

**March 8, 2012**



California – 77

Stanford – 71

An Interview with:

## **COACH MONTGOMERY HARPER KAMP**

**COACH MONTGOMERY:** Well, second half was a little more fun, for us, at least. I said from the get-go that I thought the team that had played the day before was going to have a little bit of an advantage: I didn't say that because we got by, and I really believed that. I think Washington showed the same thing simply because any nerves that you have, you've gotten out of your system.

You've shot on the basket. You've played on the floor, and it looked that way a little bit to me on us in the first half. We appeared nervous and not very sure of ourselves.

But we go in at halftime, and I said, look, we've turned it over 14 times. 14 times. It's an inordinate number of turnovers. We're 0 for 4 from the foul line and we're only down 7. We do anything right and we can get right back in this game.

I think at that point we started to play the kind of basketball that we have the majority of the year. We started sharing the ball. We started trusting one another. Guys start making shots, which at the end of the day, that's kind of the end of the story anyway. If you make shots, you're going to play harder on defense and have a chance.

Jorge made a couple. Allen made a couple, but the ball was moving and that was critical. Once we made up the deficit it went back and forth and we got up a little bit.

We really needed this win. There's no question. It gives us 24. It gets us to the semis. Losing three at the end of the year would not be a good resume builder for the next tournament. So this was a big win for us.

We're pleased. Stanford is good. We knew that. They're big, they're physical, athletic, and they're well-coached. They defend well. We really had to dig deep, and I thought we did that.

**Q. Harper, you said after the game on Sunday that your team played soft. How would you rate the toughness of your team today?**

**HARPER KAMP:** I think it was a lot better. I think we knew that they were going to be as physical as they were in the last game, and our goal was just to play through that. Not worry about calls or anything like that. Just keep playing and play together. I think we did well tonight.

**Q. Pretty dramatic contrast between halves, 54 points in the second half. What was the key for being so much more efficient compared to the first half?**

**COACH MONTGOMERY:** Well, they had 41 in the second half. So I just think whatever, we weren't making shots in the first half. I mean, a lot of it, as I said before and said many times, a lot of it just doesn't look as good when shots aren't going down.

But I thought more than anything else, for lack of a better term, we started to trust one another. We started to make each other better players. So guys were getting the ball, on balance, in rhythm. Then a ball went down. That was like oh, wow, you know. Then the next ball went down. So we got some confidence off of that, which we hadn't had lately.

I just thought we shared the ball better. We only had three turnovers. We had 17 assists on 26 field goals, so the ball was being shared. In the second half, we only turned it over three times.

So we were getting shots. I think that, as much as anything, was just the fact that there was ball movement and, like Harper said, we weren't as concerned about, hey, I can't make the cut because maybe I'm getting bumped a little bit here. That kind of got into our heads last Sunday and we just started getting to where we tried to get so we

could get to the next thing.

**Q. Can you talk about your seniors again? What they gave you in the second half, particularly. Also you didn't sub much in the second half. You talked earlier in the week that you win the game you're playing. Are you concerned about what your fatigue will be tomorrow?**

COACH MONTGOMERY: Yeah, I couldn't worry about tomorrow. Fact of the matter is I think there are certain people we have to have on the floor to be successful. I'd love to get Harper more rest. I felt like Stanford was good enough individually athletically that there were some match-ups that weren't very favorable with some of the guys off the bench.

I really trust Harper to just about do and guard whoever. It's just like okay, Harper, you've got this guy. He's going to do this, this, and this, go get him. Then you worry about what others are not doing.

It's not like he's immune to mistakes, but he's going to be where he's supposed to be more often than not. Jorge generally, too. We put Jorge on Mann because we wanted him to help. We wanted him to guard everybody. It only hurt us once when Mann cut to the basket, and we kind of lost sight of him.

Generally speaking, Jorge's where he needs to be most of the time. So, I mean, they looked like all conference players, seniors. They looked like what they have been. That's what it takes for us to win. We need to develop more depth. I'm just not sure we can do it right now.

**Q. Mike, could you talk about Justin's job on Chasson Randle? I know he got a lot of help too, but...**

COACH MONTGOMERY: No, he accepted the challenge. He wanted it. I think Justin athletically is one of our better athletes. One of our more capable guys. Probably in some ways he's better when he knows this is my guy and I've got to guard him, as compared to I've got to get off in here, and help here. He's better when he just has an assignment, and I think that's what happened, generally speaking.

We did a pretty good job on the pick-and-rolls. Zimmermann would probably like to play us again, some more. He really played well for them. Hitting three again, and really had a good game. 2 for 4 from three.

So I thought we did a pretty good job of containing him, but it starts with effort. Defense is heart and effort. You've got to want to do it, because it's not a lot of fun sometimes.

**Q. Twice Stanford hit two big three-pointers in the second half, and Jorge came right back and hit a three to answer both times within a two-minute span. How does a team react to something like that and feed off of it?**

HARPER KAMP: Yeah, that's the kind of play we expect from Jorge. It's not surprising. I think he's been able to do that all year. The last few years, as well. He's got a lot of fight in him. I think that was the key tonight. Our goal is just to show the other guys how much fight it's going to take to keep winning ballgames.

