

PAC-12 Women's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 1 2018

Mark Trakh Minyon Moore Aliyah Mazyck USC

USC - 47, Washington State - 44

MARK TRAKH: As far as the game, I thought it was a great defensive battle, low-scoring game. This time of year everybody knows what everybody else is going to be running, and I thought both teams did a great job on the defensive end. Both teams really scrapped and hustled and went at it. So it's just that we happened to be three points better.

I thought Minyon came up big down the stretch, and I thought Aliyah did a great defensive job again today as she always does. I think she's one of the top defensive players in the Pac-12 and in the country. Of course, Minyon, too. They both earned first team all defensive team, which we're really proud of.

Thought it was a great defensive game, and we look forward to Stanford tomorrow.

Q. What do you think it was in those final minutes that allowed you to hold on?

MARK TRAKH: You know, these kids played everybody tough. So we've experienced close games down the stretch. They've learned how to grind and they've learned how not to give up. This is our 20th win tonight, you know? When you look at our roster, we don't have a lot of depth, we don't have a lot of hype. We don't have anybody over six-foot in the starting lineup. We come in with Ja'Tavia who is 6'1" if she's an inch off the bench.

I'm just really proud they're grinders. Just every possession they'll fight. Like I said, we were in every game we played this year. Just going down the stretch, they had experience in playing in those close games and knew how to finish defensively. And I've been really proud of what they've accomplished. I'm sitting here going, wow, 20 wins this year. That's really big for this group of kids, and I'm really, really happy for them.

Q. I want to ask Minyon and Aliyah, because it's been quite a last year for you. Losing here at the



tournament in the first round. Coach decides to step down. Then you're without a coach for a long time, then mark gets hired and now you've won 20 games here in the 2017-2018 season. How did you do that?

MINYON MOORE: Honestly, it was just a blessing in disguise. All the girls on this team are very hard workers and all we needed was a coaching staff that came in here and believed in us. And Coach Trakh and his staff came in here, and our team has worked, worked, worked and paid attention in practice and worked hard and gutted out this whole season. I'm just honestly proud of my teammates because we're just working together.

We came here last year, lost our first game. This year we came and won. What Coach Trakh and his staff have done and our teammates have done, it's amazing to me. I'm just proud to be on this team.

ALIYAH MAZYCK: It's crazy what a little bit of confidence can do to a team. Just to piggy back off of what Minyon said. We're all just super thankful for having to come in and take us with open arms, because we're not the easiest team to deal with. He just came in and motivated us. He cared for us and believed in us despite of us, and we can't thank him enough for that.

Q. Minyon and Aliyah, in a game like that where it's a defensive struggle on both ends, does your approach change, and how so?

ALIYAH MAZYCK: Absolutely not. Just for me as a player, I'm going to get after it every second of the game, I feel like. We have a point to prove. We've got 20 wins, that's crazy. So every time we step out on the hardwood it's just like we're going to give it our all, despite we're up 20, down 20. You know what, it gets kind of tough when you're playing 38 minutes, 40 minutes, but I don't change my approach.

I'm only speaking for myself, and I'm pretty sure my teammates don't either.

MINYON MOORE: Yeah, I think we all play with a chip on our shoulder, and that can go a far, far way, especially when there are a lot of people that doubt you. We haven't really changed anything. We just changed with the scout our coaching staff has given us

and try to execute every single game, so, yeah.

Q. Continuing on that chip theme. You two were two of the five players in this entire conference to be named to the All-defensive team earlier this week. What did seeing that release, knowing you were two of those five mean to both of you?

MINYON MOORE: I think it meant everything. Aliyah and I and the rest of our team, we work really hard. And Aliyah is one of the best defenders I've ever seen play the game, and that kind of makes it easier on me. Sometimes I get a break. I don't have to guard the point guard all the time, so I was just proud.

Also, Aliyah was named honorable mention for the all Pac-12 also. Just work hard every game and help our teammates out. Just play hard, always just go hard. To see that we made the All-Pac-12 team, two out of five is just amazing, honestly. It's a blessing, yeah.

ALIYAH MAZYCK: Like I said, it's crazy what a little bit of confidence can do for a player. Just last year for myself, I wasn't as noticed as much, so just to be an honorable mention, I'm not content, but I'll take it. I'm thankful to be able to play well on both ends of the court. Minyon on defense, she plays 40 minutes and she runs around the whole time. So basically she plays 80 minutes, because in my 38 minutes, I take a break every now and then.

So to have two defenders like us on the court, it's tough. So good luck to the opponents. Coach actually defends us in practice, so...

MINYON MOORE: Yeah, he guards the point guards in practice, so.

MARK TRAKH: Yeah, I try.