

PAC-12 Women's Basketball Tournament

Saturday, March 9 2019

Tara VanDerveer DiJonai Carrington Maya Dodson Stanford

Stanford - 72, Washington - 61

COACH VANDERVEER: First of all, I think that we had a battle on our hands, and that points to the depth of our conference. If that's team No. 11, wow. Just incredible. I mean, how hard we had to play and how well we had to play to beat Washington and to beat Cal and that 7 and 11, I think it really points to just the great teams we have, the great players we have, and the great coaches we have in the conference.

Washington was playing with a lot of confidence and a lot of just house money, so to speak, and we had to play really well. We needed that half-court shot, D.

But I was really excited about how Maya Dodson stepped up for us tonight. She's been out a lot with her injury, and when we needed her to, she got right on that block. She finished. She made free throws. She was rebounding, playing defense. So it's great to have kind of the old Maya back. We need her.

You know, D, Ki -- Kiana Williams is my MVP. She just goes and goes and goes the whole game. So we just have one more game tomorrow, and we're going to need her to play well. Along with Alanna, the twins. We've got some great minutes from Shannon. Who else? Anna Wilson came in and gave us some really good minutes. So we're really excited about playing in the championship game, and it's a lot to do with the people to my right.

Q. That shot you hit with the three, but at that time when they were making this run, as they were doing all tournament, to sort of get the momentum your way, going to the locker room and then you hit a normal three, so to speak, coming out of the locker room, how big was that stretch, that first three and the second three, to getting it back to having the momentum on your side?

DIJONAI CARRINGTON: I would say, yeah, for sure they were making a run. I think it was about a six-point game at that point. So whenever anyone hits like a big



half-court shot or a big three, we all get excited. But everyone's always there in practice rebounding for me and passing it back to me. So it's kind of like everyone's hard work in that shot.

But, yeah, it gave us a lot of momentum, I think, going into halftime, and it kind of gave us a little bit more of a cushion.

Q. This is a quick turn, obviously, with the third game in three days plus the time change. You'll face an Oregon team that you guys probably have some thoughts about after what happened in Maples. But can you talk about a quick turn and preparing for an Oregon team after the last time you faced them?

COACH VANDERVEER: Oregon has a great team, we know this. They're playing three games, too, so it's not like we're playing more or anything like that. They have terrific players, a great system. They've demonstrated that throughout the whole year, but we're here to battle.

I'm really excited about how much our team has improved, how hard we're working, and we're going to come out. We were in the same situation last year and we're going to learn from the good things we did and learn from the mistakes we made. But I have a lot of confidence in our team and our players, and we're just going to play our game.

Q. There has been 18 Pac-12 championships, and you've been in 16 of them. What does that mean to you, and what has been the key to your success?

COACH VANDERVEER: I remember the two that we weren't. We're really appreciative of being in the championship game. I mean, it says a lot about our program and the support we get for our program, whether it's our fans or our administration, the great players we have. We're just really -- you said 18? Has it been 18 years we've run the tournament? Wow.

We're just -- I think the tournament has been a great thing for our conference and women's basketball, and I think it really helps to get us ready for the NCAA Tournament. It's extremely competitive, and it always has been. But we're very excited to be playing in the championship game, and we want to play very well.

Q. The game against Oregon at your place was not

how you wanted it to go. Has that been in your mind; that we get another chance to play them again and what could happen?

MAYA DODSON: Yeah, we didn't come out ready to play them. Oregon is a great team, and we came out kind of flat, and they took advantage of that. But we learned from that game. It's in the past, and I think we're ready now as long as we play our game.

DIJONAI CARRINGTON: Yeah, I would agree. As Tara always says, we have to look at it as we're driving a car. It's in the rear view mirror, and we can't always harp on that loss, but we have to look every couple seconds, right, and see what we can build from it and what we can learn from that.

I think that's what we've done from that point on. We've grown as a team, we've grown as a unit. We're improving our shot percentages and our field goal percentages, and we're playing smart and together. And I think tomorrow that will show for us.

Q. Maya, going into a match-up where you're going to spend some time against Hebard tomorrow, how do you think you've progressed over the course of the season to battle with a player like that on the inside, while also paying attention to all the other options of getting to the basket and pull you out of the three-point line too?

MAYA DODSON: Yeah, Ruthy Hebard is a great post player. From the last time we played them, I learned a lot about how she posts up every play and gets great position. I think I just need to come out. It's going to be a challenge, but I think as long as I play hard and also try to help my team out, call screens, it's going to be a great game.

Q. Tara, we have the typical, quote/unquote, 1 and 2 seed playing in the championship, but this tournament has been anything but typical. Given the fierce level of competition that we see, how does that change anything you do to prepare for the game or communicate with your players to make them aware that this is not the typical tournament even though we have 1 and 2 in the championship?"

COACH VANDERVEER: You mean we just didn't get a pass to get to this point? Our team has worked really hard. I think the depth of the conference, the competitiveness has prepared us for being in the championship. And we'll carry forward into the NCAA Tournament. But whether it's been the battle we had with Washington, whether it was being down against Colorado, having to basically hit a game-winning shot to beat Arizona, we have a great conference with great teams and we know that every night we have to play well.

I think that that is a good thing because you don't come out and think, oh, I can just slop through it. It helps you develop good habits. So the depth and competitiveness, if you don't do the right thing, you're going to lose. I think that's good to have every night. We welcome it. So hopefully it will pay off for us.