

# NCAA Women's 1st and 2nd Rounds: Stanford

Friday, March 16, 2018  
Stanford, California



**Karl Smesko**  
**Rosemarie Julien**  
**Taylor Gradinjan**  
**China Dow**  
Florida Gulf Coast Eagles

THE MODERATOR: We'll get started with an opening statement from coach.

KARL SMESKO: We're just really excited to be part of this, to be here at Stanford, what a great university and a place known for women's basketball and for us to be a part of it is a big thrill for all of us. We feel like we have earned our spot to be here and we're going to prepare to compete at the highest level we can compete at and we know we play a great team and we're looking forward to the challenge.

THE MODERATOR: Open it up for questions for the student-athletes.

**Q. Sophie said that in trying to think of a team that maybe compares to you guys they played maybe a mini Georgia. Does Missouri remind you of anybody you guys have played?**

KARL SMESKO: Well, they have different styles offensively and defensively, but offensively they execute at a real high level, they're maybe a lot like a DePaul. They can shoot the 3 and still score inside. Defensively, they're very physical, even though they don't play as many passing lanes, so they're maybe a little bit more like Jacksonville in terms of they're not afraid to bump you a little bit when you cut and they're not afraid of contact. So those will be a couple combination of teams that might fit the style a little bit.

**Q. Obviously Missouri's probably not the first team you guys have played this season that is a bigger team than you are, how have you had success going up against teams that have height, especially multiple six footers and above?**

KARL SMESKO: Well we have to be willing to be physical and we have to be willing to help one another. We got to have all five people competing on the defensive glass, looking for somebody to block out and controlling that block out as long as possible and

pursuing the ball. Obviously their posts are their second and third leading scorers and they're both very good players. We're not in a situation where we just go one-on-one, we need all five players doing their job to make it difficult to get the ball inside and understand what our game plan is to try and limit their opportunities.

**Q. Stanford hosts almost every year and sometimes there are women on the team who have never been to California, so sometimes we ask that, I know it seems a little silly, but what have you guys been able to do and have y'all been here before and also what's it like to be playing at Stanford that has a storied women's basketball tradition, as well as just athletics in general here.**

ROSEMARIE JULIEN: I've been in California but not northern California so it's a little bit different because it's colder. But it's a great experience being here. It's a beautiful campus, a very big campus, we're not used to that because we have a small campus, so it's a good experience playing in this gym. It's big, nice, comfortable.

TAYLOR GRADINJAN: I've also been to California, I've actually been to San Francisco, but as far as what we're going to do today later this evening, we're going to go down town San Francisco for lunch and stuff like that and I know the team's really looking forward to it. Then obviously just playing in this gym it's just a great opportunity, it's big, so I mean we hope that we can win and do great things here and actually get a good crowd for everything that's going to happen here, so I just think it's just an awesome opportunity for us.

CHINA DOW: I would just say that it's a good opportunity to be here and see, we didn't get to see much and we'll get to see a lot later on, so I'm just looking forward to seeing it later on.

**Q. Taylor, as proficient an of a three-point shooter as you are, for your team and how many 3s you guys shoot as a team to beat a team like DePaul and to win your conference championship game in games where you don't shoot as many or maybe they try to take it away a little bit more, how does that kind of show that you guys are still able to get your offense without necessarily just firing away from deep as often as you guys do otherwise?**

TAYLOR GRADINJAN: I like to think our team is pretty versatile. We have a lot of girls that are very talented and they can shoot, they can also drive and with that comes a defense where you have to take away the 3 and when you have to take away the 3 you can't be as good at helping on drives and that, so I think that the way our offense is set up, as long as we're high and wide and we have space that our drivers can do their job to beat their person, even if the 3 is not open as often.

**Q. Rosemarie, when this was announced the other night, didn't know a lot about Missouri, but I think I showed you the stats for Sophie and you kind of went, Wow. Now that you've had a chance to look at her, what do you think about your matchup against her?**

ROSEMARIE JULIEN: To be honest, I don't think that that really has anything to do with it. I'm very confident and I'll have a really good chance of wowing everyone and showing them what our team is all about, so. Kudos to her, but I'm ready for tomorrow's game.

