

# NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: Second Round - Iowa State vs Stanford

Sunday, March 24, 2024

Stanford, California, USA

Maples Pavilion

**Stanford Cardinal**

**Coach Tara VanDerveer**

**Hannah Jump**

**Kiki Iriafen**

Media Conference

Stanford 87, Iowa State 81 (OT)

TARA VanDERVEER: Kiki Iriafen, whoa. What a great game. Before I just go off on that, I just want to compliment Iowa State, Coach Fennelly and their staff. They have a terrific team and it did not seem like they could miss tonight. If they were open they were really knocking down shots.

You know, we gave up too many threes, but then we hit some down the stretch that we needed. But, again, they're really a terrific team, and we had to work really hard to get this victory for Stanford.

I'm really, really proud of our team and how far we've come in a year, and Kiki, I just -- my hat's off to you how hard you played. You're an absolute warrior. Playing defense against great post players, Brown, Crooks, and I just -- I'm like we have our own 40 point scorer.

That was an awesome, awesome performance. Hannah played 45 minutes. Stayed with things. Was a great leader for us. Talana making big shots. Brooke making big shots. You know, obviously Cam struggled, but when she was out there she had some nice plays for us, rebounded, Kiki with a double double.

I thought a really big thing for us that was really helpful was Nunu's defense on No. 11. She really stepped up. We had some freshmen play well for us too. Everyone's basket was important. Try hitting a shot. Nunu doing what she did.

I'm just really excited for our team and really proud of our



team and our staff.

**Q. So Kiki, I'm not going to take credit for this, but last game I said that you had a great first half and not much of a second half. This time you had both halves. What got into you and when did you make the decision that I have to just make this my game?**

KIKI IRIAFEN: I think I started the game off hot, and then in the second half I kind of just remembered where we were at last year. It wasn't a great taste in our mouth. I feel like this whole season we had this loss last year in the back of our minds.

We didn't want that to happen two years in a row. Also for our seniors, for Cameron, Hannah, we didn't want this to be our last game. We wanted to get to Portland. This is not the end of our season. We wanted to make it to Cleveland.

So just giving it my all to make sure we can get to Cleveland was something that was in my mind today.

**Q. Hannah, 18 lead changes, 12 ties, a ton of back and forth, even in the overtime period. What was your level of anxiety versus, you know, sort of a calm sense that you thought you guys would pull this out?**

HANNAH JUMP: Yeah, I think we been battled-tested all season. The I think the Pac-12 tournament taught us we can come back from anything. I think the main thing tonight every time the lead changes was just staying together, staying focused. We knew what we had to do to execute down the stretch and we were able to pull it out.

I'm so proud of how hard we battled. We worked hard to be in this game and moment, and I'm super excited for our team to go on to Portland.

**Q. Just Kiki, how many hours have you been working on that mid-range shot? That was falling all night. What's been key to developing that aspect of your game and making that so just automatic like it was tonight?**



KIKI IRIAFEN: I think it's been the whole summer honestly. People know me for being a driver, so when people started taking that away and taking charges, I had to kind of buy-in to my jump shot a little bit. I think I love it a little bit too much now.

That is something that just honed in on that and not being very predictable.

**Q. For Kiki, I know like obviously you had that offensive explosion, but like Coach said, you were a pivotal part of playing defense. How do you pace yourself throughout the game? In overtime looked like you had the same energy as in the fourth quarter. Just curious how you sort of kept your energy levels up?**

KIKI IRIAFEN: Yeah, I think if you want it that bad, nothing will faze you. I wanted it really badly so I didn't let any fatigue get into my head. It's all very mental. I was like, just five more minutes, if I can give myself five more minutes and help my teammates out.

It was probably just adrenaline taking over.

**Q. Kiki, how physical was it in there?**

KIKI IRIAFEN: Very, very physical. They were a great -- they are a great team and their post players are great. It's physical, but they have great sportsmanship, which I love. So we were able to battle against each other, and at the end of the day pick each other up. It was very competitive and nothing was easy.

That's what makes it fun, you know. Kudos to them.

**Q. Hannah, the matchup with Ryan, she had a 40 point game as well, or did she? Who has the box?**

HANNAH JUMP: 36.

