# 2018 MEN'S NATIONAL COLLEGIATE VOLLEYBALL CHAMPIONSHIP
# SEMIFINAL 2 POSTGAME QUOTES (MAY 3, 2018)

**UCLA HEAD COACH JOHN SPERAW**

*opening statement*

"It wasn't a perfect match, but the guys played incredibly hard. They played with such great enthusiasm. Coach Wooden would be proud. So we are thrilled. We are going to be playing for a national title. I can hardly believe it. We get to do it in our own house against a great team. It's a great opportunity for us. It's been a goal for us to get this far all year. Although truthfully we don't talk about it all that much. We just talk about getting better each and every day and I think we've done a great job of that and I think we are seeing some results of our efforts. Overall it was just an outstanding effort by our team."

*On the poise of freshman Grant Maleski serving an ace on match point*

"The young kid has got no fear. I mean why not? He's just a freshman going out there and having fun. He's been serving great in practice so I figured what the heck and it worked pretty well. He's a great teammate and he's been working hard all year and so for him to come in and contribute like that is incredible for us. And obviously you could see the response of the team how much they love him and how thrilled they were for him."

*On being able to handle BYU's serve much better than in the MPSF Championship*

"Altitude. Playing at BYU is a different experience. How the ball flies and how they serve there, it just has such an impact on how the game is played. It's really tough to play at BYU. They have a great crowd and all that too. We are at sea level. A lot more oxygen. It's good for us."

*On what gives the team confidence to be able to upset Long Beach State*

"Well they just present so much pressure in terms of their excellent defense both at the net and in the back court. It really forces you to be really good on offense. So we have spent tons of time trying to get this offense improved in little bits here and there and I think we have done a really good job of that. A lot of that will have to do with passing and being able to do what we would like to do. The last time we faced them I really felt that it was a match that was played from 10 feet a lot. They served the ball really well. So we are going to have to be good at the pins and attacking and playing good, transition ball when we get more opportunities. They also play with great speed. They are the fastest team in the country. So part of this next match is going to be how we adapt to that speed and how we make adjustments. It's a significant challenge. I've said before that this is one of the best collegiate teams I've ever seen. I think the numbers prove that. I saw something when I was watching the Pac-12 Networks that some of their statistics are equal to the '84 Bruins. This is a great team we are going to play. That's what we want. Shoot, you want to play the best team at the end and we are going to have an opportunity to go do that. We are excited and we are going to go play as hard as we can."

**UCLA SENIOR OUTSIDE HITTER JAKE ARNITZ**

*On being able to play the NCAA Tournament in UCLA's home arena*

"It's pretty incredible. I think it's a huge advantage to just be able to sleep in our own beds. It almost feels like it's just any other game and it's not the playoffs or anything. So it's just nice. And then of course the crowd. I think that helps a lot. Saturday will be interesting with Long Beach because they bring a good crowd being right

down the freeway. I think it will be split pretty evenly, but we play in this gym a lot and we're pretty comfortable in here. So yeah, it's an amazing feeling to be able to play my last collegiate volleyball game at UCLA no matter what. It's pretty special."

*On going up against BYU freshman phenom Gabi Garcia Fernandez*
"Gabi is a great player. He can serve the ball like no one else can really in our conference. He gets up there consistently and can rip the ball at 70 plus. I think that's pretty rare and he's going to be scary later on in college. I'm happy I'm leaving. But yeah, he's hard to read. They set him inside and then outside still so it's hard to set up on him consistently and know where he's going to go. So you just have to go up and see where he's going and try to move in the air. So yeah, a good all-around player."

**UCLA JUNIOR SETTER MICAH MA'A**
*On the great play of BYU's Storm Fa'agata-Tufuga following an injury to Cyrus Fa'alogo*
"That team actually is the most adaptable in that position. Cyrus and Storm we've played them both and in every match they have come in and played really well. What helps is we have seen them before so it's not a new guy coming in off the bench. We had a feeling we would see both but not like that. It's always tough to see a guy go down. My thoughts are with him. I gave him a big hug and told him that it's tough for that to happen. But yeah, Storm came in and he was hot. They gave him more balls than we thought. I don't think (the injury) affected them too much actually. (Storm) has a great serve and he plays the whole game really well. They are pretty interchangeable."

*On the chance to play for the program's first title since 2006*
"I think the question of the 2006 thing never really crosses our mind. We all kind of go day by day and we have enough on our plate to kind of keep us occupied. It's huge to be able to play in the national championship at home. I'm happy for our coaching staff. They put in so much work, way more than we have. I'm happy for the fans. I'm happy for the alumni. So it's an act that we wanted to do for everybody and not just ourselves. Of course it's nice to be able to be in it yourself too. So it's a privilege and we are going to treat it as such and be grateful and give it our all."

