

NCAA Women's Regional Semifinals and Finals: Chicago

Monday, April 1, 2019
Chicago, Illinois



Tara VanDerveer DiJonai Carrington Alanna Smith Stanford Cardinal

Notre Dame - 84, Stanford - 68

TARA VANDERVEER: They made some tough shots, and I think they'll be a great representative from this bracket at the Final Four.

I thought our young players really stepped up to the challenge, and our -- kind of our leaders with Alanna and DiJonai and Kiana really had -- made some outstanding plays for us to even be ahead at halftime and compete.

But I'm really proud of our team. I just want to just congratulate Alanna. She had a great career at Stanford, and we'll really miss her next year. But I think that with the returners, we can build on a great season and this, playing in this Elite 8.

Q. Could you talk first about the start? You guys sort of really had them. And then secondly, you got your three-point game going that you didn't have the other night.

DIJONAI CARRINGTON: I'd just say we came out, we had a great game plan, and we executed it in the first half.

I think we had a few slip-ups in the second half, and they are a great team and they were able to exploit those.

But, I mean, all in all, I'm proud of our team, and I think that -- I think that we played a hard game, and, I mean, they're a great team. But yeah.

ALANNA SMITH: Yeah, I think D said it. We had a great scouting report, and yeah, just -- I don't know, we have to play 40 minutes, and we didn't. We played 20 minutes really, really well and had one bad quarter.

Q. What was the reason for that bad quarter do you

suppose? Let-down by you guys or them or both?
ALANNA SMITH: Probably both.

Q. Coach, this is a program you're familiar with over the years. What was the scouting report telling you to set up your game with them, and how successful of course it was early?

TARA VANDERVEER: It was. I thought we -- you know, they're a very talented team, and I thought we did a good job of knocking down shots. We hit our threes early, made some late, too.

But we did not do a good enough job defensively. We fouled them too much, putting them at the free-throw line. They shot 16 free throws, we shot six. They got on the O-boards, dominated that, especially in the second half. I don't know the numbers, first half, first or second half, but that was something they did. And we turned the ball over too much.

But again, they're a team that -- they've played together a lot. They're basically five seniors playing together, and they play very well together. They pass well, extremely well, and they're very physical.

This is I just think something -- I thought we competed very hard and very well, but they were the better team today for 40 minutes. We did it for 20, and we didn't get it done in the third quarter, in the second half.

Q. How beneficial will this experience be for your younger people going forward?

TARA VANDERVEER: Well, I hope that in some ways it can work two ways. It should help Kiana, DiJonai, maybe Lexie with their confidence, and it'll also point out to people, hey, things they need to work on, things we need to get better at.

But this is a really, really close team, a really fun team to work with, and I'm very proud of -- only one team is going to be really happy at the end of the day, and I'm really proud of this team, and I don't think that one game should define or even 20 minutes should define the season for them. They've had a great year. We've dealt with some adversity, and we hope that we'll get some other people healthy, and we have great recruits coming in next year that will help our team a lot, so it's something to look forward to.

Q. Care to speculate on Notre Dame going into the Final Four as a National Championship team?

TARA VANDERVEER: Well, I think any time a team beats you, you're excited to see them win. I think if they go head to head with Oregon, I'm going to root for Oregon because they're in our league, but otherwise I'll root for Notre Dame.

I think they have a great program. Muffet does a tremendous job, and they're really an elite team, and we were -- I'm really proud of how we competed against them today.