

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

Saturday, March 17, 2018  
Stanford, California



## Lisa Fortier Jessie Loera Emma Statch Gonzaga Bulldogs

Stanford 82, Gonzaga 68

COACH LISA FORTIER: Stanford was too tough for us to stop on the glass today. Unfortunately that was a big key for us, and our players played hard, they always do. We were gritty. We fought till the end.

I thought, at times, we did enough offensively and executed well enough, but they had too many second chance points and too many rebounds, coupled with -- specifically offensive rebound, coupled with our inability to really get on the glass. It's a good team. They really know their role, it's just the same stuff with talked about yesterday: They know their role and they fulfilled it to their highest ability, and today we couldn't overcome that with our defensive efforts on those personnel collectively.

**Q. How difficult was it the way they were able to get out in transition and really push the pace? Kiana in her NCAA debut had a really impressive day.**

EMMA STACH: They just wanted to push in transition. They made us -- tough in the first couple minutes and especially just like throughout the whole game. We couldn't just like get stops. It was just like back and forth. So we scored, they scored, but yeah, we knew that she's a great player. She can shoot it. She can drive it.

So yeah, just like we struggled and just like playing defense, it's just like, yeah, play defense, whole court, especially.

COACH LISA FORTIER: I'd just add to that one; that the rest of their team did such a great job of transitioning that our safety is stuck inside a little bit so that opened up the perimeter. I think she had three in the first quarter it seemed like; maybe it was just the first half. So when the rest of them run the floor, these guys are recipients of that sometimes. They run the floor so hard that someone else receives the efforts of that.

**Q. For both players, was it surprising to see some of their bigs hitting from three, and how frustrating was that?**

EMMA STACH: Yeah, just kind of what Lisa was saying, it's difficult when the drivers can just like penetrate in the middle and just like it opens up everything and then -- Smith can shoot it, or, you know, like all, some of the other players can shoot it from the outside. It's just difficult to defend when you're just like not keeping them out of the paint. So I think, yeah, we struggled a little bit, just like keeping them out of there.

**Q. For Jessie, you provided a big spark in the first half. What was the feeling at halftime?**

JESSIE LOERA: I think knowing how hard we came out and how hard we were playing, we were all thinking we've got to keep it upcoming into the second half.

I mean, we're all feeling great and confident as our comeback was coming into the second half. I mean, Lisa said they did start rebounding a lot more and that's what made it a lot tougher. But that second half -- that first half is what really kind of got us going at first.

**Q. Emma, what's the feeling like, your final game? It's been quite a career for you, nothing but postseason appearance for you. What's your thought right now?**

EMMA STACH: First of all, just like being super grateful that I got the opportunity to play here, you know, just like play in the NCAA Tournament. Not everyone gets to do that.

Yeah, just like looking back, I think we had a great season. We did even stuff that like other teams before us didn't do. So just like right now, it hurts really but I think just like in a couple days realizing what we did this year is going to be good, just like looking back. But yeah, right now, it hurts.

**Q. Near the end of the third quarter, there was a sequence where they hit three, I think it was like an eight-point game or something like that. They hit three 3s and Smith took a charge from Barta. How important was that sequence in this game?**

COACH LISA FORTIER: You know, I don't remember that exact sequence. I felt like there were several

stretches where we would have a great offensive play and then we didn't get a stop on the other end. They beat us in the percentage game.

We talk a lot with our team about percentage-and-possession game, so they either make a big bucket to counter what we had just done or get a great offensive rebound or something like that. I can think of a couple of those opportunities in the first half where we kind of do something good and then they have an answer. You know, that's how teams like this play.

So I would say probably that specific sequence, they make a couple buckets, and then we're probably scoring, maybe not, and then that foul, I thought she had an open player so she could have kicked too.

But it's hard to keep your team, a bunch of teammates who are talented and care about each other and competitive; it's hard to keep them realizing that we have to take it one possession at a time and it's not all you or you or you or you. It's going to take all of us in those kind of situations. That one, Jill got the ball and she was going to score. Maybe one of those threes was on her. Alanna hit a couple in that stretch.

You know, not in a negative way but just those guys, they want it so bad that they are trying to make something happen, and then often times, as we all know, it's counterproductive.

