

Pac-12 Women's Basketball Media Day

Wednesday, October 10, 2018



Kamie Ethridge Chanelle Molina Borislava Hristova Washington State Cougars

KAMIE ETHRIDGE: Well, thank you for letting us be here, and I think my statement would first and foremost -- I just want to say thanks to the Pac-12. I think coming in new, being around this kind of setup, you guys, this kind of media attention, the validity and the value that you put into women's basketball is something I certainly am thrilled to be a part of.

It's not normal out there. It's not what most people that coach women's basketball get to experience. Clearly I just want to say thank you for letting us be here and put our program on the platform a little bit, and I am thrilled to be at Washington State.

I am unbelievably excited to be coaching these two players that are here and the others that are back in Pullman. I think these two players representing our program is perfect for us. Who they are, their values, their work ethic, their talent, and I'm excited that you guys continue to get to know them and get to know our program a little bit.

But my ultimate statement would be just this is a new beginning and a new start, and I'm excited to be a part of it and really excited to represent Washington State.

Q. Chanelle, what's it like to play with two sisters now on the team, have three Molinas? And, Coach, have you ever coached a set of three sisters on a team before?

CHANELLE MOLINA: I'm used to it. We played together in high school, so it's kind of a natural feeling to play together in college. We're competitive, so I'll get on my sisters when I see that they're not doing their job, and they kind of won't tell me what to do because I've been there before, I've done this, done that. So I'm just kind of taking them under my wings, but it's been awesome.

KAMIE ETHRIDGE: She's the bossy one. I have not. I have not coached three. I had a sister that was just a year ahead of me, so kind of know the sibling rivalry. Someone asked earlier if I could ever see them being

on the court together, and I don't even think you've done that in practice. But it's great to obviously have Chanelle as the leader and leading them along the way. But it's been a new experience for me.

Q. Coach, you built something pretty special at Northern Colorado, program record for wins, first NCAA Tournament appearance. What was it about this opportunity that you felt like was the chance you wanted to go for after building up obviously such a great team in Greeley?

KAMIE ETHRIDGE: Well, I would just tell you when I went on my campus for the interview, I got shown the facilities and a little bit of Pullman right the night before the interview, and I called back and said, I'm not sure this is a good situation, just because of knowing what we would have to recruit against. And then I walked into an interview with Pat Chun, our athletic director, and it's just like we all know in women's basketball, it has very little to do with geography or the state you're in or whatever, it's about the people you're surrounded by. And certainly as a coach, the person that is your boss, the president of the university, being supportive of your program, and when they tell you they're going to give you time and they're going to give you every resource you need and they're going to be proactive in the things, the challenges set before the university, your athletic department or anything that we might face, you want to grab hold of that boss and say, I want to work for you.

And Pat Chun did that for me, and Anne McCoy, those two people, and ultimately I think they're a great representation of what makes Washington State so special, and it's the people there and how they believe in the program, believe in the university. And if we can build on that, we're going to do some good things there.

Q. Borislava, now that you've been on campus so long, I know when you first got here, you were pretty shy, you didn't have command of the English language in interviews and stuff like that. Can you look back to where you were when you first got to Pullman and where you are now and talk about your growth as a person and a player and everything you've been through?

BORISLAVA HRISTOVA: I mean, the change, the progress I made throughout those years is just

unbelievable. The help that the program provided me just helped me grow as a person, as a basketball player, as well. And it's just been fun being around the people.

I hope my language is getting better. But yeah, it's been an amazing opportunity for me.

KAMIE ETHRIDGE: She understands everything, right?

BORISLAVA HRISTOVA: Yeah.

Q. This is your first year in the Pac-12, but you're an experienced coach --

KAMIE ETHRIDGE: Old.

Q. No, you're a very good coach. This is your first year; what do you want Washington State to be known for? And this may change later, but for this year, what do you want -- when people play you, what do you want to be known for?

KAMIE ETHRIDGE: Well, that's great, and I know -- I think more than anything, you just want to lay a foundation, and I think I'm walking into a really pretty special situation. I think the seven that stayed and stuck around this program and committed to this program and wanted to stay and want it to become successful, that's unique, even as a coach that's walking in just to seven players. But I think they represent a lot of the things that I want to be about. I think they give us a great foundation. They're committed players. They love to play. They love to practice. They want to be coached.

So I don't think I'm any different than any other coach. We just -- the culture, you hear that word thrown around all the time. We want to teach them how to be great competitors. We want to teach them how to be great teammates. And I think if you do those two things on the court, you know, you're building the right things, and eventually I think winning takes care of itself.

We're trying to do that every day. It's just walk in here, this is what championship programs look like. This is how they practice. This is what the gym sounds like. This is what we need to be every single day, and, oh, you're in a bad mood? We don't need to know it because you can't be that for your teammates.

So it's just teaching them how to consistently be their very best and bring out the best in others around them, and that's more than -- more than anything that we're doing, we're trying to preach that message, and I think we can build on anything else as we go.

Q. And for the players, obviously going through a coaching change is different. What are some of the things that are different, and what are your expectations for this year?

BORISLAVA HRISTOVA: I mean, our expectations are really high. With the new coaching staff we have, it gives us the freedom offensively. It's like a free-flowing offense, more like reading-based. We're just able to create for yourself, create for your teammates, and just being able to observe Kamie and Laurie's knowledge, it's just a great opportunity for us, and I think it's going to help us grow as players and as people, as well.

