

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

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Stanford, California



Tara VanDerveer Alanna Smith Dijonai Carrington Stanford Cardinal

Stanford 72, BYU 63

COACH TARA VANDERVEER: Well, first of all, we are very excited to be going to Chicago and be part of the 12th Sweet 16. I'm really happy to be able to say that.

And I just want to complement BYU on their team. They have just a great team and a really special player in Shaylee Gonzales. She, I think, we had all we could handle with her.

I'm really proud of our team. I thought Dijonai, she really kept us in the game the first half and then Alanna really stepped up her game in the second half.

Kiana did her usual, I think played really hard. Our team worked very hard defensively and again we're really excited to be moving on.

Q. Dijonai, your game was all over the place today. You were hitting threes, going to the basket, got a couple offensive fouls, at least one I think. You hit the floor about three or four times. How can you attribute to it the total game you had today? Are you sore right now?

DIJONAI CARRINGTON: I'm just excited. I'm proud of our team. We struggled shooting, obviously, in the first half. But I think just the way that we stuck together, it wasn't really any one person. I think we all contributed in different facets.

I think I was able to contribute mostly in the second quarter, but I think that just the way our team battled; it obviously wasn't a beautiful offensive game for us, but in any instance, we found a way to win and that's what we're going to have to do moving forward as we continue to seek a National Championship.

Q. What clicked for you in the second half, do you think?

ALANNA SMITH: I had a couple of my teammates just talk to me and tell me, "Keep shooting," like "we love

that you're taking those shots and we know that they are going to go in eventually."

And so, you know, if I'm open, I'm going to take an open shot, and I think everyone on our team is confident in doing so, and it was great that the second half that we were falling.

Q. Can you describe your emotions in your final game here at Maples Pavilion?

ALANNA SMITH: Yeah, I think that it's -- it hasn't hit me yet but it's definitely -- I'm sad that that was my last game. I love Stanford. I love the coaching staff. I just love the atmosphere and playing at Maples, and I'm definitely going to miss it. It's been the best four years of my life.

But you know, it's not over yet. We have more games coming up in the next couple weeks, hopefully and we've got to focus on the Sweet 16.

And while it's sad that it was my last game in maples, I have another one in Chicago, so I'm just trying to ride this wave and ride it as long as possible.

Q. How would you compare Shaylee to some of the players you went up against in the Pac-12?

DIJONAI CARRINGTON: I would say, I mean, she clearly was scoring anyway she wanted to kind of today, and I think she's a great player. I think that our defense still did a good job, though. I think we made it tough for her. She got a lot of buckets, but I think that Anna, Lexie, Lacie, everyone who switched on to her really did a good job of defending her. She's a good player though and good players are still going to score.

I mean, I don't really want to compare her to anyone. I think she has her own unique game and best of luck to her, her next three years. That's great, especially for a freshman.

Q. For either player. It was nip-and-tuck and then you scored 16 straight points midway through the third quarter. What do you think was going on in that stretch that allowed you to pull away?

ALANNA SMITH: I think we were hungry. We came out of the second half and we had a really good talk about the first half, and we knew that we weren't playing our best basketball. You know, the only way to

go is up, and to improve, so we were hungry in the second half, and we wanted to play better.

And we knew -- we had been getting open shots and that we weren't hitting them so it was just about hitting those open shots and taking advantage of what the defense was giving us, and I think we had a better idea of it after that second half.

So going into the third quarter, we knew what we had to do and we executed really well. People started hitting shots and it just kind of all fell into place.

Q. After Saturday's game, Kiana said that you guys still had not peaked yet; that you still had a lot to show. Your thoughts on what she said, especially after tonight's game.

DIJONAI CARRINGTON: I mean, absolutely. I think we can only go up. I really am so confident in my teammates and our coaching staff. We missed how many threes? 20-plus? I mean --

COACH TARA VANDERVEER: 23.

DIJONAI CARRINGTON: 23 threes. I think that right there tells you that this isn't the cap for us.

Everyone's potential, the sky's the limit for each of our players and as we move on, we're just going to keep getting better and better. This is the time for us to peak, and I think Kiana said it best, yeah, we haven't even touched the surface yet -- scratched the surface yet at all.

Q. How do you feel about playing the No. 11 seed now, Missouri state, in Chicago? They are like the Cinderella team of the tournament, or one of them, anyway.

COACH TARA VANDERVEER: Well, we did that in the Pac-12 tournament, too. You know, hope it's a late game and midnight, Cinderella goes home (laughter).

You know, obviously they are playing very well to be in that spot, and quite honestly, I have not looked at any game past this bracket just because this bracket, so far for us, took a lot of preparation.

But we have played them before in a Florida tournament three years ago, so we'll dig that tape out and we'll really study up and be ready to go. We'll meet for a short amount of time tomorrow.

You know, we'll be ready.

Q. What did you think was the cause for your big explosion there in the 16-0 run in the third quarter, obviously you're hitting your shots, but what more

was there involved in that?

