



2017 NCAA DIVISION I WOMEN'S BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

Second Round · UCLA vs. Texas A&M

Pauley Pavilion · Los Angeles, Calif.

Monday, March 20, 2017

POSTGAME QUOTES – UCLA

Cori Close, UCLA Head Coach:

Opening statement:

"As usual, thank you all for being here. You know how I feel about that and how important it is to grow the game, so thank you for your coverage and for making the sacrifice to stay late tonight. I'm proud of our team. I think I was more nervous than them. Even today at shoot-around, I went to Jordin (Canada) and asked if we were tight. I think in hindsight I was a little tight! We've been talking a lot about how we're not born for this; we're built for this. There was an ease about them because of the hard work and the habits that they have formed. We always say that the work done in the dark is what gets revealed in the light. We've talked the whole week that you have prepared for this, you're built for this, and all our hard work paid off. This game wasn't won tonight, it was won in August when we went to Australia to train; it was won in the conditioning in September; it was won when we didn't feel like going one more sprint or going beyond one more time. I couldn't be more proud of team. I loved the way we passed the basketball and shared it and really made each other better. I challenged them to pour everything out, everything they have, and not only that but to pour with, to be linked together. Usually it's not the more talented team that wins in the NCAA Tournament; it's the closer team, it's the one that does things together and makes plays for each other, and I thought we made the plays for each other."

On Kari Korver:

"She makes a hustle play all the time. That's what Kari Korver does. She brings her heart and soul to everything. Our culture reflects that, and I couldn't be prouder of her as a basketball player, but I'm even more proud of her as a human being, as a teammate and as someone who believes in our mission before there was much to show for it. I'm just incredibly grateful to be part of her college experience, and I feel like I'm

the luckiest coach around. I didn't tell her this, but I was trying to give her one more three, but we couldn't get the defensive rebound. I tried to get her in on that sideline play just to get her one more look, but we weren't able to get it for her. But it ended up working out because I wanted to bring her and Nicole (Kornet) and Dom (Williams) out one last time so they could be appreciated by the fans and so they could say thank you as well."

On both UCLA basketball teams making the Sweet 16:

"It's really fun. I got a text from the wives of our men's coaches today, from all four of the men's coaches. They have been incredibly supportive. Some of their guys in the middle of final exams came in to the game. It's really fun to play in a very supportive environment, where they're really rooting for us, and we're really rooting for them. It's been a really collaborative relationship and I'm really grateful for that. I'm really excited for our guys. We're with them and for them always, and I'm very appreciative of their support of us."

On playing UConn:

"We're playing in Sweet 16, and I think that really has to be delineated. So many people go 'Oh my gosh, we're playing UConn.' We're playing in a Sweet 16 game, and every week all year long we've said 'What did last weekend teach us, what do we need to get better on, and how can we have a growth mindset this week to be our best going into whatever our next game is.' It's really important to keep that focus. The mental framework is the most important thing going into this next game. They (UConn) are a great team; they obviously have our respect, but my team has my respect, and I need to lead them the same way that we've done it all year long. And that focus is on how do we need to grow, how do we play to our best given the opponent we have next, and we're going to play in a Sweet 16; we're not just going to play UConn."

On team's play in the postseason:

"I definitely think we're playing our best basketball in March. I thought we played really well in the conference tournament. We didn't shoot well against Oregon State, but I thought our momentum and trajectory was going in the right direction. I thought we've really been building ever since we lost at Oregon. Even at Oregon State. Even though we lost the game, we got better. Jordin went down and other people had to step up, and we grew in our teamwork and our confidence that other people were going to make plays. We weren't just going to watch Jordin play the game. I think it's been a steady trajectory, but I think we're playing our best basketball right here in March."