**Q. Have you met Tara Vanderveer previously?**

KARL SMESKO: I have previously. I'm pretty sure this is accurate, we played them when she won her 900th game. I know she's over a thousand now, but that was down in Mexico and she was very gracious and obviously she's a coaching legend, a Hall of Famer, but I can tell you, meeting her again this morning how courteous she was, she insisted on showing me all the facilities and invited me up to the office. I had a practice plan to finish up, so I didn't go there, but she was just really gracious and a great host and everything that you ever hear about her.

**Q. China, y'all like playing these power five schools and taller kids don't. Y'all get into it a little extra hard and what do you think about the matchup?**

CHINA DOW: I think the matchup will be good. Like coach said, we need five players locked in and helping each other because that's what it's going to take to beat a team like this, because we are shorter. But at the same time we do have fight in us, I think everybody sees that. So the more we fight and push like we'll be okay, as long as we get help from other teammates. So we play together and stay strong and we should pull out the win.

**Q. Sophie is such a good scorer, it's also the efficiency that kind of tends to stand out to a lot of people that she's able to put up a lot of points without necessarily taking the volume of shots that others around the nation take. What are some of the things that you kind of noticed about her that are going to be challenges for you guys defensively in terms of stopping her?**

KARL SMESKO: One, she's really active and to be six-one and be able to shoot the 3 so well with that kind of length is a challenge, but she's always moving, she reads her screens, she's really smart, and as you said, she's a willing passer, she's not the big time scorer that doesn't look to get other people involved, she moves the ball. She's really good at drawing fouls and initiating and getting contact and getting the call her way, so she's just a smart player who is really talented and can score in a variety of ways. They posted her up a lot this year as well, not just had her shoot 3s. And she scores in conversion a lot too. So she finds different ways to keep putting pressure on your defense.

**Q. You guys shoot more 3s than any other team in the country, put up over 1,100 this year. What's your philosophy when it comes to 3-pointers and how it fits into this offense?**

KARL SMESKO: Well, we definitely like to shoot 3s. We like to have as many people on the floor as possible that can make them and we want to spread you out and make you have to guard every inch of floor. I think we're pretty selective in terms of we understand what a good 3 is and what a bad 3 is and we just want to work together as a team to get a great shot. If it's a 3, great, if it's a drive and get fouled, great. We just really are more concerned about what our shot selection is and what our likely efficiency is from that shot. That gets defined through the years and our players all know immediately, was that a good shot or was that a bad shot.

**Q. With somebody who is as versatile and can kind of do it all like Sophie can, is there kind of a comparable player that you've had to kind of phase your game plan against in that regard?**

KARL SMESKO: Well we played some great players, we played some All-Americans, we have gone against Mitchell at Ohio State, DePaul has some great players, South Dakota State, the Miller kid is probably pretty similar to the Cunningham kid. In terms of their versatility and being great shooters as well. So we have faced really good players and Rose has always done an outstanding job on teams' best player and players and we have other players that when Rose needs a break that have been up to the challenge when called upon this year. We understand it's a big challenge, but I feel confident in our team that they're going to compete and they're going to at least make things difficult, you're going to have to work for it.

**Q. Rosemarie, I heard that you might not follow the NBA all too closely, but there's an NBA team here that loves to drop 3s as well and it's on your bio that your favorite athlete is Steph Curry. What goes into that, I know, you're not going to get a**

**chance to catch the Warriors while you're out here?**

ROSEMARIE JULIEN: I wish. No, I don't think I'll be going to catch it, but, yes, Stephen Curry is my favorite. If his shot is not on he'll continue shooting and that's what coach always tells me to do, because I'm a great shooter and you have to believe in that and have the confidence and no matter what big shots will be there for you to knock it down.

**Q. You said on flight over yesterday that the game plan was almost in. How was practice last night, how do you feel going in, the game plan obviously is firmly in at this point and how do you feel about the kids going in?**

KARL SMESKO: Well I feel like we have a plan and we know what we want to get accomplished. I think practices have been really good. We have had everybody's attention, they're excited about this opportunity and we all want to have a great showing and we really, we want to win and move on and advance. And we feel like we have a team that's capable of winning and we're looking forward to trying to see how well we can play.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thank you.