

Stanford University Women's Basketball Media Conference

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Tara VanDerveer

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everyone, and thank you for joining us today. We'll start with opening remarks from Jaquish & Kenninger Director of Athletics Bernard Muir. He'll then turn it over to Tara who will offer an opening statement and then we will open it up to questions for you all. Bernard?

BERNARD MUIR: Thank you all for coming. Just hard to believe, Tara -- you can sit down for a little bit. (Laughter).

I had a chance to visit with Tara quite a few times yesterday, and obviously this is a monumental moment for Stanford, for the athletic department, and certainly women's basketball. But Tara, on behalf of our coaches, our student-athletes over the years, just thank you. That's all we can say and say repeatedly.

At some point in time, we will honor your legacy and we will hold that for now, but today is just a chance to express our gratitude for all you've meant to this community, all you've meant to Stanford, to women's basketball, to college sport in general, and we're so appreciative.

With that, I'm going to turn it over to you, and I know you have some thoughts. But know that personally I will miss you. As I told somebody this morning, Jennifer Azzi, who was on a call with me, I just said, it's like I'm losing my security blanket because you've been such a confidant and somebody I to talk to to get the coaches' perspective, and on behalf of all those people that you've encountered, especially myself, I just want to say thank you for all you've meant to all of us.

With that, I turn it over to you.

(Applause.)

TARA VANDERVEER: Thank you, Bernard. It's great seeing everyone this afternoon. Thank you for coming.

It's a little overwhelming, I'll admit, but I'm very excited to have a chance to talk with you and share some of my thoughts.

About 39 years ago, I called my father to tell him I was leaving Ohio State to take the Stanford coaching job. I wasn't completely honest because I told him I was thinking about taking the Stanford job. He proceeded to tell me that it was impossible to win at Stanford and that the job was a graveyard job.

After more about how crazy I was to consider Stanford, I interrupted him to tell him that I had taken the job. He hung up the phone and told my mother she'll be unemployed, coming home, living with us in three months.

As a young-and-upcoming coach, I left a great job and team at Ohio State to prove something to myself. To win at Stanford with the strict academic requirements is the ultimate challenge. When I met assistant dean of admissions John Bonhomme, he told me straight up, your recruits need to be able to jump through the same academic hoops as other admits. I remember thinking, John, I need recruits who can put it through the hoop.

My father was right about one thing: The Stanford job involved digging, but instead of a graveyard job, it has been a gold mine job. My 38 years as the head coach of Stanford University women's basketball team have been nothing short of magical.

Stanford is a beautiful place with incredible people. The strength of Stanford is unwavering commitment to excellence.

At Stanford, the term "student-athlete" isn't an oxymoron. What other basketball coach has Carolyn Bertozzi, a Nobel Prize-winning chemist in their locker room for a game? Where else would a star player, Chiney Ogwumike, have a former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, as an advisor? How fortunate are we to have Middle East correspondent Janine Zacharia do directed reading with a player so they could represent their country in summer competition? Who else has world-renowned happiness professor Fred Luskin meet with their team weekly developing mindfulness training?

When our team and I needed help with leadership, I turned

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to the No. 1 business school in the country at Stanford and former dean of admissions Kirsten Moss. She did customized leadership sessions with our team, coaches and me.

The S in Stanford is for special. Thank you to all our great faculty for your brilliance, dedication, and accessibility to our student-athletes. I am proud of the championships we have won and how we have built a great tradition. What brings me the most satisfaction, however, is to see the transformation of the young women on our team both on and off the court. How about Kiki this season?

Off the court, young, unsure women become steady, confident leaders. In the classroom they've excelled and gone on to become doctors, lawyers, professors, businesswomen and leaders.

Just walking into Maples for practice and hearing the balls bouncing and the music playing has brought me great joy. Coaching has never felt like a j-o-b job. I've loved the game of basketball since the third grade when we did three-player weave in gym class. From the beginning, the strategy of basketball intrigued me, but what really attracted me to the game is the importance of teamwork. It is thrilling to be connected in a successful team.

As a daughter of two educators, I've enjoyed teaching basketball fundamentals and skills. Basketball is so much more than dribbling, passing and shooting. Great teams love playing with and for each other. Basketball is the ultimate team sport, and I'm part of a great team.