On rebounding and defense:

"I thought our defense was really solid. We wanted to take away the lobs, and I think they only had two of them to (Khaalia) Hillsman. I really thought our defense took away what they do best; they wanted to find Hillman on the assist. That's one of the reasons Knox has so many assists, on lobs to her, and I thought we took that away. Monique (Billings) was fearless and went right at her. When we went zone, we were able to double the low post and get out to shooters. We had a couple of lapses in our rebounding, but I thought overall it was really solid."

On winning by 32 points:

"My goal was for us to play our best basketball. Whether the score reflects it by 30 or by three, I don't really care. But my goal is to lead my players to play their best when the best is needed. I'm thrilled we were able to have a dominant performance, but I'm much more interested in us playing our best when the best was needed."

Kari Korver, #2 Guard:

On emotion during the game:

"I usually try not to show that much excitement, but I was pretty pumped up. It's cool to be able to play in the Sweet 16. It's my last game in Pauley and I was just really excited. My teammates did a great job in finding me and we were a really unselfish team so it was fun."

On having a hot handed game in college:

"I would say in high school I've had some games where I was hot. I've had a few games in college but this was probably my hottest college game."

On the UConn matchup:

"Super excited, obviously, we respect them. They're a great team, they've been for multiple years but any given night someone can win so I think we're just going in, we're going to give it all we have and we have an opportunity to win."

On what they need to improve on:

"I think we gave everything we had, our effort was phenomenal. I think something we can still grow on is our defensive rebounding. We talked about that and we still lost the battle of the boards and that's something we need to take care of going into UConn. But I think if we continue to give the type of effort we've given the last two games, it'll be a lot of fun."

On being subbed out at the end:

"It meant a lot. It's been really cool to play here at UCLA for five years. And just the support from the fans, support from my family. It's just really cool and I appreciate what coach did."

Jordin Canada, #3 Guard:

On team assists:

"I just felt that as a team we wanted to share the ball. We didn't get good shots, but great shots on offense. For me having 11 assists, that's just my job. I was looking for my teammates early on and my teammates were confident. They were knocking down shots, Kari went 7-for-10 from the 3-point line and I'm very proud of her but my teammates stepped up and made shots so I thought we did an excellent job executing in the half court sets. We just wanted to share the ball and we took time, we were patient. We knew they were going to try and pressure us in the second half to get us to turn over the ball but I thought we did a good job taking care of it."

On the UConn matchup:

"There's a reason why they're the number one team in the country. They execute pretty well, they're a really good basketball team, but at the moment we're focused on us and what we can

do to get better and what we can do to grow as a team. I think that's what we're focused on right now."

On what they need to improve on:

"I agree with Korver. The one thing we need to work on is defensive rebounding and also not having little mental lapses on defense. As well as when they start to go on their little run and we get a little tired and a little fatigued, I think that's something we need to work on. And on the offensive end it's executing down the stretch even though we're up by however many points, we still need to learn how to execute and find good shots no matter what the score is."

POSTGAME QUOTES – Texas A&M

Gary Blair, Texas A&M Head Coach:

Opening statement:

"Appreciate the media being here. This is the way women's basketball should be—well attended. Appreciate the coverage, but also appreciate UCLA for running a good sub-regional. Their administration, all the people who helped along the way, was very well done. We're used to doing this. This year, we didn't quite earn our way. The thing is, we've had 12 years of doing it the right way, going from a two seed to a six seed, and consistency is what we have. I've got two seniors (Taylor Cooper and Curtyce Knox) up here and a junior (Anriel Howard)—they're hurting. This is not the way they wanted to leave it. UCLA thoroughly outplayed us, just like Penn did for three quarters the other game. Were we out of gas? Was it our depth? None of that. Sometimes, compliment the team that won instead of finding out what's wrong with the team that lost. I used a John Wooden comment before that I saw on a wall up there—'Is it about the win or is it about the loss?' Basically, it wasn't about any of it. It's about how did you put your best effort out there. We tried hard in the second half. The execution of UCLA in the first half was more on their execution than on us. Yes, we missed shots—13 out of 50 from our one-through-four positions. Yesterday, we were 11-out-of-52 and won the ballgame.

