

Stanford Cardinal National Championship Postgame Press Conference - Dec. 4, 2011

Head Coach Paul Ratcliffe - Ninth season

Camille Levin - Senior Defense/Midfield

Teresa Noyola - Senior Midfield

Emily Oliver - Sophomore Goalkeeper

On focus for this game

Camille Levin: We didn't think about any other game this year, it was about this game. We knew we had to come out and keep possession and play our game.

On lone goal in game

Teresa Noyola: It was going to be the difference at the end of the day because you don't get that many opportunities at this stage. Camille played a great ball and that shows how connected we are. I knew exactly what she was going to do.

On the cross that set up the goal

CL: I had gotten the cross blocked before that second cross and the girl slid and intercepted and I had seen [Teresa] run into the box before the block. So I just hit the cross hoping she would be there.

On setting up scoring play

TN: I scored a goal like that against Washington. Sometimes the players lose you when you go to the weak side and I don't think many people expect me to go back post for a header.

On making the big play

TN: What I feel right now is such thankfulness to my teammates that we finally did it. This team deserves it. We've worked extremely hard but has also shown great character to not let the heartbreaks of the last two seasons catch up. I said that before the game I said 'It's already incredible that we're here, first of all. Because not many teams can bounce back from heartbreaks like that. That in itself shows great character.

On playing all over the field

CL: I just want to do what I can wherever I am on the field. When I play in the back I like to get forward and get involved in the attack and play my role.

On last two years' losses

CL: Both years were heartbreaking. Since last year we've been working for this moment to win this game. It's been a long journey, it's been a lot of hard work and everybody was dedicated to

it from the staff. From the athletic trainer to every single player on this team and I don't think there are words to describe how great a feeling it is to win this last game.

On Emily Oliver's big save

TN: She does that every day in practice. She's done that in many games we've played. It doesn't surprise me. She's been huge back there, her presence, her leadership. I'm glad she got recognized.

On making save on volley shot

Emily Oliver: That's something we've worked on all season. So all the training paid off. Everything I do with Jay [Cooney] and the other keepers, it's a great environment.

On last 20 mins as a goalkeeper

EO: It was the longest 20 minutes of my life. I have complete confidence in my backline and my midfielders and the whole team really to deal with those situations. I think it's a stage that we've been to before. The whole team handled it well. I think we played a really smart last 20 minutes. It was high pressure and I'm sure everyone's hearts were beating out of their ears. But Duke did a great job pressuring, so credit to them.

On last minute of game

EO: That was a long minute.

CL: They had a few corner kicks in the last minute. They were right in our half, so we really just had to stay calm and clear the ball at that point. Get it away from Emily.

On mental preparedness for positions

CL: I don't really have to mentally prepare. I'm ready to go at any moment and do what's best for the team.

On close play at the top of the box

EO: Kelley Cobb is a great player so she was on top of us all the time. She came in hard, completely clean, it was a close one but I think we handled it fine in the end. I jumped up, so I'm in the air and I knew I was pretty close to the edge of the 18 so I just kind of blocked it with my body instead. I was just trying to get it out of her path, I wasn't trying to clear it necessarily because at that point it was a difficult clearance, but I just wanted to get it out of her path. That was my thought process at the time.

On double team during goal

CL: Chioma Ubogagu played a nice little slip pass and I looked to cross it initially but I thought Katie [Trees] did a good job with the defense, but I was on the ground as well. I just got up as fast as I could and played the ball into the box where [Teresa] was.

On goalkeepers mentality

EO: I think that like a lot of people I'm completely different off the field than I am on it. Because if I lived like that, I don't think I'd have many friends. We have fun in training all the time. The goalkeepers, we like to joke, well other people like to joke that we're a cult. Jay is awesome, Aly Gleason and Lindsay Dickerson, they're some of my best friends and we just have a great time.

On being the seniors to make the big play

TN: It's absolutely fitting. I started playing with Cami, how old were we 14 or 15?, on ODP teams and I knew that from the first time I played with her I wanted to play with this girl as long as I possibly can and it's just fitting that we would combine for the winning goal.

On strategy defending Duke corners

EO: I think we're a very intelligent team in that we kind of know what needs to be shut down at what time and when the players play alert it just makes my job easier. They know what we all have to do. So I think in that respect, and we go over them before every game, so we were well prepared for set pieces by the coaching staff.

Head Coach Paul Ratcliffe

Opening Statement

Paul Ratcliffe: First of all I want to congratulate Duke. They're a well coached team and have a tremendous spirit about them and really made us earn this national championship. You know the last twenty minutes were the longest I've encountered in a game for many years. So I'll congratulate them first. This win caps off four tremendous years at Stanford. The last four years, this team has been incredible and they've shown such great character to have all those setbacks and come back and fight through and achieve our goal of winning a national championship.

On game finishing 1-0

PR: I had a feeling that would happen because they have a great defense. They're very hard to break down and score on and we saw that today. Then we have a strong goalkeeper and a strong back line, so it's not easy to score on us. It was a very tight match and luckily we made some big plays and the goal we scored, you got to feel sorry for Duke because that's unstoppable. I want to say they blocked her cross twice and she still got back up and crossed it to the back post, it's so hard to stop that. Then the back post header, tremendous goal to win the game.