Thank you to my parents, Rita and Dunbar, for their love and support. My parents have always been my role models. My mom would always say to me, you sure move faster around the basketball court than you do around the kitchen. That wasn't hard. My dad told me basketball will never take you anywhere. I sent him postcards from all over the world.

As a young girl, I never played on a high school team or had camps or travel basketball. Our college schedule was only eight regular-season games. Coaching wasn't a profession for women.

I got into coaching by accident. I had taken a year off after graduating from Indiana as a sociology major and I was planning to go to law school. My sister Marie was on the newly formed high school team. Title IX had just passed. They had lost 99-11 the night before. My dad basically made me go help that team.

I learned two very important lessons in my first year. First, after games my parents would say, why didn't you play

Marie more. Parents see things through a different lens than coaches. Second, I love my sister, and through my years as a coach, as upset as I might get with a player, I would always come back to, she was someone's sister.

Thank you to Marie, my siblings Nick and Beth. I also want to give a big shout-out to my sister Heidi, the head coach at UC-San Diego. We talk daily and help each other. I love you, Heidi, and you are the No. 1 coach in the family.

Coaching feels like it was my destiny. I watched hours of boys' practice from the seventh grade on. At Indiana I took coach Bobby Knight's basketball coaching class. I got an A. And watched his practice for three years. While at Ohio State I got to know the legendary Fred Taylor. Don Munson was my colleague at Idaho, and here at Stanford I've had the incredibly great fortune of becoming friends with the late Pete Newell.

Thank you to Andy Geiger for hiring me in 1985 and Bernard Muir for keeping me. One of my greatest supporters isn't here today in person, but he is with us in spirit and we are in his building. Thank you, John Arrillaga.

Once about 10 years ago I seriously considered retiring and went to dinner with John. He had heard I was thinking about it, and he told me that was a bad idea. I told him I was exhausted. He recommended I take the summer off. His support was critical for me to take the time I needed.

No one has cared more about Stanford and Stanford athletics than John. I'm so thankful for the love and support from the entire Arrillaga family. Thank you Joya, John Jr and Laura.

Thank you to Helen and Peter Bing for supporting our team as scholarship donors and financing our trip to Italy. Thank you to Tony and Linda Meier for your annual barbecue and pool party and attending all of our games.

Thank you to Jesse and Mindy Rogers for supporting the Women's Sports Foundation Legacy Fund Scholarships and Lifetime Cardinal. Thank you to the late Setsuko Ishiyama and her family, Nelson, Terry, Julia, Patricia and Margaret for endowing my coaching position.

Thank you to all our exceptional donors for your contributions to endowed positions and scholarships.

Coming to Stanford wasn't an easy decision for me. I initially said no to Andy Geiger. He asked me why, and I told him I don't know enough about Stanford, so he said, come back. I actually learned a lot about recruiting from Andy.

On my second recruiting trip to campus, I met the track coach, Brooks Johnson. Andy had instructed Brooks to keep walking me around campus until I said yes. We walked and walked, and not only did I say yes to Brooks, but we became best lifelong friends. He is my soulmate. Thank you, Brooks.

As I said, I am part of a great team. From the beginning I've understood the importance of outstanding assistant coaches. I have always had incredible assistants. Thank you to Amy Tucker, who along with Julie Plank and the late June Daugherty, came with me from Ohio State back in 1985. Amy, I'm so grateful for your confidence in me. Thank you for the sacrifices you made to come to Stanford.

Amy called me the first summer to tell me about a great guard. I asked, does she have grades. Amy said yes, but there's a problem; she's from Tennessee. I said, ooh, that's a problem. But Jennifer Azzi came to Stanford and became the first All-American.

When I took a year off to coach the Olympic team in 1996, Amy took over as the head coach. She coached the team for an undefeated Pac-12 championship and Final Four. She has the best winning percentage at Stanford.

Thank you to associate head coach Kate Paye. I love working with you. Kate is a phenomenal coach. She is knowledgeable, an excellent communicator, and totally invested in Stanford.

Thank you to Katie Steding. I'm so thankful for your loyalty and hard work. Katie was our first player to sign at Stanford. She was a key to our 1990 championship along with being a member of the 1996 Olympic team.

