

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

Saturday, March 17, 2018

Austin, Texas



**Charli Turner Thorne**

**Robbi Ryan**

**Jamie Ruden**

**Kianna Ibis**

Arizona State Sun Devils

Arizona State - 73, Nebraska - 62

CHARLI TURNER THORNE: Well, first of all, Nebraska's a really tough team, well-coached team. It was a hard-fought game. The two-week break between the conference tournament and now, you love it and you hate it, because you love to get the extra rest and the extra practice, but it's a really long time to go without playing the game. I thought that showed for us.

I thought we were very rusty. Just, good, solid defense the first half and really good second half offensively. But I'm excited. Excited that they get to keep playing. And I always tell them that the first game is the hardest because you just have the first-game jitters a little bit too. But really proud of this team to settle down, got the offense going and credit Nebraska for not really ever going away, but credit the Sun Devils for stepping up and staying with things.

You know, we were definitely rusty, so excited to be still alive.

**Q. Kianna, why were you so dominant rebounding tonight against Nebraska as a team?**

KIANNA IBIS: I would just say --

CHARLI TURNER THORNE: You can tell them the real answer.

KIANNA IBIS: I would just say we wanted it more, I guess. I would say that. We just wanted to stay aggressive on offense, offensive rebounds, and we just went at them. We don't want to be boxed out, so we just went around them and got the ball.

**Q. Jamie, what changed with in the third quarter there? It seemed like defense picked up in the last five minutes into the fourth, what changed?**

JAMIE RUDEN: I think for us we have a big focus on

just finishing strong. So I think I don't know just a fire kind of went under our butts and we decided we needed to ramp up the pressure defensively and ramp up the energy, crashing the boards and boxing out. Rebounding was a big focus coming into these games, so that was huge.

**Q. Robbi, in the first half you had trouble kind of scoring. Y'all did a good job defensively. What was the trouble in the first half? Were shots just not falling?**

ROBBI RYAN: I was probably forcing it a little too much, as CC told me.

CHARLI TURNER THORNE: You don't get that award by yourself. You can just say collectively.

ROBBI RYAN: Yeah, we were just -- we weren't poised. As the game went on we settled down. We got better looks and played better together, and I think that was the difference.

**Q. Jamie, you said a second ago, the fire went under our butts. Did you put it there?**

JAMIE RUDEN: I think it's a big credit to our coaches. They were on us that we needed to really lock in. But also we put that pressure on ourselves too, so, yeah.

**Q. How did you escape from Omaha?**

KIANNA IBIS: How did I escape? I would say that I just loved Charli and the coaching staff, and it felt like a family. Also my mom, growing up when she went to college her mom kind of wanted her to stay close to home and then she didn't want me to go through that. Not go through it, but she just wanted me to get out there and do something I wanted to do. And I wanted to go out more west coast, and ASU was a great program.

**Q. Charli, tell us the real reason on the rebounding? What is the real reason on the rebounding?**

CHARLI TURNER THORNE: Well, we held ourselves accountable. They held themselves accountable on the break. So if anybody didn't hit a rebounding spot or missed a box out, the entire team did five push-ups, and we did a lot of push-ups this last week and a half. They were just amazing with it.

I actually joked in the locker room, like, hey, if you miss a box out don't get down on the floor and start doing push-ups during the game. I said just go get the ball. You might miss a box out. So we kind of joked about it.

But certainly it's always a focus in our program, and obviously when you control the board, you control the game. You know, we needed every rebound in this game given our shooting percentages.

**Q. You're a good rebounding team, but you say you were not satisfied before this?**

CHARLI TURNER THORNE: No, I felt like we could be better. Yeah, and I think it was just fatigue, fatigue. We're not a deep team, and you need to get down -- we're not practicing, so we didn't have an opportunity to work on a lot. So when we had a chance to work on things, that was the number one thing we were working on. That and transition defense, which we will need on Monday.

**Q. Were you pleased with the shots you were getting in the first half?**

CHARLI TURNER THORNE: Yes and no. We missed some shots that we would normally make, but we also caught and dribbled a ton and forced things. They played from the inside out, they're overhelpers and we were just going right into them instead of getting to two feet, making the extra pass, finding our own teammates.