COACH TARA VANDERVEER: Well, I thought starting out, at halftime, we talked about the fact that we were rushed and you know, I think people -- like the very first play, it was like a little phrenetic. You know, shots and just like calm down and play. So we have 20 minutes; we know what we can do. Let's just come out and focus.

Dijonai did a great job in the first half. She really put the team on her back. You know, we're not used to Kiana being in foul trouble, so we went in the zone and the zone helped us. We were down seven and came back out of that.

And then we just know that Alanna is better than what she did in the first half. Lexie hit a big three for us. Shannon hit a three. It was contagious.

In the second half, we really got going offensively, and we were still working very hard defensively. You know besides obviously Shaylee Gonzales had a great game, but you know, they have a great three-point shooter, No. 1. She was 3-for-11. You know, No. 13, 5-for-18.

So I think other people, our team, it's about everyone playing well, and we've played against some great players in the Pac-12 that have had great games against us and our team still wins, so we just kept playing hard.

Q. Along those lines of the competition you've seen in the Pac-12, five teams --

COACH TARA VANDERVEER: I know, it's awesome. We're really excited for five teams to be in the Sweet 16. I think it's a great statement about our league.

Is there another league with five teams in the Sweet 16? I don't think so.

But I mean, I haven't followed it that closely, but you know, congratulations to UCLA and Oregon state. We're excited. That's awesome.

Q. You talked about Gonzales for a second. Yesterday she was saying Stanford recruited her a little bit.

COACH TARA VANDERVEER: Not hard enough.

Q. We can see why.

COACH TARA VANDERVEER: Yeah.

Q. Can you elaborate a little bit on what kind of player she is?

COACH TARA VANDERVEER: I think she's a special player. For a freshman to come into this atmosphere

and against some real quality players that she played against, she's very poised. Her numbers speak for themselves. You know, going 4-for 4 from the three, 4-for-4 from the free throw line, 12-for-21, I guess you can do the math better than me but it's better than 50 percent. Probably better than 60 percent.

But you know, she really -- she's surrounded by really good players, and I think, you know, they have a system and she really -- she was very tough to guard.

We switched on her or we're in positions to try to take away stuff; she still made some big shots. She did bank in that one from the corner. I don't know if she called that bank, but you know, she's a very special player.

Q. Late in the fourth, you were up by 18, and in a minute, it was down to nine and you called a timeout. What was your message to the team at that point?

COACH TARA VANDERVEER: Well, I think there were some things, we got careless with the ball. They are an aggressive team, and they are going to make a run.

You know, it wasn't -- I think that sometimes I think our team maybe felt that the game was over, and we just got sloppy. We only had eight turnovers for the game and we probably had four of them in that one-minute stretch.

Turning it over, and we just needed to take care of the ball a little bit better, so just tried to remind them of that.

Q. Going back to that run in the third quarter, Jeff thought maybe your team wore them out and that it was more physical than they were used to. Do you think there's any truth in that?

COACH TARA VANDERVEER: I thought they were physical, too. You know, we were able to -- I think we were able to play, you know, get people some rest in the first half. Anna came in. Unfortunately she got two fouls. But Lexie, Lacie, Dijonai, I thought Shannon Coffee helped us a lot. I don't know how many minutes she played, but you know, 16 minutes, and then Maya, they were tag-teaming.

The pace of the game was really fast in the beginning of the game, and sometimes that can -- you know, you can't recover from that. Sometimes you come out too fast. It's like a race. You start out really fast and then you're just dying. So it might have -- the pace might have hurt them a little bit.

Q. Just with Anna Wilson, she obviously missed the NCAA Tournament the last two years with

injuries. How does it see is it to had he in action?

COACH TARA VANDERVEER: It's great. She just gives us a low, quick defender that's just different than Lacie's defense, and Lacie has been playing great defense for us. It allows us to not have Ki defend the ball. We need her. I thought Ki did a really nice job on chase,.

But Anna, especially in the second half, I thought she was really a big key for us. She kind of just made her think about someone being there and got her hands on the ball a couple times. Then she hit her three.

Again, I would have liked it if we could have made some free throws and taken care of the ball down the stretch but I'm excited to be moving on and I'm really proud of how everyone came played hard.

Even when things were not going Alanna's way early, and she stayed with things. You know, it wasn't Ki's best game, but she kept playing hard. So I'm really proud of our team and how hard they work.

Q. Brenna chase was scoreless for most of the game and then she hit a couple shots but the coach felt like you did a great job of shutting her down.

COACH TARA VANDERVEER: You know, she is a terrific shooter. Kiana has guarded players like that, Courtney Ekmark from Arizona State. Goodman from -- she did a great job on Goodwin (ph).

So we had confidence, and Kiana's defense was really, really key. Now, we were switching sometimes, so I bet she got her shots when were key wasn't on her. I'd have to go back and look.

I thought the defense was very focused. People worked very hard not to allow three-point shooting. Even they made eight, we were working really -- they didn't take bad shots. They are a very well-coached team. Even if Shaylee hit some, I think she was open a couple times, but I think we were working hard to keep her in front and get a hand on the shot.

Thank you very much. We're really excited about going to Chicago.