

Nov. 15, 2003

POSTGAME INTERVIEWS

Stanford 1, Cal State Fullerton 0

Stanford coach Paul Ratcliffe:

I thought the team had a strong performance and we're excited to get our first playoff win of the year. Hopefully, this will give us momentum going forward.

What did you like from your team tonight?

A: I thought we played really good possession soccer. We moved the ball well. We created chances. We need to do a better job of finishing our opportunities, but that comes with time. Hopefully, we're saving the goals for later rounds.

What about the lineup changes?

A: Taylor Uhl rewarded us with a goal, which is nice to see. She's a great goal-scorer. We've been moving people around a little bit and there were a few adjustments we made today. With all the adjustments we make, we're always a solid team because we have so much depth and so much talent. It's just, what's the right chemistry against different opponents.

You pulled Chioma Ubogagu back to play at attacking mid.

A: She's done a nice job in there. She can create havoc in there with her speed, and her ability to go after people.

Can you feel good about the performance without the goals?

A: I've been preaching persistence. Even the goal we scored, it was an unbelievable header by Taylor Uhl, off the post, and she had to get the rebound to put it in. We've got to be persistent in there and make our own luck, and it's not always going to be the prettiest goal.

How far can this team go?

A: I think we can go very far. We could win a national championship. The key is, confidence levels have to be high and you have to work hard, keep your concentration, limit your mistakes, and we have to get hot down the line.

What's going to be the focus from here on out?

A: Playing good soccer, keeping our concentration, enjoying the journey and improving with each game. We've got to go down there hungry, give our best effort and see what we can do.

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Cal State Fullerton coach Demian Brown:

I'm very proud of the ladies. We exceeded so many expectations this year, and I'm so happy for the senior class to be able to have this experience on their way out. Obviously, we played a great team in Stanford. Our gameplan was very good. And at the end of the game, I thought we had a couple of chances that we had hoped for and just fell on the wrong side of it.

Did you feel you had a good chance?

A: Yeah, we had two good chances, one that was a scramble, and one that was pretty well designed and fell on the foot of our freshman, Aly White. Those were the type of things we hoped we would be in position for. Obviously, you don't want to open yourself up to a program like Stanford. I thought we did a good job of being disciplined. And we had talked about it, that there would be an opportunity at the end of the match to either win it, or tie it. We almost were the smartest guys out here.

Did anything from Stanford surprise you?

A: No, I was impressed with their backline. They defended us so well that we never really got an opportunity to get close. I wasn't surprised at all by the quality of their players or anything they did.

Can you talk about the season?

A: This season was a success. We took some lumps. We had a very challenging schedule – going away to play BYU and Texas Tech. I thought we traveled well and played well in those matches. We took some lumps in regards to injuries to some key players, but through all that, the women persevered. The will and the heart our program showed throughout the season was tremendous.

How will this season translate into next year?

A: I think the confidence that will translate into the returning group, as will having players who mean a lot to this program being fully healthy. That in itself, as well as this experience here, will really help our program take another step forward, which I think we're primed to do. This is a good experience, but I'm looking forward to starting to train for the 2014 season with the thought that with the next group, we can probably go a little bit further than this.

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Stanford goal-scorer Taylor Uhl:

Can you describe the goal?

A: My teammates did a great job of serving the box, and that ended up in a goal. I think, overall, attacking chemistry tonight was really on point and that's been something that's been inconsistent for us and something we'll definitely need, that combination play.

What about the near-misses for the team?

A: We'll probably stay extra and work on all the finishing to make sure we can put those away next weekend. But I definitely don't think it's a bad thing when you're getting near goals in games.

How has your transition been this year?

A: I definitely feel like I belong now. It's an amazing team and I'm really excited to see what we can do here.

Was the transition difficult?

A: Yeah, the West Coast is typically known for its possession oriented soccer, which is something I wasn't used to. Playing in the Midwest, we're a lot more direct and play more of a physical game. Out here, they play more of what is called the 'beautiful game.' That's definitely been more of a transition, playing more with my back to goal, being expected to hold the ball a lot more than I was used to. It's definitely something that I'm still trying improve on.

Can you feel yourself get better?

A: It was really nice to have 10 days off before this game. Everybody on this team got better in those 10 days. We had some really competitive training. I feel I've improved, just competing against my teammates every day to make everyone better.

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Stanford fifth-year senior forward Courtney Verloo:

The team had some chances that it wasn't able to put away.

A: We were unlucky today, I think we had a lot of chances that we weren't able to put away. But it was promising to see we had so many opportunities. Now, we just need to execute.

What about the goal?

A: I played in a long cross. It was a great effort by Taylor Uhl. She's phenomenal in the air and she got her head on the first one and was sharp enough to follow it up.

I knew she was going to be on the end of that one. Taylor is great in the box, that's one of her huge strengths, she's so confident in there. After I saw she got the first header on it, I knew the luck was going her way.

How does the team look different than when camp started in August?

A: We have a pretty young team. But as unfortunate as our losses have been, we've learned a ton from them. It's been a great experience for this group, because we know that feeling and we don't want it to happen again. There's been a lot of growth in this group and we're going to make a run in the playoffs.

You could play UCLA and possibly even North Carolina.

A: It's definitely a tough bracket. The cool thing is we've played UCLA and we went into overtime in a game that could have gone either way. So, the team has confidence in playing teams that are highly ranked. Everyone has a mindset now. We know if we lose, we're done. I think that people are more fired up and ready to go.