So, no, we were not happy with our half-court offense, but we had also gotten some solid shots that we just missed too.

**Q. What was your view of the last five minutes of the third quarter?**

CHARLI TURNER THORNE: I think we just combined some really good defense with hitting shots. Obviously Jamie is instant offense, and Sophia Elenga probably should have been up here. Just so productive tonight in the minutes that she had, rebounding and scoring. Our bench really stepped up today, I thought.

Because at halftime, I mean, really, I don't think any of our starters would say, oh, I played well. So it's like when you don't have one of your starters really playing the way they can play, you're like, oh. You figure, okay, they've got to get better. At the same time we were a little worried, and I thought our bench was huge for us today.

**Q. A lot of benches as the rotations get shorter in the NCAA Tournament --**

CHARLI TURNER THORNE: Ours is short period.

**Q. Well, you played everybody.**

CHARLI TURNER THORNE: Well, not Eva. Eva Rubin didn't get in, but we have nine Bre'Yanna Sanders, call her Junior. We have too many Brees. She really did a nice job. She doesn't usually play necessarily that much. But she really spotted our guards well, because it's tough if we have to go with a four-guard rotation. And she's been practicing well, so that helps us.

I mean, we have depth at post. We do. We have four posts. And we have Eva as a fifth post, so she's a really big body, so she could definitely possibly help us against Texas.

**Q. Looking ahead to Texas, just the way you saw the team rebound today, do you feel like you can crash with the No. 4 rebounding team in the country?**

CHARLI TURNER THORNE: Is that what they are?

**Q. I think so.**

CHARLI TURNER THORNE: Well, we're going to have to. That and transition defense. I kind of look one game at a time, but from what I know of Texas, the little bit I watched this past week, are probably the two biggest keys. Obviously they're a very defensive team as well. I'm hoping we can get this game under our belt and we'll be a little more efficient offensively one day.

**Q. Going back to the post play. Sophia's really come into her own this season. She won 4 of 5 tonight, 21 minutes. She's been earning more minutes this season. What did you think of her play tonight and over the course of the season?**

CHARLI TURNER THORNE: I mean, she's been -- I've had a lot of media people say, "She's your x-factor, Charli. She's your x-factor," and I don't disagree with that. Obviously, she's a first-year player, junior college, big stage. We thought she would be an impact player and she is. But she's just continued -- she's the most lovely, beautiful person, and she just is so coachable. She gets in the gym extra.

So all the credit it is to her. She wants to be good, and she's worked really hard. It does not come easy for her to learn the playbook. A lot of this stuff does not come easy for her. She just keeps staying committed. So, yeah, really proud of her.

**Q. You talked yesterday about your past experiences here.**

CHARLI TURNER THORNE: Yeah, I was joking about some of them.

**Q. Yeah, how much better does this feel?**

CHARLI TURNER THORNE: Well, haven't played UT yet, but...

**Q. That's right.**

CHARLI TURNER THORNE: Yeah, obviously, this was fun. This was great. I mean, we don't usually (Indiscernible), so it was a little bit frustrating. We didn't enjoy this game quite as much as we normally do because that is like our pet peeve, and we don't do it. We thought, I mean, we fouled and we don't do that. So that's one of the things I'm talking about the rust and stuff.

So, I mean, that was -- again, we should have been enjoying it a little bit more, but it was like, really? You know, slip out, slip out, slip out. But, yeah, this is a great venue. I obviously want to create a few more good memories here. But, obviously, fun place to play. This town supports women's basketball, has for a long time.

**Q. The team struggled from beyond the arc tonight, shooting 21%. How much of a factor is that in the second round match-up against Texas?**

CHARLI TURNER THORNE: Well, we shot 13 in the first half. Like we don't do that. That's not us and that's what we talked about at halftime. I thought we adjusted and we didn't shoot as many in the second half. We like being like 6 for 13 or somewhere in there.

So I mean, we like the three, and I think we have good shooters. Again, I thought we were just rusty. So I think our shooting will get going. But we also, you know, everybody's very scouted right now. Our best shooters are not getting great looks and that's part of it.