Thank you to Tempie Brown for coming back this season. I appreciate your calm, mature demeanor and how you always would check to make sure I was wearing matching shoes.

Thank you, Bird, Erica McCall, for joining our staff this season after a wonderful pro career. I have enjoyed working with you as much as I enjoyed coaching you. You are the quintessential coach.

Thank you to my sport administrator Heather Owen, our basketball staff Eileen Roche, Jeanette Pohlen, Casey Spinetti, Brian Shank, Katelin Knox, John Cantalupi, and Erin Poindexter McHan. Working with our coaches and staff has been a highlight of my time at Stanford. I have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to plan, strategize, argue - lots of my ideas get shot down - and laugh with such great colleagues. Thank you for making work so much fun.

I would be remiss if I didn't recognize the women's basketball coaches' sorority and fraternity for their friendship and competition. Thank you to the giants of our game who I have admired: Pat Summitt, Jody Conradt, Geno Auriemma, Ceal Barry, Andy Landers, Muffet McGraw, Nancy Darsch, Kim Mulkey, Lisa Bluder and Dawn Staley.

I also want to thank the other coaches at Stanford who I have learned from and cheered for. When I first came to Stanford, it was very intimidating to be in the company of people like Dick Gould, 17 NCAA championships, Bill Walsh, Skip Kenney, but in fact they were welcoming, helpful and supportive.

Once I was walking into the athletic department following five-time NCAA champion Dante Dettamanti, I thought to myself, if he can do it, I can do it. We did win a couple of championships, and later in the same spot, I met Sadao Hamada, who had coached the gymnastics team. I said to Sadao, what got into you winning? He said, Tara, I said to myself, if you can do it, I can do it.

Working and learning alongside great coaches and great people like Mike Montgomery, Trent Johnson, Johnny Dawkins, Tyrone Willingham, Jim "who-has-it-better-than-us" Harbaugh, David Shaw, John Dunning, Mark Marquess, Greg Meehan, Anne Walker, John Tanner Lulifru, just to name a few, has been inspiring. Thank you all for your support and encouragement.

Another joy of working at Stanford has been watching and getting to know the accomplished student-athletes in other sports. Once during a rainy winter week, a young man asked me if he could putt on the side of the court. You guessed it: Tiger Woods.

During the pandemic, I got to swim in a lane between Olympians Simone Manuel and Katie Ledecky. Talk about humbling. I've rebounded for Mark Madsen and led Andrew Luck and Christian McCaffery onto the field as their guest coach.

Most importantly, I want to thank all, all of the women I have coached at Stanford. I admire and respect the dedication that our student-athletes have to excellence in the classroom and on the court. As their coach, I have aspired to help each player get to a place they couldn't get on their own. I've wanted to be a coach that I would want to play for: Someone who works very hard to give our team the best chance of being successful, along with a person who demonstrates empathy and compassion. Through the game of basketball, I have taught the importance of teamwork, hard work, discipline,

determination, unselfishness and resilience. I've had many former players tell me the demands of playing basketball have helped them be successful in their careers. Most importantly, I've wanted our team to have fun and be great teammates.

Our players have been inspiring and motivating. When I asked the 1990 team members to write down on an index card what is your contribution to the team, walk-on Angela Taylor, who rarely got in the game, wrote, spread sunshine. We won the NCAA championship. When I asked Chris MacMurdo, an incoming freshman, as we drove on to campus on Campus Drive, what are you thinking about, instead of the expected answer, she said, "I want to make a difference in this world." She's a doctor now.

When her national team was in Ukraine in January, our bus was leaving for the airport at 3:30 a.m. As we boarded the bus, 12 to 15 women shivering in thin coats were begging. Everyone, including me, walked right by ignoring them. Not Jennifer. She reached in her pockets and gave them her money and then opened her suitcase and gave away her clothes. Everyone on the bus followed Jennifer.

After losing arguably the toughest game ever to Old Dominion in 1997, the players were inconsolable. Jamila Wideman commanded the room, "Pick your heads up. I would rather lose with you than win with anyone else."

Later after a very tough loss to UConn in the national title game, Jayne Appel emotionally told me she didn't want to take her uniform off because she knew she would never put it on again.