On winning first national title

PR: I'm really proud we broke through and won the national championship. Stanford has a tradition of excellence in athletics and academics. So we want to keep that going on the soccer stage. So I'm really proud. Now the pressure's on and we have to keep this rolling.

On Camille's cross

PR: Cami has an unbelievable spirit about her. She's a competitive, driven person that deserves success. I had a feeling that she would get her success in this final four.

On Cami's defense

PR: The way to describe her is winner. She is a winner. That's why it's been hard to not win a national championship with her on the team, it took until this year. I had a private word with her and it seems that much sweeter to finally do it senior year.

On Teresa's goal

PR: Teresa has done that before in big games. Because she's a small player, she has to go to the back post a bit more and sneak away from them. If she gets in a confrontation for height she's going to lose that battle. She usually she darts for the near post or the top of the near post and asks for the feed to finish, or she'll go all the way to the back post and put it away.

On if team wins without being here before

PR: It's hard to say. The hard part is that, I feel like people criticized us a little bit for not winning it the past couple years and I don't feel like that's the case. We played great teams when we lost. We played hard-fought games. Today, Duke did the same thing. I thought they were a great team and we came out on the winning end but their girls are fantastic and it's a difficult game in the end.

On pressure of coming close before

PR: We're all competitive people. For me, I always want to achieve goals and we set that goal for us as a team, so I'm thankful we're able to cross that off our list. But now that we've done it and realize what a wonderful experience it is, I think we're going to want to replicate this again.

On sympathy for Duke

PR: There's no doubt about it. I want to be a graceful winner because I've been on the other side of it and it's not fun. But they were a tremendous team, fought hard and really made us earn it.

On postgame conversation

PR: I told them I'm very proud of them and that all their hard work has paid off and they're going to go down in history as the first team to win a national championship for women's soccer at Stanford.

On travel compared to other clubs

PR: No, it was out of my mind. We've dealt with that in the past. The big thing was the Sunday game and trying to adjust to the time difference. With the Sunday game you're getting up for breakfast and it's 6 a.m. our time. I think in the last couple championship matches we've looked sluggish and tired. So that was an issue that we talked about and tried to readjust to get used to the time change a little earlier and I think that really helped us and benefitted the team at the end.

On defense and stopping Duke late

PR: I think the best way to stop Duke's attack is to have the ball; the first half we did a pretty good job of keeping possession and dictating the tempo and that's what we needed to do. In the last twenty minutes Duke had the ball a lot and we were under pressure. So we had them drop in and weather the storm because Duke has a potent offense. If you give them the ball they're going to find ways to attack you and they did.

On the College Cup

PR: I thought it was a first class event. Kennesaw State did an amazing job hosting. The facility is incredible. I can't say enough about it. I think the players really enjoyed the whole atmosphere and so did the coaches because we felt really special here. We appreciate everything the host did for us.

On biggest strength from the game

PR: The most important thing for me, was I thought our outside backs we're going to be the difference in the game and it turned out that way at the end of the day. Their back four is very solid, their three in midfield a hard-working players and we needed to get our outside backs forward to create numerical advantage outside and try to get in crosses and get in the box. We didn't do it as much as I'd have liked, to be totally honest. We did a few times in the first half we did a little bit and then when Cami got behind on that cross.

On seniors

PR: I'm going to miss them, no doubt about that. Kristy Zurmuhlen, she's just a fiery competitor. She's got the heart of a lion and I'm so proud of what she's done. She scored some critical goals in this playoff run and she's just a great story. Cami Levin, another champion for me, great soccer player. She can play anywhere on the field and she's a winner. Teresa Noyola, one of the more creative players that I've ever coach and great brain for the game. She's like a coach on the field and her touch with the ball, it's unbelievable what she's done for this program. Lindsay Taylor is one of the great goal scorers I've coached, another fiery competitor. That's the thing about these four seniors, they were very competitive people, they love soccer, have a passion for soccer and they're great leaders and they care about all their teammates. It's really fitting that they should win the national championship because they're such great people and leaders and they really led this whole group. I give them all the credit.

On sending seniors off with a championship

PR: There's no doubt about it. For me I do this all for the players. It's not about me at all. That's what I try to do is get them together and I want them to run the show. I want them to run the team. I guide them in the right direction but at the end of the day you have to have great internal leadership. I never usually have four captains, but this year I decided to and it definitely worked out.

On recruiting senior class

PR: I don't think it's ever a slam dunk easy sell for the best players in the country when we were recruiting them. The tricky part for me was convincing admissions that I found two of the best players in the country in Teresa Noyola and Lindsay Taylor that were actually across the street from Stanford. We were recruiting nationally and I had to convince admissions I found two players and they proved me right here. Kristy Zurmuhlen is from New Hampshire, who thought you'd find a great player in New Hampshire when you're looking nationally? She's a diamond. Cami Levin is from southern California and played for the Slammers, great club down there. She had fantastic coaching growing up and she's definitely been a diamond. It was hard to sell her on Stanford; I had to work hard to get her. But I'm thankful they all came to Stanford and trumped it up. I think they've benefitted from everything at Stanford, the academics and athletics.