARA VANDERVEER: Well, I would like four quarters like the first quarter, yes. Our first quarter we really were moving, and sometimes it's almost bad to jump out to a lead like that because then you're always looking at they're going to catch up a little bit. But Jen and Joe really have helped us teach the offense, making -- they're much better at it than I am. But they've helped me a lot. They're my tutors, and I'm the student, and I said to Jen after the game, I said, well, I know you don't feel really good but you can because you helped us be successful. Probably the timing of that comment was not maybe -- I mean, but I know she took it the right way. She has really helped me be a better teacher of the offense. Without her, we couldn't be doing it.