

PAC-12 Women's Basketball Tournament

Sunday, March 10 2019

Kelly Graves Sabrina Ionescu Ruthy Hebard Oregon

Stanford - 64, Oregon - 57

COACH GRAVES: Well, congratulations to Stanford. They earned it today. They were better than us. They were more focused, more determined. They played harder than us for the most part and they're certainly worthy champions, no question about it. They have the opportunity to go a long way and represent the Pac-12 well.

You know, disappointed. I thought we continued to play hard and got back in the game, and I was a little disappointed with our execution once we took the lead in the third quarter. Or the early fourth quarter. I thought, okay, this is our time that we usually shine. We just didn't make the plays when we needed to.

So doesn't derail our goals of doing well in the NCAA Tournament, going a long way. But, you know, we feel bad now. But hopefully we'll learn from this and move forward.

Q. Obviously they opened with the first eight and closed on a pretty good run once you took the lead there in the fourth. Sabrina, maybe more frustrated with the start or the finish, one or the other or just both?

SABRINA IONESCU: I mean, both, honestly. We didn't come out and we didn't have any fire and they came out, and you could tell they really wanted to beat us and we were on our heels for most of the game.

We fought back, but we didn't fight back hard enough and long enough to win this game.

Q. Ruthy, after the game in Maples, you had to have a sense they were going to come out pretty fired up. Is there a reason you guys weren't able to match that?

RUTHY HEBARD: I'm not sure. We knew they were going to come out fired up, but for some reason we didn't match that intensity, which we should have.



Q. Kelly, I think Sabrina hadn't hit a basket for the last eight minutes. I think Sabrina was it just other people weren't getting shots to fall, what was it in that fourth quarter that the execution wasn't there?

COACH GRAVES: Yeah, well, you put the ball in your best player's hand, and you let her work with another great player, and we did some good things to get back in the game with that formula. Just down the stretch, again, couple of -- we had a couple of decent looks, but a couple of timely turnovers didn't help.

But, you know, you kind of ride the ones that got you there, so to speak. A lot of our sets, quite frankly, just, you know, we weren't on point tonight. So we decided we're just going to kind of play ball in the middle of the floor, and screen and re-screen, and see if they would bite.

We didn't get the roll action tonight. They did a nice job on that, so we ended up taking tough, contested pull-ups. Didn't get the three game going either. But the best shooting team in the country shoots 33% for a game, you're just not going to win. That's credit to Stanford, credit to lack of execution on our part, and credit to just a night when we had some open looks and normally go and didn't make them. So it was all three.

Q. Kelly, the defensive address you made at the half, it looked like third quarter, beyond the momentum that they lost when Dodson and Smith went out, but it looked like you had them stifled offensively. Did you like what you were doing defensively, and was it a matter of not being able to sort of maintain that?

COACH GRAVES: Yeah, I mean, you know, we trapped a little bit more. We put more pressure on the basketball. It wasn't a ton of adjustments. I think we played harder. We were more active. I think we got hands on more balls in the second half. First half, it seemed like we just kind of went through the motions. So that was the main thing. I just thought we played a little harder and with a little more urgency, and when we do that, we can make things happen because we're really long.

So we created some turnovers and, you know, they were -- we didn't have many run outs. At least we had some in the second half a little bit.

Q. What can you take from that that you guys can use moving forward in the NCAA Tournament?

COACH GRAVES: Well, this is an NCAA Tournament game. This is an Elite Eight, Final Four, kind of game. Both teams are certainly capable of getting there. I think hopefully we learned that you can't come out -- I'm not saying we weren't ready to play. I think our kids were fired up, and we were prepared as much as you can do in one day, you know. But it's just that sense of urgency just wasn't there. You do that in the NCAA Tournament and you're done. It's a one-and-done deal, and it's hard.

If we want to achieve the goals that we want to achieve, we better be ready each and every night for three weeks.

Q. You still feel like your body of work is worthy of being in that Portland region?

COACH GRAVES: I'll leave that up to whomever. Listen, we've earned what we've gotten. You always want to win the tournament championship. But to me the real championship is the two-month grind. I'm sorry, the regular season championship, having to go nine games on the road over two months, battling injuries that everybody has to, and that should count for something.

You know, we're the number two RPI conference. And listen, we lost today to Stanford, and they're pretty good, and they beat Baylor who is right now the overall No. 1. So you're talking sure, I mean, but where they put us, hey, we'll be ready to go wherever they send us.

Q. Sabrina, any sense that playing a really physical overtime game last night against UCLA that you guys were tired?

SABRINA IONESCU: No, I don't think so. I know we recovered well. We got to sleep in and take care of our bodies, so, no, I don't think we're tired.

COACH GRAVES: We had a tough grinding game last year against UCLA in the semifinals that could have taken us out, and then we won the next day against Stanford by 20. That's not an excuse. We won't ever use that one.

Q. Sabrina, how tough is the next couple weeks because you don't play for probably two weeks from now. I know you like to be on the court. Is it a chance to rest your body and mind and get ready or is it, I want to get back out there right now to play again and erase this feeling?

SABRINA IONESCU: I think it's different for everybody. The people that need to take care of their bodies should take care of their bodies and take the rest that

they need in order to be a hundred percent in a week. And the people that want to get out there, can get out there. We just have to be smart about it, and our coaches trust us to be smart about it.

So it's going to depend on the player. But we have this week to get ready and prepare ourselves for the following weeks.