*On his offensive style of play tonight*
"I had no idea I was going to do any of those (referring to several two-handed dump putaways he had). It's just kind of circumstantial. The ball gets up there and I react. I got lucky tonight on a couple. But it's just kind of how the game played out. When it gets tight like that sometimes I can give it to other guys and sometimes I just randomly put it down myself. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. Tonight it worked which is nice."

**BYU HEAD COACH SHAWN OLMSTEAD**
*opening statement*
"Congrats to UCLA for advancing and moving on. Long Beach from the match earlier. Should be a fun matchup for those guys Saturday. I don't know. Like I told the guys, you try to, as a coach, say the perfect thing or exactly what they want to hear in this moment. I'm going to be honest—it's tough. So I don't know if I have the exact words for these guys, but I'm proud of them. This team has been through more. We know that in the locker room, it's not things we share with everybody. It's no excuse. It's just important for these guys to remember. My entire coaching career, I've never had a group that's been through more adversity from the start of the school year to this point. I don't know, I think, again, maybe it's raw and the truth, but to think that this group's even here in this moment right now. That's not 'Hurrah, we did it,' but I'm just proud of these guys, every single one of them, for what they've overcome throughout the entire year. I love these guys. Through it all, the crazy thing is, through it all, I enjoyed this group maybe more than any group I've coached as well. And that's crazy to think—I've lost more sleep than I ever have in my coaching career because of these knuckleheads, but I love them. I love each one of them. I truly do. So there's my opening statement."

*on meaning of Sander name to BYU volleyball and if a dual 15 will be retired*
"Maybe a triple because I was 15. You know, so put me in there. I'm kidding. I'll get emotional and again it's just raw, I'm a coach. Maybe it's because I've got a five-week-old at home. Maybe I'm a little more emotional. But Brenden probably doesn't even know—the first time I met Brenden was here on this court. He probably

doesn't even remember. Yeah, see he doesn't. But his mom asked me—I was coaching the women team's and I was here watching the boys—they played, what, Irvine in that final the last time UCLA hosted? His mom came up to me and said 'Hey, can you go talk to my son? I really, really want him to go to BYU.' I think you (Sander) were still undecided and you were with Jake hanging out. So it's fitting that we're here. I can't speak, Taylor—he's a great kid—I didn't get to coach Taylor. But I got to be a part of Brenden's life—a small part. He came to BYU, he was willing to take on the 'You got to fill your brother's shoes,' and you didn't back down from that. If you have to do a draft of the greats that have come through BYU volleyball and the outside hitters, you're probably going to pick Taylor and Brenden. Brothers. And so that's what they mean. I wish his parents were at the age to have another one. I love him. He's accepted that challenge and every single match we played in his four-year career he heard it, 'You're not like your brother.' And he just got better and better and better. He is as good as his brother and he's an outstanding young man. Again, it's kind of fitting—it's unfortunate that it's a loss—but it's fitting that we're here at UCLA on this court where I first met him."

*on losing two assistant coaches*
"Yeah. They were with me from the start. This transition, again. I'm super excited for both of them. I'm 100 percent supportive throughout the entire process. And both Luke (Slabe) and Jay (Reyes) have had a handful of opportunities that they've passed over the years—and they should, they're deserving. Two of the best coaches in our game, hands down. Each one of them. They stuck around and very rarely do you have an entire staff that's alumni of the program and so I know that BYU means the world to them from their experience as a player and now coaches. I'm going to be excited to watch those guys. Both of them are going to do great things. Both of them—100 percent."

**BYU SENIOR OUTSIDE HITTER BRENDEN SANDER**
*on his time at BYU*
"My time at BYU—it's, I don't have any words to explain it. It's been the most amazing experience of my life. I've met some of the best friends I will ever have and they are the greatest guys in this whole world—even the coaches. I can stay friends with those guys forever because we have such close relationships. It was just an amazing place for me and I think I grew a ton through BYU and what they teach. I met a girl who is amazing. It's just been an amazing experience and I wouldn't have done it anywhere else. I would go into battle with these guys 10 times out of 10, I don't care. These are my boys right here."

**BYU SENIOR SETTER LEO DURKIN**
*on Gabi Garcia Fernandez*
"Gabi's been awesome. I remember Jaylen (Reyes) gave me a call, just kind of a backstory, after Tim let the coaches knew he wasn't going to be coming back. Literally I think it was that following Sunday after we lost the national championship, he goes 'Hey, I think I found us an opposite and this kid's going to start right away and he's probably going to be Freshman of the Year. He's done just that. Gabi's one of the most assertive players I've had an opportunity to play with. Just goes up there, no matter what point it is, clutch situation, he's going to go out and he's just going to play ball. We saw some bigtime swings from him. High-pressure situations he's awesome. He's going to have an amazing career here at BYU. I'm excited for what's to come for him."