**Q. When they have the ball -- is it a helpless feeling when their post who shoots 27 percent from three is draining them? And did you guys feel a little tentative when you were in 3-point shooting range?**

COACH LISA FORTIER: Well, I think first of all, she's a way better shooter than her percentage indicates. I know that you know our team very well. We liken her extremely close to Jill Barta. She really can shoot it. I know her percentage doesn't show it but that was not -- the scout was not to leave her open at three.

I think Emma kind of nailed it where they are driving down the gut and we are having a hard time keeping them out of the paint, and so you have to help and then she pops out at a great time. I mean, matching offense, everybody in the world backs off, that's how we defend that offense because of all the cutters and most people don't put their unskilled player right there, and Stanford is too smart for that. So everybody backs off, back off, back off, and they pop them right out there.

We adjusted to where we weren't backing off but the game plan was never really to let her shoot threes. And I forget what your second question was -- oh, on our side.

I don't think there should have been. One of the things in the film, when you watch Stanford play, they get a high hand every time. And so I think, I don't know that we were tentative, I don't think we had open threes, really. There were a couple times I thought Stach maybe could have shot one. She's been shooting the ball so well for us.

But Barta got some off that looked pretty good. Chan know had a couple that looked good. Jessie, my thing with her sometimes is her footwork. But we don't shoot a ton of them. So 17 is probably about right if we had only made five. I wouldn't want to -- shot many more. Maybe we were a little tentative but I definitely think they were trying to make us think about it and not have any catch-and-shoot.

**Q. Now that you've scouted and seen Stanford, where would you sort of rank them as an improved team in this country?**

COACH LISA FORTIER: We were actually talking about that today. My husband and I went for a run this morning, and I think it's a huge compliment and I hope it's taken this way. We've said this about BYU, and I know a lot of people say this about us: Stanford's teams are always, always, always better this time of year than they are in the beginning. They get good players; don't get me wrong. I know they have plenty of All-Americans and those kind of things, but some teams get players that are just unbelievable and Stanford gets the right ones, and then molds them into the team that they want to have, and you know, has them understand their roles and play.

I think that they are drastically improved from early. Again yesterday we talked about how they had some injuries and stuff and getting healthy helps that, but they just buy in and continue to improve. You know, I hope that people think that about our team because that's a compliment that I'd love to have and a group of teams that I'd love to be included in, as opposed to a team that maybe gets all the best players or underperforms or something like that. That's never going to be the case here.

I remember a few years ago our guys in Stanford lost two games early that people didn't think they should lose and everyone thoughts they were terrible, and it's just laughable because they are just going to continue to get better as they understand what their coaches are trying to get out of them.

**Q. Does getting stuck with the 13-seed instead of 12 sting after what happened to Missouri?**

COACH LISA FORTIER: Yeah, I didn't see any of that game. I think that's the difference is the home team versus the road team, and I'll be the first to admit, we were that spot last year and we didn't capitalize on it.

But it is different when you're playing a team at home. It's actually one of the issues that I have with the way that it's bracketed. You know, we were recipient of home-court advantage a few years before and we were always a low seed, so I didn't think that it was enough to overcome the higher seeds we were playing necessarily, but it does help you.

You know, if you had asked me any day, play a bigger team or a whatever team on the road -- or equal team on the road or home, of course you're going to pick the team that's on the road.

I know that Florida Gulf Coast does a great job, so again, not having seen any of that, I don't know if it was because Missouri was on the road or not, and who knows what's going to happen on Monday. But I would take the switch, just not knowing much about Missouri just because again, I over-scout (ph).

**Q. Both Jenn and Jessie got some pretty big runs today. How important was them playing in a big time game like, this two players projected to be long-term, important pieces?**

COACH LISA FORTIER: I think any time you can get your young players is good. We said that last year; we had a couple of them, I don't remember who -- Laura played, and Jill played, in the NCAA Tournament, and it was their first time actually playing in the NCAA Tournament. Barta was on that team but was redshirting that went to the Sweet 16 a few years ago.

Any experience that they have been able to get all year long has been valuable to us. They will have make an impact: We had Jill Townsend in at an important team; we had LeeAnne in at important times. Hopefully that's something that we can build on going forward and now they understand a little bit, and next time we're in this situation, hopefully it will be a different outcome.