

# PAC-12 Women's Basketball Tournament

Saturday, March 3 2018

## Cori Close Monique Billings Jordin Canada UCLA

Oregon - 65, UCLA - 62

CORI CLOSE: As usual I always thank you as journalists for covering our sport and telling the stories of our players because it is so important for our game. Right now we're really hurting, but in the midst of hurting, I'm really proud.

They fought their butts off. They grew from the time in Eugene to here. They were relentless. They were locked in. They fought like crazy, and in the end, as I just shared with the Pac-12 Networks that when life kicks you, you've got to let it kick you forward, and it's going to start with me.

I'm going to be a different coach for them, because all I can ask for them is that they fight like that. So right now I'm going to let that kick me forward as a coach so that we're better when we have that opportunity in the NCAA Tournament. And they're going to fight, and we're all going to hold the mirror up and we're going to grow a few possessions better.

That's an Elite Eight level game. That's like -- we want to be playing deep into March. I'm so proud of their fight, and obviously, Oregon's a really good team, and they're going to make a deep run in the NCAA Tournament. But all I can ask is they give everything from their heart and their soul, and I couldn't ask for anything more on that front.

### **Q. Jordin, can you talk about the last possession, what you guys were looking for, what you were trying to get there?**

JORDIN CANADA: Well, we were trying to get isolation for a three or a quick drive to the basket. Obviously, didn't make a good decision trying to pass to Mo on the inside. I mean, that's basically what we just tried to do. Tried to get a quick two or wide open three. I just didn't make a good decision down the stretch.

CORI CLOSE: Jordin's always going to take responsibility, and she's going to take too much on with



that. But the job that she did on Sabrina defensively to play that aggressively, to make her catches that hard and to do it without fouling was remarkable.

I thought we had opportunities. We tried really hard to find Mo more inside. They were playing all those passing lanes. But in the end, that last play was not as clean, but I thought it was the plays leading up to that that we needed to get a little more production.

### **Q. Can you talk about the momentum swings in the game, because there were a lot of them. You guys bust out, I think with a 13-2 run, they come back. They obviously finish the game on a run. What was it about those swings tonight?**

MONIQUE BILLINGS: Well, we expected them to -- when we had our first punch, we expected them to punch back. So we knew that's how the game was going to be. So we just had to prepare our minds for that. We wanted to set the tempo, and I think that's how we came and we started out the game that way.

### **Q. You guys win points in the paint, second-chance points, you win the turnover battle. What didn't go right tonight aside from the score?**

CORI CLOSE: We missed some jumpshots. They were rolling the dice on our jumpshots and trying to really clog the lane. They hadn't played us a possession of player to player, and they went a lot of player to player defense and switched all the screens and just tried to keep us out of the lane.

Their main thing was to keep Jordin out of the lane. Even fouling intentionally in transition because they couldn't stop her once she was going downhill. But we got some open jumpshots. We needed to knock a few more down. We needed to have a few more ball movement so we could set some screens to free up some easier touches for Monique.

But we didn't hit shots. We were 0 for 7 on our last seven trips down the floor, and we gave up some -- we said we couldn't give up lay-ups or threes down the stretch. We could live with mid-range, contested jumpshots, but we had to take away straight line drives and threes, but we gave up a couple of those and went 0 for 7 on our trips and we couldn't get those buckets to fall.

So obviously it starts with me. I'm the head coach. I'm ultimately responsible. That's my job. So I'll go back and look at the film on that and figure out if I could have equipped our team in any different way to get us some easier shot opportunities and hopefully it will make me better.

We know it's just going to be a battle, so we have to stay locked in and mentally focused.

Buck stops with me.

**Q. There's lots of really, really great teams here in the Pac-12. But when you and Oregon go at it, it just goes to another level. Why do you two think the games you play are as thrilling and exciting and back and forth as they've been this season?**

MONIQUE BILLINGS: I would say both teams are just passionate and competitive. I feel a maximum amount of competitiveness out there on the floor, and both teams want it. We talked about earlier, too, we have to earn it. So clearly, I mean, they were the better team tonight. You just have to give credit to them.

JORDIN CANADA: Yeah, I agree with Mo. I think it's just about the energy and the passion and the fight, and who wants it more. I mean, this is a tough league and tough conference. We know every game's going to be a battle. But Oregon's a great team, great IQ, and they play their hearts out, and we play our hearts out.

At the end of the day, it just comes to who wants it more. Tonight we fought, but we didn't fight hard enough. Hat's off to Oregon for a great effort.

**Q. Mo and Jordin, you guys have played the last two weeks every game has been so close and come down to the final stretch. How does this prepare you guys for the tournament moving forward, and how have you guys learned from all those games?**

MONIQUE BILLINGS: I would just say we have to keep learning what we're doing well and what we can do better. There is always room for improvement. So we have to go back to the drawing board, every single one of us, and we have to learn how can we improve? How can we get better so these games aren't so close? Just being able to lock into a game plan along the stretch in the game and being able to finish out the game.

JORDIN CANADA: Yeah, I agree with Mo. Towards the end of the season, everybody's going to give you their best game, and we just have to stay locked in and mentally prepared for 40 minutes day in and day out, and that starts in practice. It starts with me and Mo and Kelly just bringing that energy throughout the rest of the season.