CHANELLE MOLINA: We don't really know what to expect in the season. You know, we just know that we're going to go out there and give it our all, always compete, compete, stay together, and it's kind of like our foundation. That's what we said. We talked about unity, yeah, competing. And what was the other one?

BORISLAVA HRISTOVA: Respect.

CHANELLE MOLINA: Oh, respect is very important. We trust in our coaches, and we really have high respect for them. So whatever they tell us, we're going to take it in, be sponges, absorb whatever knowledge they want to share with us. That's all we can do, just compete out there, give it our best.

Q. Kamie, your first year in the Pac-12, you kind of touched on just kind of the challenges of joining such a competitive coverage, but can you talk about what are you most excited about being in such a competitive conference your first year here, and also your biggest fear or biggest concern as you enter this year?

KAMIE ETHRIDGE: Yeah, concerns are Stanford, UCLA, Oregon, Oregon State. Name all 11 of them.

But excited. I mean, honestly, I'm thrilled that I've got people like this, players like this, competitors like this, people that have been through some adversity on my side and on our side and committed to this program and committed to the process of getting better every day.

I know we're facing some of the best teams in the country. Unbelievable challenges. They're in year ten, they're in year nine. I think Scott told me he's in year nine, and he loves his team, and he's like, why shouldn't I because I'm in year nine. I've developed what I want in my program.

We don't have quite all the pieces that we want eventually. We have 11 players. But we have a lot of really good pieces, and I'm thrilled that we can -- we're going to put a competitive team on the floor. They're

going to play unbelievably hard. We're going to fight through adversity, and we're going to play a lot of teams that understand that already. They've already been through some high-level, top-of-their-game experiences.

But I think they're being really shy right now, but I think you're going to see they're unbelievably competitive, and they want to take on those challenges. You don't sign up for the Pac-12 to come to a program like this and be shy or give in to understanding that you're going to play against the very best every night that you play the game. We're looking forward to that challenge, and we're going to take it on, and we're going to see where we stand, and hopefully surprise some people.

Q. The message to -- you've got veterans here who you will rely on heavily; what's the message to the team, though, in terms of: I'm a new coach, you didn't pick me, I didn't pick you, we're here together, let's do this together but clean slate? Are there some athletes who are showing you something that might not have gotten a lot of playing time last year, but under your guidance and new philosophy may be showing you a little something?

KAMIE ETHRIDGE: You know, I think, if anything, I think most of our players -- I mean, they might be able to speak to it better than me. I think they feel real -- a brand-new slate, like you said. I think they don't feel like -- I look at some of the minutes played last year, or I've seen those, and I'm surprised by certain people because we certainly need those seven that were back to be ready to play and play significant minutes and significant roles that they have in the past. What a great opportunity for them. I think they're embracing that.

I think they understand that the ones returning are really going to have to produce and provide us with a lot of leadership, and I think the other thing that you're saying in that is they're also having to learn to change some behaviors that we've come across in the gym that I don't think helps us be a better team or helps them be a better teammate, and so those are learned behaviors that, again, that's just my gym and what I want in my gym, and what I want is teammates and what I want is competitors and communicators.

And so those are the things that I think are the biggest challenges for older players, is they've gotten used to one or two years in the gym and they can behave a certain way or speak a certain way, and now all of a sudden it's a non-negotiable.

So those are the challenges, I think, on a day-to-day

basis of can we get consistently good at what I think are non-negotiables in the development of our program, and I've got to hold them to that every second we're on the court.

Those are the hard lessons. I think that some of the older players are having to learn. Freshmen totally are having to learn it because they're -- they don't speak anyway, so it's hard for them.

But I think the older ones, sometimes it's even harder for them, and the challenge is -- because they've gotten comfortable in their own role or something, and we're challenging them a little bit in those areas.

But ultimately, it's good for them, and I know ultimately it's good for our program, and that's why we're doing it.

Q. Even though you're a newcomer to the Pac-12, you're not a newcomer to being in a conference that's considered the best in the nation. When I covered the Big 12, you were at Kansas State, in the Brittney Griner years. Are there any parallels to that experience to where you are now and can learn from and work with?

KAMIE ETHRIDGE: Yeah, I mean, I think the beauty that I have of being old, it's, again, what you said, being experienced. I really have had a lot of opportunities to be around great teams, great competitors, great players, players that have been the fourth-round -- fourth pick in the WNBA draft, sixth pick in the WNBA draft another year, All-Americans, Player of the Year in conferences, and really highly successful teams.

So I certainly as a player and as a coach, I think I have a good grasp on what it takes to be good and what the great programs do consistently on a day-to-day basis.

Those are some of the programs in this conference. Clearly they're doing things right because they're consistently in the top ten or in the top 20 year after year after year, and so that's our goal is to do those things, to do the things that are going to consistently make us relevant, and, again, the word "consistency." Show up every day, and can we become not just a program that wins a few games every year but consistently wins year after year after year.

I've experienced it. I think I understand what it takes, and I think I'm pretty good at being very direct on how to -- what I expect and my expectations and how we have to do on a day-to-day basis in order for us to grow. Direct. I think that was a good way to say it. Direct.