I have so many stories of how the people I have coached have motivated me, influenced and inspired me. I have learned so much from each player. I'm eternally grateful for having them in my life.

I'm incredibly proud of the Stanford sisterhood. We've had real sisters. Karlie could find Bonnie open anywhere on the court. Nneka was another coach for Chiney, and Lexie and Lacie competed daily. In tough games, the sisterhood is a key to victory. It was very exciting this season to win three overtime games. I don't think we've ever had three before, and see how hard everyone was playing for each other.

Yes, the championship years are on the wall in Maples, but what I see when I look up there is Kiki high fiving Cam, Jennifer and Sonia leaving the court arms around each other, Candice hugging me and Nneka embracing Rhys. It is the friendship that we have that makes it so special.

It has been an honor and a pleasure to be part of these women's lives. My goal has been to be a teacher, mentor, confidant, and eventually a lifetime friend for them.

I have grieved at funerals of parents and former players. I have celebrated at weddings. When children are born I've been called within the hour or I talk my way into the hospital to see mother and newborn.

As John Pohlen said to me when recruiting Jeanette, "Tara, we are family."

Thank you, fans, and the Stanford Fast Break Club. Our fans are fantastic. It's been thrilling to see the attendance at our games go from being able to count on my fingers and toes the number of people in the gym to sold-out Maples. I will be sitting up with you next season cheering for our team.

I'm very sad about losing the great Pac-12 Conference. Thank you to the outstanding coaches that I have competed against for close to 40 years.

Thank you to our conference administrators, conference game officials and Pac-12 Network. Thank you, media, for your coverage of our teams through the years. What a pleasure it has been to get to know Dwight Chapin, Elliott Almond, Darren Sabedra, Tom Fitzgerald, Ann Killion, Michelle Smith, Scott Ostler. It's a big game if all three from the SF Chronicle are here. Marisa Ingemi, Joan Ryan, Janie McCauley, Anthony Flores, Cheryl Coward, Michael Roberson, Jason Dumas, Aaron Wilson, Kate Rooney, Vern Glenn, Gary Radnish, Ashley Adamson and Mary Murphy.

Thank you for telling the stories of our games and great players. There is a young girl out there who will watch or read about Stanford women's basketball and her dad will say to her, basketball will tell you everywhere.

Questions?

(Applause.)

Q. Tara, as I told you before, when you recruited Sonia from my hometown, I was like, I love this woman, and then when you guys won the championship, it was awesome. I also want to thank Brian Rizzo for finally getting me credentialed for finally getting to cover you guys back in 2010. It's been a pleasurable ride to see you guys the whole time. How would you surprise how it ended when you had all these great players during this time frame I covered you guys like Nneka and then you go to Kiki and Cam to end your career?

TARA VANDERVEER: Thanks for being here today. I honestly have to pinch myself and just say, wow, what a ride, what an incredible opportunity to be coaching at Stanford, working here, and to coach the outstanding young women that I get to coach.

As you can imagine, my phone blew up, texts from Chiney, Nneka, Ros. I can't imagine a better life.

Q. Can you take us through your decision process, how long you've known that you were going to make this announcement and what the tipping points were for you?

TARA VANDERVEER: Well, I really -- I went into kind of this year extremely motivated. We kind of had a motto, best year ever, and it's been a fantastic year.

I just really wanted to enjoy every practice, every game, and after every year I really evaluate it. I probably retired at least 20 times in my mind.

I mean, it's hard work. You are exhausted after the season. I wanted to give myself some time when our season was finished and just really make sure I knew that this is what I wanted to do.

But the time has felt right.

I wanted to say that it has nothing to do with going into the ACC. That was a motivator to want to stay, to play that competition, because I think it's going to be a great, great league.

My mom is 97 this year, and I think just wanting to do things that maybe you just want to do in your life, and you realize that this is not a dress rehearsal, this is your real life. I feel like basketball coaching has changed a lot over the 40 years, as you can imagine, but now it is an incredibly 24/7 job. Even if you're on vacation, I might be water skiing at the lake, but I'm on the phone recruiting. I've got a 4:00 call, a 4:30 call. Sometimes it's just -- you're ready. I just felt I'm ready.