**Q. She was hitting some really big shots. What was the key defensively our down the stretch with her?**

TARA VanDERVEER: Yeah, like you said, she hit some very difficult shots. She was hot and the bucket got big for her. We tried a lot of different people on her. Talana Nunu. Nunu did a great good job. I think being a little bit bigger really disruptive, and really just sticking to the scouting report.

When it came to the end of the game, one possession at a time, and we just executed exactly what we needed to to get that stop. No, yeah, she had a phenomenal game and amazing career, so...

**Q. Kiki, when Cam's having a rougher night, does that amp you up as well? Do you feel like you have to pick up slack, or is that motor running at the same speed regardless of what is happening with Cam?**

KIKI IRIAFEN: Yeah, I think Cam are like this (crossing fingers) so we pick each other up. When I'm in foul trouble she takes over and vice versa. I don't there is any pressure for either of us. We just know we have to pick up for the other person.

But she was a great teammate tonight. From the bench I could hear he her talking to me every time. She was pouring into me saying like you got this. She was a great leader for us and great encourager for us tonight.

**Q. Kiki, I know the other day you spoke about whoever's night it -- Tara talks about whoever's night it is, but you had Brooke and Nunu staying ready to make key contributions, and so many others tonight. In their minutes they capitalized. What does that say about the depth of that group and everybody taking their role and staying ready?**

HANNAH JUMP: I think it's been like that all season. When someone's number is called they've stepped up and played big when we need them. We're super deep, and I think anyone can go out there and play the minutes that we do.

It's just staying ready, putting in the work in practice, everyone knowing what we are doing in scouting report, and when your name is called, go in there. We have the confidence in every single one of our teammates, as the coaches do.

So, yeah, you know, just go in there and do your thing.

**Q. For Hannah, from your perspective, last year you guys lost in this round last year. Tight game. This time you guys pull it out in a tight game in overtime. What was the difference this year for you guys to pull in one out?**

HANNAH JUMP: Yeah, I think last year that game really taught us to just take it one game at a time. You know, we came in today prepared. I think we just didn't want to go home. We wanted to get out of here and go to Portland. That's been our motto all week, to be honest.

We fought hard. As much as I love Maples, I didn't want my season to end here tonight. It was emotional for me to be here and play in front of this crowd one more time. They've been incredible, and tonight they were super loud and I think that was very helpful for us especially down the

stretch.

Yeah, just wanted to get out of here.

**Q. Yeah, guys, for both of you, what did you think about Brooke's contribution down the stretch? She didn't take the shots in the first three quarters, but just staying ready and knocking down some big shots and the free throws at the end in overtime.**

KIKI IRIAFEN: Yeah, Tara calls Brooke Steady Eddie and she's always ready. You can always count on Brooke. She is just always, always ready since our freshmen year, regardless of how the game is going for her or how we are doing. Like you can rely on her to be the energy to be someone that can get a bucket for us.

Defensively, offensively she did everything she needed to do. She hit tough, tough spots and got key rebounds. Brooke kind of does it all and doesn't always get the praise she deserves.

But we definitely would not have won this game without Brooke's contributions tonight.

**Q. That was my question. To follow through on that, Brooke's shots maybe change your maybe motivation in the game? Did you feel like it was a kind of a change in the momentum for you and gave that you extra lift to pull it out?**

KIKI IRIAFEN: Yeah, it is definitely a momentum shift. She got us all hype. She got the crowd involved. I think when we hear the crowd it kind of riles us as well.

But I think that's what we needed. We needed at the end to push this thing and close this game.

But that's something that we can always rely on Brooke for.

**Q. So Coach, I was going to mention that, too, about the last time I remember a performance like this was Nneka, so when you were sitting there watching on the sideline, did you go back to the time when neck a did this against UConn in those dramatic games she did when it was big moments?**

TARA VanDERVEER: No, not at all. I was totally focused on this team, what we're doing, and hoping just trying to give them a good set to run when we needed at basket, trying to get the right matchups.

You know, again, I think a real key, even though she did have 36 points, Nunu came in and we did get confused on some of their screens, again, they shot the ball extremely

well. You know, to shoot, what, 64 -- 63% from three, you're not going to win too many games if you give that up and they make 12 threes.

I was totally -- I was just really proud of how our team battled. We got down, we came back. Going into overtime Talana was -- has been struggling with her knee. Chloe came in for a little bit. Jzaniya helped us a little bit. It was a total team effort.