(Khaalia) Hillsman did not have her best game offensively or defensively. I just decided it's time to go with the little ones and thank heavens Cori (Close) was nice enough to put (Monique) Billings over on the bench. With as many kids that are getting hurt right now, she did the smart thing. I'm not sure there's a whole lot of people that want to get on that plane and go to Bridgeport right now, but I tell you what, they've earned that right. And that's an honor to go up there and play Connecticut with that winning streak that they have."

"These two seniors (Cooper and Knox) right here are very special. All three of my seniors when I got my little walk-on (Alyssa Michalke) in at the end. They were special. They lived up to it. Curtyce only got one assist in the ballgame. That's her lowest of the whole year. Why'd she get one assist? We shot 13 out of 50 and I didn't have an inside game. It's a shame she had to end it this way, but she's got a next level that she will play. This one's (Cooper) going to get gray hair and go into coaching. This one over here on the end (Howard)? She can be an All-American. I'm telling you this. She can be an All-American if she can put all of her energy to go with ball skills and basketball IQ.

That is what UCLA beat us on, was ball skills, basketball IQ and I think Cleveland might have the wrong damn Korver, because that (Kari) Korver's pretty damn good. Give her a little bit of credit because her release—if I'm LeBron (James), I'm trying to get this one, too."

On Curtyce Knox:

"She's a great mother. Her boyfriend's on the taxi squad of the Rams. They both have a chance to have a pro career. More important, they have a chance to have a family. Most of these girls out here are not going to get rich playing in the WNBA or anything like that. There's just so few out there. When they get to the WNBA and all of those other places, that's Uber money for the guys and we're never going to get the pay equal, but to be able to get little kids like this a chance to go and play at the next level—it's going to be special. She's a little upset right now. You've got to understand, plus she's very quiet. Most important thing is, she's an Aggie, she's a graduate, she's working on her Master's and she's going to be an excellent pro, whether it's the WNBA or Europe. Or she's going to be in charge of that beautiful little baby that she has."

On Texas A&M's defense:

"That was the basic what we call '23.' That was just a block, 2-3 zone. A matchup, they shot us out of [it] and we tried something else. We were just slow moving on the pass. They did a great job of rotating and they knew where to find Korver and we just didn't cover out. You've got to move on the pass, you don't move on the catch. Give the kid credit. This is the way that she wanted to leave her last ballgame in Pauley Pavilion. Great kid, great story. Then we had to switch to a man, just about the rest of the way. When that happens, Hillsman couldn't guard Billings. That wasn't going to happen. We were just hoping to double down on the guards in the 2-3 zone if it went inside, but why does it need to go inside when they're shooting what they are outside. Had to try something. It didn't work."

On the difference between the Pac-12 and the SEC:

"I think you have better shooters in this league. We have more athletic post players, besides Billings. The girl up at Washington (Chantel Osahor), she's sort of like my Danielle Adams, who put a ring on my finger. You've got better shooters, but we've got more athletic kids. This is not my finest defensive team. I played more zone this year than I did in the last 13 years combined. So, that's the difference. In the SEC, it's a shot-blocking league, not a bank-robber (hands up) league."

Taylor Cooper, #3 Forward

On what UCLA did well:

"Well UCLA they have a great point guard; they have a great shooter in Korver. I just think that she shot the ball extremely well tonight and Canada got the ball to her open shooters and post players. They executed their offense very well and we just didn't defend it."

Anriel Howard, #5 Guard

On UCLA's inside game:

"Well all of their posts are pretty athletic. Besides South Carolina, I would say they're one of the best inside teams with Billings; she did really good job against us and she had a lot of counter moves that we couldn't guard, so she did really good tonight."

Curtyce Knox, #11 Guard

On what UCLA did well:

"Well UCLA they have a great point guard; they have a great shooter in Korver. I just think that she shot the ball extremely well tonight and Canada got the ball to her open shooters and post players. They executed their offense very well and we just didn't defend it."