I never really thought I would be. I kind of just felt like maybe I would kind of just keel over on the bench, because I love it. I love it. I love it.

I told our team this yesterday, that the hardest part is that this year's team made it really hard. Just such great young women, hardworking. Did we want to go further? Yes. But what a ride.

I've coached teams before that we have gone further, and you're still looking forward to next year.

It kind of just came together.

Q. Do you go through maybe like a personal checklist when you decide to do this? They say you want to leave but you want a little left in the tank. For you, was it a matter of that before you said, okay, adios?

TARA VANDERVEER: I feel like I tried to put everything into it that year that I could. Again, I thought for me, walking out of Maples after the big game we had with Iowa State, we couldn't play another game in Maples, and I just said, if this is my last game, damn, this is fun. This was an awesome game.

I just said, I feel that it's time.

But I will say that I feel like I can contribute more to Stanford and to our athletic department, and I hope that whether it's an ambassador type of job or advisor, consultant, one of the things that I did this year I think that was really helpful was I had a coach, and I think I could be a good coach for some other coaches who just maybe need some perspective.

I don't feel like I'm in the reserve tank. I've still got a lot of tread.

Q. You retired on the day that a huge landmark happened. We've learned that the women's game not only outdrew the men's game but trounced the men's game. I'm just wondering what you can say about stepping away -- not that you're stepping that far away, but stepping away when the game is at this point that it is.

TARA VANDERVEER: It is so thrilling to see the support for women's basketball. When I come in this room and look around this room, there's more people in this room than were at our first game. The support for women's basketball is just growing, and for basketball in general.

It's very, very exciting.

I do feel that you all as members of the media are so important to the growth of our game, and where we are now is because people are watching and learning and getting to know these outstanding players.

But the game is more than one or two teams or one or two players, and it's really exciting to see kind of where we are.

I feel like I'm leaving it in a good place.

Q. To follow up, when you first came to Stanford and

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you thought about your dreams for women's basketball compared to where we are now, what are some things maybe you thought in your wildest dreams may have never come true or that they did come true, and what are you looking forward to sitting back in the future for the growth of the game?

TARA VANDERVEER: Well, obviously I never really played growing up except for having the best ball, so the boys had to let me play in their games, or I'd be out shooting by myself and I would be dreaming about what is happening for these women now, going to a full stadium, being on television, just all the excitement that is part of the game now.

But even as a young girl, I could see it. I always believed in it. That's kind of maybe why I went into basketball and have been able to do what I've been able to do.

But I really had a vision as a young girl that this is going to be something really exciting. Going to the Olympics and we had 40,000 people at our game there, the television coverage, we're just scratching the surface of not only how good we are going to be but how exciting it's going to be. Let's double the numbers.

Q. This is a unique situation where you know who will replace you, and it's Kate Paye, and I think that says a lot for what the relationship you've had also with Bernard. But what does that mean to you, the fact that the program won't go through a drastic overhaul and change, and your staff will largely be intact and you have someone who's been there next to you for 17 years and played for you? That's pretty unique and special.

TARA VANDERVEER: It is. When Bernard said I was his security blanket, I'm thinking Kate has been my security blanket. Bernard, it's just a different blanket.

Kate is going to be awesome. I've loved working with Kate. She's brilliant, hardworking, is a great communicator. She loves Stanford and loves the players here at Stanford. No one will outwork Kate.

She's paid her dues. She's had opportunities to be a head coach other places, and she has been incredibly loyal. I just cannot say enough good things about her.

I want to be back up here and have a chance to say more when it's her day.

Q. What's been the key to your evolution as a coach from when you got to Ohio State to now, and you've always been able to adapt and change. What's been

the key to that?

TARA VANDERVEER: I would just say that I really feel like I'm a lifetime learner. I'm really curious about -- and I'm a copier, so I watch teams and see what they do. I watch a lot of games on TV and obviously on my hard drive now. But I think that just wanting to always give our team an edge, give our team the best chance of being successful, developing ways to have our team prepared, and I think that's been just -- and also just wanting to always really keep it fun, just knowing that basketball is fun. It's great going to the gym. Have fun with it. Be excited.