**Q. Coach, I was wondering if you could talk about how on defense the screen navigation by your guards allowed Kiki and Cameron to stay on Crooks and allowed them to basically keep her out of the game?**

TARA VanDERVEER: You know, I thought Talana worked really hard getting over the screen and Crooks set some very good screen. They all did.

But Talana worked really hard and we tried not to switch that. We did switch it one time with Nunu and actually got a steal on it. I think the fact that they had 19 turnovers hurt them.

And you know, like you said, this was a heavyweight fight. We had a great fighter out there. Lots of people stepped up really big for us.

But our defense, we had to work really hard. Even when we were working hard they still hit some good shots.

**Q. I was going to ask you how you felt about your defensive effort tonight, but also wanted to ask you is there such a thing as too much Kiki on the offensive side?**

TARA VanDERVEER: I think there were some times where I told Kiki, you know, just maybe to be a little more patient. Kind of the basket got really big for her and she was playing with a lot of confidence.

But when Cam is not in and Kiki is shooting, we're not really on the glass very well. But how can you have too much Kiki tonight? I mean, she was in that zone. She's been in that zone before. She's out there taking her three.

But she stayed in the game, you know, really battled and made great plays. Crooks the other night was 18 for 20 and this time 3 for 21. Both Cam and Kiki were very disruptive defensively. They got their threes going, which was challenging for us, but this is a type of game that you learn a lot about your team.

I mean, they battled, stayed with things. They stayed together. And I think that what Kiki said is really important.

Cam obviously did not have a great game tonight, but she kept talking to everyone and encouraging everyone and that meant a lot to Kiki and helped her.

**Q. With this being obviously the last game in Maples no matter what for Cam and Hannah, Hannah was visibly emotional after the game.**

TARA VanDERVEER: Yeah.

**Q. What can it say about maybe what the team picked up and learned from last year to finish the job even in a very similarly competitive and tightly battled game?**

TARA VanDERVEER: You're in the tournament and you're not thinking about last year or anything but guard people, rebound.

But I'm so proud of this team for being in this position. You know, we're going to the regionals. Anything can happen. We know we can play a lot better and we're up against a team that was hotter than snot out there.

You know, there were some times where people were right there and they still made shots but I think this -- we had a lot of different people step up. That was a great play by Kiki. Brooke was so key. Talana hitting her shots. Nunu coming in and helping us. Different people. Elena had a really good first game.

You know, I think we can be really clicking on all cylinders, obviously keeping Cam out there and really running offense and not fouling.

But this is why you do this. The fans were great. It was an awesome environment. I told our team, you don't have to go into overtime for TV, but it was a great TV game. It was exciting.

**Q. Just talk about the defensive effort you got from Kiki inside. Four blocks and the rebounding inside. Obviously the offense was phenomenal, but her defense inside seemed equally phenomenal.**

TARA VanDERVEER: Yep, and how about her 16 rebounds? That wasn't bad either. You know, again, she's a warrior out there. Look where she was -- look how much she's improved. It's incredible. To me, she's most improved player and she gave an All-American performance tonight.

I'm really proud of her. But it was a total team effort. People were like looking for her, getting her the ball. Very unselfish basketball and I love it.

**Q. Brooke had those two big shots at the end. She has had a few clutch shots this year. Just how have you seen her develop tonight to get to these moments where she was very confident that was going to go in?**

TARA VanDERVEER: You call her Big Shot Brooke. You know, she hit some big, big shots for us.

It was really exciting. She was very poised. You know, just she was open and she is a confident player so really excite to go see her make those shots.

**Q. Coach, just you talked about Kiki's defense earlier, but just want to get your thoughts on how impressive it was to see her stay out there without -- well, she got into foul trouble, but then staying out of foul trouble later in the game. How aggressive was it playing defense on Crooks without...**

TARA VanDERVEER: She was awesome. Couldn't have asked for more. You know, we went through the scouting report, we watched a lot of her moves, and our team really listened and did what we asked them to do.

You know, we really didn't double her except for maybe one time. Got a turnover on that. After that we were like, you got to stay out on your three point shooters. Even when we were trying to guard them they hit shots. Kiki was fabulous. Absolutely great game.

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