**Q. Pretty dramatic contrast in you. Sunday you were quite emotional the last regular season game. How long did it take to you get over that disappointment and prepare for this game?**

HARPER KAMP: Yeah, it was tough. I was kind of out of it until about probably --

COACH MONTGOMERY: Halftime.

HARPER KAMP: Halftime today? (Smiling). Yeah, I think probably about 3:00 a.m. Tuesday morning I finally stopped sulking and realized that we've got another season, another game to prepare for. It was likely that we'd get another shot at Stanford. So there was no room to keep sulking after that.

I think we prepared pretty well this week, and it helped playing through that physical play. Knowing the way they were going to play and how much energy and effort they had, we knew it was going to be a test for us.

**Q. Pretty interesting situation. Some people saying this is a one or two bid league. Then the conference champion goes out and loses to the 9 seed. What do you think the selection committee is going to make of Washington, and how many bids could you see the Pac-12 getting?**

COACH MONTGOMERY: Well, those some people, that's what gets us. It starts from the get-go, and some people become the majority somehow because they keep talking about it.

This league's not bad. I think there are

four legitimate teams that probably have a legitimate claim of being good enough to go: Ourselves, Washington, Oregon, and Arizona.

Now, obviously, it doesn't help Arizona losing to Arizona State the last game. Probably didn't help us losing to Stanford. I happen to think Stanford's a good basketball team. So I don't want to lose that game, but it's not like going and playing against somebody that isn't any good.

The problem that we have is nobody gives any credit to Stanford or to anybody else when you go and you play them and you don't win. Oregon State's a good team. They went in the league 10-2, and people talked about them maybe winning the conference, and they knocked off Washington.

I think based on the merit of how good some of our teams are, I think we could look at three. Whether we don't get -- whatever the word is I want to use -- impression, perception out, remains to be seen. There are some teams that can compete favorably in our league. It was a tough fight all the way to the end.

There were three teams that didn't have much luck that were struggling. But the other nine were tough games, tough places to play. So I don't know what's going to happen. I know we needed this one. I didn't want to go in with three losses. I'll tell you that.

**Q. You're going to either have Colorado or Florida, and you know them both well. You played Colorado pretty recently. What do you remember about both of them and what kind of problems they could represent?**

COACH MONTGOMERY: We played Oregon at our place. To answer your question, and we beat Washington at Washington, Oregon at Oregon and UCLA at UCLA, which nobody else did. We lost a couple games we shouldn't have.

But we played Colorado recently. We had a tough game with them at our place. Had a tough game with them there. They're a solid basketball team. They match up well with us. They play a lot like us.

Oregon, frankly, at the end of the year, I thought Oregon was playing as well as anybody. Again, you hear people talk about well, Oregon's playing better than anybody. Who did they play and where did they play them? They had home games. They won home games and they won at Oregon State.

But when we played Oregon at our place, I thought Oregon was really good. I thought they

were really good, and we had to play great to beat them. Then they went over to Stanford and beat them.

So I think Oregon's legit. They've got depth, and they've got their system. They've got seniors, and they play really hard, as does Colorado. Very similar in that regard. So we know we're going to have our hands full tomorrow.

**Q. Two guys playing here Colorado and Oregon, just based off their style and play, which team would you say matches up better with you or gives you a more favorable hatch-up?**

COACH MONTGOMERY: As I say, they're fairly similar. I think Oregon is probably playing a little better right now just based on confidence and guys shooting the ball. But they're both tough. They both play really hard. We split with Colorado. We swept Oregon. But I don't think that has any bearing, frankly. I don't think that means anything right now.

Whoever makes it, obviously, is going to be looking at their resume trying to figure a way to get another win. So it's going to be a tough game. Whoever we play, that's what we're going to have to do. We're going to have to make the adjustments.

But Colorado, lately, I guess they would feel they're not playing as well as they did early on. But I do know they played very well when we played them at their place a couple weeks ago.

**Q. You guys had a chance to clinch the regular season conference championship, lost to Stanford. How does it feel to tag them back in the tournament and to knock them out?**

HARPER KAMP: Yeah, it feels good. That might have been one of the more disappointing losses that I've been a part of, not just because of the loss, but I really wasn't happy with the way we played as a team. I think I'm the kind of guy that can be proud of the way we play, even if there is a loss. But we weren't showing that in the loss against Stanford.

We've got to go out there and do that every game now, play our style, play loose, and just play with confidence.

**Q. Fourteen turnovers as you referenced earlier ties your season high for a half. What was going on to create or cause so**

**many turnovers uncharacteristically?**

COACH MONTGOMERY: We were really making poor decisions. We just really made poor decisions. We jumped in the air and passed to people that weren't there. It was just like, "What are we doing?"

Nobody really wanted the ball. The second half we slowed down, we waited for screens, we set screens and started delivering the ball. It was really uncharacteristic.

We had -- I think we probably dropped it off at least four times at the low post, either David or Robert Thurman and turned it over. Had lay-ups, sort of. It was what we wanted out of it. We didn't end up catching and converting and making a play.

Some of it was that. Some of it was, for those guys, Stanford's physicality. The fact that they get in and dig on the ball a little bit. They don't let you get much. They don't concede much, and we didn't do a very good job of handling that.

But we made really poor decisions. Some were just extremely uncharacteristic. If we didn't solve it, we weren't going to have a chance.

**FastScripts by ASAP Sports**