

**April 8, 2008**



Tennessee – 64  
Stanford – 48

An interview with:



THE MODERATOR: We're joined up here on the podium by Stanford head coach Tara VanDerveer, as well as student-athletes Candice Wiggins and Jayne Appel.

Following a brief opening statement, we'll entertain questions for the student-athletes for probably about eight minutes, and at that point we'll let them go back to the locker room and take questions for Coach.

COACH VANDERVEER: First I want to compliment and congratulate Tennessee on a national championship. And I thought they came out, they were extremely aggressive, and they were a very physical team.

And, secondly, I'd like to compliment and congratulate Stanford and Jayne and Candice for a fabulous season, playing their hearts out. Doing the very best they could and taking us to the Final Four and this championship game.

The game itself was I don't think indicative of the great season we've had. We did not play well. We did not handle the pressure well. Obviously the turnovers absolutely killed us.

But I'm so proud of Candice and so proud of Jayne and just really enjoyed working with this team all year. And it doesn't change tonight.

THE MODERATOR: Again, questions for the student-athletes.

**Q. Candice and Jayne, how did you guys feel going into the game? Tennessee came out really aggressive. Did you guys feel like energy-wise you were in good shape and they just really came at you?**

CANDICE WIGGINS: You know, we knew they were going to be pressuring us and that's their style of play. They really rely a lot on their defense to get them going. And they're big. They're in passing lanes. So you can't have any sloppy passes. And I think that's what happened in the beginning of the game.

**Q. Candice, no matter what you guys tried, you didn't seem to have an answer. You had trouble getting the ball in bounds. Had trouble -- back on your heels against the press. Is that as ferocious as a defensive effort as anybody has thrown at you this season?**

CANDICE WIGGINS: They were just as aggressive when we played them in December. But I think the national championship is at stake. Of course, they're going to be, go really hard and go all out. You have Nicky in the top and she's just really big at the top of the press and really aggressive.

**Q. Candice, can you talk about it's over, your career's over and how you feel emotionally?**

CANDICE WIGGINS: I don't think it maybe has set in yet. But I just know that I told the guys in the locker room that I couldn't be any prouder of them. I wouldn't want to be on any other team in the country, any other team. And it happens that we ended our season with a loss and that hurts. Because we wanted it. And this team is

a special team. And just beautiful people. And I've been so honored just to be on this team.

So I think it maybe hasn't quite hit me yet. But I think we should celebrate our season. I think to win the way we did, we did it right, and I'm so proud of this group.

**Q. Jayne, can you talk a little bit about the pressure and what was going on in the post and how you think you guys responded offensively things weren't clicking like they had been clicking like in games coming into this?**

JAYNE APPEL: I think we just had a tough time matching up with their size and the back court with Nicky, like Candice said up front is really tough.

They're a really very athletic team and I thought we hung with them until they made a little run. They got up 9 or 10 on us. We stuck with them I think with that 9 or 10 gap for pretty much the rest of the game until the end. So I think we were just kind of playing catch-up since that run.

**Q. This is for both of you ladies. I know this is a fresh, tough loss. Candice, you mentioned it was a little bit -- you were seeing turnovers and sloppy passes. Where do you think the breakdown happened in this game? It doesn't seem indicative of your last 23 wins. What do you think was the breakdown?**

CANDICE WIGGINS: I think just really aggressive. They were jumping, they were in passing lanes. You have to credit their defense. And usually when people are pressuring you you have to be able to get by them. I think we didn't really start attacking the pressure until later in the game. I think it would have really helped us if we started attacking maybe a little bit earlier.

**Q. Jayne, could you follow up on that?**

JAYNE APPEL: I feel the same way in the sense that we needed to attack them a little bit more and take it to the basket. And obviously break their press, first of all. And I think that was just -- they were very aggressive coming out and we didn't have much to counter it.

**Q. Candice, to what degree do you think there were missed shots, missed opportunities?**

CANDICE WIGGINS: I think looking at shooting percentage, it was not a terrible shooting night, but I just think we were not really -- we didn't

really have -- our tempo wasn't in our favor. It wasn't at our pace. And for whatever reason, you know, we just -- I think we could have controlled it better.

**Q. For both of you, did they show you anything that surprised you or did you expect them to try to choke off the high post, low post and do the trap? Were you expecting all that?**

CANDICE WIGGINS: We were very well prepared for this game. I think our coaches did an excellent job in scouting them. Nothing was really new. You just get in the game and you've got to play. And I think you can't second-guess your passes. You can't second-guess yourselves and they just did a great job on defense.

**Q. Candice, were you trying to get to the free throw line at all? You never -- you didn't take any shouts from the free throw line tonight. That's got to be pretty unusual for you?**

CANDICE WIGGINS: I'm sorry, I don't understand the question.

**Q. Were you thinking strategically aggressively --**

CANDICE WIGGINS: Oh, I mean, yeah. I was thinking to attack, I wanted to attack off the dribble. They were really pressuring me, just trying to find gaps and make contact, yes, absolutely.

**Q. Candice, I just want to ask you about this sway of emotions losing this game and maybe just in a few hours a dream of yours will come true with the WNBA draft and possibly being taken pretty high?**

CANDICE WIGGINS: Sorry, what's the question?

**Q. Just the swing of emotions from this game and another dream of yours coming true in a few hours?**

CANDICE WIGGINS: Well, I think I'm just trying to cope with just what transpired. So I haven't really thought about that yet. Obviously it's a new start for me and a new career.

