

PAC-12 Women's Basketball Tournament

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California-71, Washington-68

LINDSAY GOTTLIEB: Thank you for being here and covering our great conference and these young women. It's March 1st. It's the best time of year for those of us who live and breathe basketball. First, want to credit Washington, a team that is way better and way more accomplished than their record might show.

I've known Jody for a long time. It's not easy to take over a program, certainly not one that's losing a gazillion points to graduation. I think she had her team ready to play every single night. Certainly the three times we played them and the most tonight. So I think that speaks to their resilience and those young women how tough that they are. So just wanted to say that.

For our team, I don't think we were our best all around. But I thought we were together. I thought we were gritty. I thought we got stops when we needed them, and big buckets when we needed them. A.T. was tremendous in the clutch, but I thought it was an All-around team performance.

Jaelyn's minutes off the bench were incredibly big for us, and across the board I thought we did what we have to do and we're happy to be playing tomorrow.

Q. Asha at the end of the third quarter, in the beginning of the fourth, you went on a huge run as a team, but you scored 12 out of the 14 points, I think it was. Can you talk a little bit about what got you going in that stretch? Because you were obviously getting a lot of points in transition, but I was just wondering what got you going? What was going through your head?

ASHA THOMAS: We weren't scoring, so I know that was a motivation. Whether it was for me to score or getting other teammates involved to score, but it was just opportunity for me to score. I had transition buckets, kickouts from Kianna, I'm not sure, Jaelyn possibly.



But it was just opportunities for me to knock down shots and give my team the lead again.

Q. Lindsay, this is the third time you guys have faced them this season. Even though you beat them those two times, there is still a danger facing a team a third time, especially in a tournament. What were the things that you felt you needed to focus on and that Washington may have come for and tried to get your number in this game?

LINDSAY GOTTLIEB: Well, we have such a contrast in style. They play a five-out motion, which forces our post players to have to guard on the perimeter, and we know that's a challenge playing them. They have an elite scorer in Amber Melgoza. So I think we focused on trying to defend them really well and consistently, and at the same time, I thought a great adjustment they made, and we just annihilated them in the paint the first two times we played them, and if you look, they tried to take that away. Our three leading scorers were guards.

Maybe it speaks to our growth that we don't have to put all our eggs in one basket, but I think they did a nice job adjusting and saying we're going to play you a little differently. They still did what they do on offense, which is try to spread you out and get the court wide, so Melgoza has driving lanes and their bigs can shoot threes.

I think we weathered that storm well enough, but I think they did a nice job kind of going to their strengths.

Q. So you close out this game tonight. How do you think that experience there is going to help you against UCLA?

LINDSAY GOTTLIEB: I think totally different styles of play. But my first couple of years back in the conferences, we had the bye, and you're always a little nervous coming out in that first game when the other team has played. The last couple years we haven't had the bye, and I think you try to use that as an advantage in terms of your players are settled in a little bit. They know what postseason basketball is like. They kind of get their sea legs under them so to speak. I don't think there will be similarities in terms of the style of the game.

But I'm hoping that our players have kind of had a little

bit of confidence coming out knowing we just won on this court and there is a huge task ahead of us for UCLA. They're so good, and they're a top 10 team nationally for a reason.

But we'll try to get ourselves in the mentality right from the tip that, hey, we understand March basketball and we have to make some noise tomorrow from the beginning.

Q. Lindsay, Kristine Anigwe had a fairly quiet game in this game, as opposed to the game against the huskies on Sunday. But she did have nine rebounds. I guess, was it just what you were alluding to that the Huskies were packing it in against your bigs in this game?

LINDSAY GOTTLIEB: Yeah, I think what you call quiet on the stat sheet is three people on her, right? So they weren't guarding one or two of our players at times. So we've learned how to play through that. We've learned how to take advantage. So that's where we're a tougher team. If you're going to make her have a quiet night, it's going to be at the expense of giving other good players open looks.

I thought Jaelyn was terrific with her pull-up jumper because she comes into the paint. People are going to hang low on Kristine, they knock that down. If they came up on her, she'd make the pass. I thought she did a better job in the second half, obviously, of getting herself going. I think she had 4 for 6, whatever, in the second half, and just kind let it come to her. But more so, I think it speaks to we're kind of a tough team to scout, if you have to pick your poison on who you're going to try to take away.

Q. Time and time again this season you've come through for your team down the stretch with this sort of competitive fire to kind of like we're not going to lose this game if it comes down to me. The Washington coach kind of credited you with that today as well. Can you talk about that and what goes through your mind at these points where you're like, we can't lose?

ASHA THOMAS: I think that's just how I was brought up in the game of basketball, especially where I'm from, to always have a certain toughness deep down in yourself. I don't know. I mean, I don't want to lose. I know my team doesn't want to lose. So if that's me that day or it could be Mikayla some days, Nina. But there is always some fire in me that doesn't allow myself and then my teammates to lose. So I think it's just a fire that I always have.

Q. Jaelyn, I noticed that when you came down with an offensive rebound you had a pretty key point in this game, you had a big smile on your face. Don't

know if you remember that, but I was struck by that. I also want to ask you your thoughts as you were watching A.T. go wild on that stretch at the end of the third quarter and beginning of the fourth?

JAELYN BROWN: To come on the board I was just happy because it was a pivotal time. We needed that. So I just wanted to do that for my team. But A.T. here, she's a bucket. She's a great spark for us. Like whenever we're low we can always count on her to just pick us back up. She's just a person that I can always count on.