Q. What is your favorite Taraism, your favorite Tara saying?

TARA VANDERVEER: Wow, let's see. Well, there are a couple of them, I guess. "Sleep nights when we're not focusing on a drill." It might be the one of "Some days you're the dog, some days you're the hydrant." Some of them just -- "They made the movie 'Dumb and Dumber' and you weren't in it." Some of them just pop into my mind at the time.

I think some of it is just knowing maybe who I'm talking to, too.

Q. Three National Championships, '90, '90 and 2021. How would you compare and contrast those three National Championship squads?

TARA VANDERVEER: Well, I think we were able to win in 1990 because of the three-point line. When the rules changed and the three-point line was adopted, that became more our style of basketball. We weren't this big kind of inside team, but we were more of a shooting team, and that's where I think Jennifer and Katie kind of led the way, Sonja Henning. We had real good perimeter shooting. We took advantage of the three-point line in both of those years.

Then I think one of my players, Stacy Parson, said just have kind of an emergency and Stanford will win, kind of like we had the earthquake in 1990 and then we have the pandemic in 2021.

During the pandemic I think our team had incredible focus, and just we were really ready for winning that.

Now, I think we probably could have won 15 other times. We had teams that were at the Final Four, and our team that lost to Connecticut that had a chance -- I think the hardest loss ever was Old Dominion where we had a great team. A player like Kate Starbird was that kind of

electrifying player like a Caitlin Clark.

But sometimes the stars just have to be in alignment, and those years they were.

But I don't know that those teams were necessarily like head and shoulders above any of the other teams that were Final Four contenders. Sometimes the ball bounces right. We win against Arizona, that ball was in the air for a long time. Remember that? But we were able to pull it out.

Q. Obviously you're still going to be involved according to the press release with Stanford in some capacity. As you make this decision now, how much do you still want to be involved in the sport of basketball but on the converse end, what things are you looking forward to getting to do that coaching hasn't let you do in that regard?

TARA VANDERVEER: Well, I think that I don't feel like I want to just become a hermit or drop off, but I'm also -- also part of the decision is so as an example I play bridge with my mom every day, and I'm going to start studying so I'm a little better, more competitive with her. But I want to do other things.

But I do want to be involved with this great game of basketball. This has been my whole life.

I asked the group yesterday, I've been in coaching for basically, not counting my sister's year, but 48 years as an assistant or a head coach. This is what I know, and I love it.

But I also really -- I feel like I love Stanford, too, so if I have an opportunity to be a mentor and someone that can help with whether it's a transition or with things at Stanford, I speak at a lot of things all over campus, I want to be involved.

But it'll be a balance. When you're a coach, and I think Kate might have woken up a little bit feeling differently, you're on 24/7. I'm ready for maybe just the seven, not the 24.

Q. You may have hinted at this a little bit, but 1216 wins, tops in all the land. How hard is it to win one game?

TARA VANDERVEER: Well, I remember my very first coaching game at Idaho, and it might have even been an overtime game. I remember it was a really close game, and the team came over, and I said, okay -- I think we were up three, and the other team had the ball, and I just said, all right, so all we've got to do is let's play great defense

and not foul. We went out, fouled, they hit the shot, and it was overtime. I said, this is going to be harder than I thought.

Coaching is hard work, but it is incredibly rewarding. I just love coming to the gym.

I will admit I think I enjoy practice more than the games, and I will say that I hate losing more than I enjoy winning. I'm probably someone that looks at, well, what could we have done better, and no matter how we played, try to think about that.

There is no better job. I mean, I've lived just a charmed life, and I'm so fortunate.

Q. Following up on your mom, I know you've got these bridge games in front of you. What did your mom say when you called her and told her?

TARA VANDERVEER: Well, I told our team before I told my mom because I was afraid my mom might tell someone and they would post it, and I wanted something that was really important to me. My mother doesn't know how to post very well. What was really important to me is that our team did not hear it by a rumor or whatever, that they would hear it from me.

Last night after we met with the team, I thought, I'd better call my mom. So I did, and she was very excited that I'll get to spend more time with her. I didn't tell her that I was going to really start studying the bridge game, though.

Q. Not trying to be controversial, but do you feel somewhat bittersweet that you won't get to see Kiki's senior year?

TARA VANDERVEER: I will see it. I told our whole team that I am not leaving; I will be here, very present for them. I just said, just because you're retired doesn't mean that you're not going to need to eat lunch. I'll be in the stands. I'll be cheering.