**Q. For either of you, you came back in December, you were down 11, and did you keep that in the back of your head? Did this game feel at all like the December game or did**

**it just from the start feel like Tennessee was playing at a different level?**

JAYNE APPEL: I think that we came out and, you know, like what I said before, they made that 9-, 10-point run on us. I remember Candace Parker hit the layup and then she got another steal. We kept reminding ourselves we were down 11 last time. At halftime we said we just played a really horrible half, let's start the second half and get it going and kind of fight back the second half.

So we definitely kept that in mind. Like I said, we had to weather the storm a little bit better.

**Q. Obviously you guys had success against them earlier in the season. Did you notice them do anything different offensively and defensively on the court?**

JAYNE APPEL: You know, I think they did the same thing. I think we just handled it a little bit better in the first game. We played a lot better. It's kind of tough having a bad night on a night like this.

But I think they played a great game and they played a great game in December, also.

**Q. Candice, before the game, from across the way it was fun to kind of watch you guys sit around on the floor there and huddle. Were you guys kind of sharing some memories and talking about the special season or what was going on?**

CANDICE WIGGINS: Yes, you know, it kind of became a ritual since the Maryland game. We just gathered together and really just reflected on such a great season and, more importantly, it's like we wanted to just enjoy the moment. And, just like I said, I'm just crying and things like that, it's because I'm so happy -- I'm sad it's over because of how much I love this program, this institution, this team and my coaches and teammates. It's that amazing.

This season, I could not ever have dreamed of this. So it's more than I could ever ask for. I think everyone kind of felt the same way.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you both. Questions for Coach.

**Q. Can you talk about how prepared your team looked for the pressure to start the game. You said they came out really aggressive. I asked the girls how you felt they came out. What was your impression?**

COACH VANDERVEER: Well, I mean, we know -- we know what to expect. We can't simulate that in practice. They were extremely aggressive. It was a much more physical game than the game in December.

I mean, bodies were all over the floor the whole night. And I think just a lot of our -- I thought we made a lot of uncharacteristic turnovers and some very bad decisions.

I mean, defensively, you know, I thought we actually did a decent job. Scoring 64 points was good, but we just had -- we were not able to run anything offensively. People could not get open, whether it was against their press or whether it was against their half court defense. You know, just the ability to put the ball on the floor and go by someone. There were times I thought we got it into Jayne. I thought we did miss some shots, and we missed some free throws.

In order for us to win this game, we had to play a lot better. And we didn't play well enough to win and I thought they did the things that give us trouble. And they have the bodies and they have the experience to do that. And a lot of teams don't.

**Q. The last few minutes of the game, it seemed like the team wasn't really fouling on purpose, but then when they did it was when the shot clock was almost down.**

COACH VANDERVEER: Yeah, that was a bad one.

**Q. What was going on there?**

COACH VANDERVEER: The whole game was not one where there was -- we struggled in basically every facet of the game. I mean, we wanted to foul sooner. And then when we didn't, we didn't want to foul late. Candice's foul, I think you're talking about.

I think their pressure and their aggressiveness, the number of turnovers that we had, really took us out of everything we were trying to do.

**Q. Did you feel like Tennessee was playing any differently this game than earlier in the season, and if so, how?**

COACH VANDERVEER: I'm sorry, can you rephrase that for me?

**Q. You had success earlier in the season against the Vols. So I'm wondering if**

**you felt like their game was different, if they were able to capitalize on their play a little bit different in this game versus earlier in the season, or if it was the same type of play. Just wondered what your feelings were on that.**

COACH VANDERVEER: Like we just -- their pressure was much more intense this time. They pressed and trapped basically the whole game this time, which they didn't do at all. We didn't have trouble with -- their full court press was minimal last time. Their three-quarter trap was pretty minimal.

I think that in a way what really hurt us was how we finished the Connecticut game. And it was like Tennessee just picked up where Connecticut left off. The clock ran out in the Connecticut game, but Tennessee is actually bigger and more athletic and could get hands on balls. And we just really -- we just made too many mistakes to give ourselves a chance. Our turnovers were -- just too many of them.

And I just think that if you want to know, a lot of the difference, this was a much more physical game than the December game, just in terms of how the game was played.

**Q. You've got a lot of kids back. How valuable is this experience you've had through this weekend all ends of the spectrum?**

COACH VANDERVEER: I think this is really hard. It will hit our team and I know it will hit Candice and it will hit me probably more tomorrow. I mean, to have a chance to win a national championship and you just feel like, well, we wasted an opportunity.

But there's 300 and how many other teams, coaches that would like to be sitting here. And I have thoroughly enjoyed every single minute of working with this team, including tonight, when we were not playing well, when everything was going wrong, people really worked hard to just kind of stay together and not get upset with themselves or their teammates or their coaches. And it was very frustrating. But I'm really proud.

And for our young players, you know, we needed to play better. We needed to handle the ball better. We needed to rebound better. We needed to make our free throws. We needed to be able to execute offensively. We didn't do all those things.

But for Jayne -- I looked out there and I saw a lot of seniors for Tennessee. We have one senior that plays a lot. We have basically

freshmen and sophomores who can only look back and say wow. It was awesome. And they learned how to do things. And to get to the Final Four and play in this game, I'm thrilled for our team.

**Q. In that vein, do you think their experience of knowing how to win a national championship, the intensity level it takes to win, do you think that might have been the difference tonight that they've been here before?**

COACH VANDERVEER: I definitely think that Tennessee has more experience, and they have seniors that this is their last game too. We have one senior that this is her last game and multiply that times five. Bobbitt is a senior. Hornbuckle. Anosike. Parker. They played really well.

And I think defensively I thought we played well. Offensively, it was extremely frustrating. But a credit to them.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.  
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