

# NCAA Women's Basketball Championship Final Four: Arizona vs Stanford

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San Antonio, Texas, USA

Alamodome

## Stanford Cardinal Kiana Williams

Finals Postgame Media Conference



Stanford 54, Arizona 53

THE MODERATOR: We will now be joined by Kiana Williams. Questions.

**Q. 11 different players played tonight for you guys. How important was the depth of this team not only in what you did tonight but in getting through this season?**

KIANA WILLIAMS: That's what we hanged our hats on all year long. Every game someone different stepped up. I'm super proud of all 12 of my teammates. I know Agnes didn't go in, but I know she was ready. I feel like next year is going to be a breakout year for her.

Like you said, we needed all 11 players that stepped in, and Agnes was big cheering for us. We really hang our hate on relying one another.

**Q. I remember at the end of the Pac-12 tournament you did vow to all of us that you were going to be the last team standing. Was there ever a time during this tournament that you doubted that? How were you able to stay so poised when things got really pressured at the end?**

KIANA WILLIAMS: I never doubted this team for one minute. Tara kept telling us after every practice, in the locker room, in between games and stuff that we're the best team here. We just have to go out there and prove it. I feel like we were ranked No. 1 for a reason, but also ranking don't matter. The tournament was in one location so nobody really had an advantage, although this is my hometown, so I feel like we were the home team.

We had to go out there and give it our all and fight. The last two, three games were dogfights. We came out on top

because we wanted it more.

**Q. How good does it feel to get this done for Coach VanDerveer?**

KIANA WILLIAMS: It feels great. To end this drought for me, to win this in my home city for her, it's a great feeling. I'll share a quick story. She's probably going to get mad, but...

In September when we first got back to campus, we all got in trouble for breaking quarantine. We were supposed to be in isolation for five days. On the fourth day we went to a gym off campus to play pickup. When she found out she was just so heartbroken and disappointed. I felt like the only way to make up for that is to win a national championship for her. Me and Alyssa, we said from there on out we're going to be better leaders, follow the rules, follow protocol, to win this natty, to look back on that experience, having that feeling to now, I'm extremely proud of this team.

I also want to add I feel like it was worth it going to play those pickup games (laughter).

**Q. The balanced scoring, different players stepping up. Talk about Haley, what a roll she's been on. Tonight Lexie and Cameron with 10 points apiece. Talk about that aspect of the team coming together.**

KIANA WILLIAMS: Yeah, the last two games I've struggled, but credit to Arizona and South Carolina, their defenses took me out of my comfort zones. Some easy looks that I usually get, I didn't get any easy looks. Haley took on that scoring role. Lexie did. Cam played really well tonight. That goes back to the first question. We always have someone that steps up. I think that's why we were so talented and successful this year. The scoring load wasn't solely on me. I don't have to score 20 points for us to win, and that showed tonight.

**Q. You've talked about pride in not turning the ball over. Pretty tough game the last two games. Even though you're elated to get this championship, was it somewhat bittersweet that you didn't perform the way**

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**you wanted to at home? How grateful are you to Haley for stepping up the way she did?**

KIANA WILLIAMS: Extremely grateful for Haley. She's a pro. She's a pro as a sophomore. I feel like she can make a WNBA team right now with her skill set, her ability to make plays. She got her three ball going, so that's going to be huge for her next season.

I really hang my hat on not turning the ball over. I knew coming in, I watched a lot of video, I knew they were going to be trapping. Some plays I was trying to force things, I weren't there. A few times I dribbled myself into a trap, into a turnover. I'm just for sure going to rewatch this game and learn from it. End of last game, as well.

**Q. What seemed to be the motivating factor throughout the season and also through the tournament?**

KIANA WILLIAMS: I'll say just what we've been through. I don't think any other team in this tournament had to live out after suitcase, live out after hotel for 10 weeks during a season. We had to do that because that's how bad we wanted to play. We couldn't play at Stanford at our arena at Maples, so we had to go elsewhere. We went to Vegas, then we were in L.A., then we were at the Warriors' facility. The adversity we've been through this entire year, just how bad we wanted it. We didn't want to go through all that for no reason.

**Q. You haven't hugged your parents since mid September. As soon as you guys are done with this, do you get to go hug 'em or still not? Do you have to get back on a plane without hugging them?**

KIANA WILLIAMS: No, I'm actually going to stay home. I'm not going to fly back with the team. So hopefully I get to hug my mom if not tonight, for sure tomorrow. I get to see my family tomorrow. Super excited about that. I'm for sure going to enjoy this last night with my teammates and my coaches.

**Q. You guys like to say winning a national championship is indescribable, but I want you to try. What does it feel like winning a national championship?**

KIANA WILLIAMS: It's a great feeling. Just looking back on the season, everything that we've been through, the incident I described when we first got back to campus.

**Q. You were risky.**

KIANA WILLIAMS: Yeah, we were.

Everything that we've been through, it feels like it was worth it. To win this for Tara in the same year she's become the all-time winningest coach. It just means everything. To win it in my hometown, that means a lot. I know my teammates wanted this as bad as I can, my senior year in my hometown.

Everything just lined up. I just feel like it was already written. To win it on Easter Sunday, that's just God.

**Q. You watch basketball long enough, a lot of times you know when a shooter lets go of a shot whether the ball is going in or not. When Aari let go of that shot, did you think it was going in? Did you not think it was going in?**

KIANA WILLIAMS: I don't even think I was thinking at that moment. I knew she had a tough look, but when I saw it had a really good chance to go in. But she's just a great player. After the game I just congratulated her on leading her team to the national championship game when nobody thought they would do it. I just congratulated her on an excellent career. She's really turned around the Arizona program. It was really inspiring to watch from a distance.

She's a great competitor. She brings the best out of me and out of other people that she plays against. I just congratulated her on a great year.

That shot, I know we've had to make it tough on her. Where we had three people on her because that's how good she is. I was for sure scared for a minute when it left her hands.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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