I'm very excited about the development of our young players. I mean, every player. They're very motivated. They're in the gym.

Kind of what Kiki did, I will say tonight in our banquet, copy Kiki. She went from -- the numbers are incredible and the confidence that she has shown and the leadership that she has shown. I think that other players also want to come and play with her, and they've expressed that to me.

I will always be Kiki's coach. Kate might get her for one year, but I have had her for three, and I've loved it.

Q. I just want to know how much pride you take in the coaching tree that you've set up. You've got Lindy at UNLV, Charmin at Cal, you've got Kate taking over for you here. How much pride do you take in seeing former players carry on your legacy as coaches and being able to impact them in that way?

TARA VANDERVEER: Well, maybe if I was coaching somewhere else even -- some of these people that could have been great coaches are doctors and lawyers and professors. I'm very proud of all of the coaches that I've worked with, whether it's been assistant coaches or head coaches.

We do have a really strong Stanford sisterhood, and that is something I take tremendous pride in. Even like in the WNBA, a lot of the players -- we've had, what, I think 30 players go to the WNBA and more even playing overseas. Again, my phone last night just blew up with former players texting me and calling. That's why you do it. It's to have the relationships that you have.

Sometimes they don't understand it as it's happening because as coaches we are hard on them. We are very demanding, but only to see them be really successful.

Q. As long as I've known you, you have always made it a point to bring the women's basketball brand into our community. I can't thank about the numerous clinics that Stanford women have conducted in our community, and you've given us a platform for our women to talk to the women of Stanford and to really inspire them in so many different ways, obviously Markisha Coleman landed in your locker room, and we're so grateful for that. Talk about the motivation to make sure your student-athletes had an opportunity to see another community in the way that you've presented us?

TARA VANDERVEER: Well, thank you for coming today. Whether it's through Job Train, which I've been part of their board and really admire the work they do, our team with Jennifer and Sonja and Katie, we used to go over to Annette Harris Center, and that was back in the day when I was playing, and we would play against the fellas there.

I think that that's what a great part of the type of player that we have at Stanford is that they give back, and I think that that's something that we really try to do.

We had actually what's called Shoot For the Stars program where kids would come over to campus, wanting to have Stanford not be on an island but be part of the community.

I'm really proud of the community involvement that our team, our coaches and our players have done over the years.

Q. You just mentioned 10 years ago you seriously considered it. That was John Arrillaga you had the conversation with --

TARA VANDERVEER: Right. I'm glad I didn't, though.

Q. That's what I'm following up on. Did you take the summer off?

TARA VANDERVEER: I did.

Q. Fully? Did you do any -- what did you do that summer?

TARA VANDERVEER: I listened to John, and I had permission from Bernard to basically take the summer off.

I think some of it was -- it's not just that one year, but doing the Olympics, I'm coaching a summer team, winter team, summer team, winter team, and it went on for about 10 years, and then it just caught up with me a little bit.

I think I was just -- sometimes you go through some tough Rocky roads with teams and I was just worn out. John gave me great advice, and it really helped me a lot. I had obviously the help of assistant coaches that allowed me to do that.

It was almost like a sabbatical that professors would take. It was awesome.

That really kind of gave me a lot of energy. A lot of coaching is about having a tremendous amount of energy.

You have to bring it every day.

Again, when I go to the gym, I have great coaches and staff that are energizing and upbeat and positive, and our team is that way, too. That's what made it so much fun this year.

Q. You water succeed, read books, did anything but basketball really for a few months?

TARA VANDERVEER: I did. I water succeed, I sailed, I spent time with my family, and it recharged the battery.

There's really no -- right now there's really no -- one of the hard things, I think, in coaching for both men and women, there's no work-life balance, and maybe as reporters you feel the same way. But it's really challenging.

I really felt like for me if I can't give our team 100 percent, then I know someone else can, and they deserve that. But this year I did, and I'm really excited about the year we had.

Q. Did you go into the summer saying, okay, if I take this time off, I will return, or did you leave it open?

TARA VANDERVEER: No, I didn't leave it open. I was coming back.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Tara. Thank you all for being here.

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