

NCAA Women's 1st and 2nd Rounds: Waco

Saturday, March 23, 2019
Waco, Texas



Lindsay Gottlieb Jaelyn Brown Kristine Anigwe Asha Thomas California Golden Bears

California 92, North Carolina 72

COACH LINDSAY GOTTLIEB: Winning is really fun. Winning in the NCAA Tournament is even more special and get to go play with this group that I'm fortunate to coach, there's no words to describe it.

First I just want to congratulate North Carolina on a terrific season. Actually I've never matched up against them, and Coach Hatchell is a legend with a national championship and a 1,000 wins. So I was in awe being on the sideline with them. They had a terrific year and gave us a really intense battle.

Proud of our group because they figuratively punched first and we had to find a way. I thought they did actually a nice job on Kristine making her life difficult. She still ended up with 18 points and 22 rebounds, which just, again, speaks to the year she's had, but I think we needed everybody to step in and that's what happened.

I thought we really locked in after the first quarter and I'm really proud of our entire team and various people stepping up individual, and as a group, our collective will to get to the next round. So we're excited to be staying in Waco.

Q. Jaelyn, right before the end of the third quarter, you had a shot but they had a turnover that opened that up. Just talk about that and then talk about how the fourth quarter, you had a 14-2 run and put the game away?

JAELYN BROWN: Yeah, end of the fourth quarter, there was maybe three seconds left and I knew that we had to get a shot up. I think it was like two touch passes in the shot and then that was just a really great moment just to get the energy going into the fourth quarter, which just gave us a run and we did what we had to do.

Q. Kristine, I know that's probably not the first time you've seen that defensive strategy this year, but how difficult was it for you, especially in the first half, and in the second half after your teammates started making some shots how much did that loosen things up?

KRISTINE ANIGWE: Again, Lindsay said it. North Carolina came up with a really, really good game plan. Their coach is highly respected and their team is highly respected. I was really grateful that my teammates came and like had my back. You know, it's not like a one-player team. We needed effort from every single player on this team.

I credit a lot to my guards and post partner. Asha always has really good games in the Baylor gym, just credit to her performance. Jaelyn, I think she missed a shot. It's just like, if I didn't have my team, we wouldn't have gotten this win.

Q. Asha, can you just talk about, I'm clear you guys were down 22-11 into the fourth quarter, and talk about what Coach talked about, the will and desire to keep going and keep pushing and not letting that take you guys down, especially when Kristine was having a tough time even getting touches.

ASHA THOMAS: Right. I would just say her main message was just play Cal Basketball. She knew that we wasn't playing our best, or even close to our best.

So I think it was just pick up the energy, do what you do. Of course, knock down shots. Find our bigs down low. Just be aggressive. Really find your niche and what you do well in and let's do us.

Q. Like you said it is a team game and you had your teammates doing it, but when a game like this is over with and you have 18 points and 22 rebounds; when it seemed like every time we looked at you, you had three players around you, what are your thoughts after a game like this, when you're still able to produce with all that going on??

KRISTINE ANIGWE: I felt like I wasn't doing enough the first half and I just had to change my mindset and just focus on defense, something I've been trying to focus on throughout the season and get on the glass because my offensive game isn't going. I have to trust

that my teammates are going to have my back and I can always make an impact on the defensive end and that's what I really tried to do.

Again, like, they have a really good post player and she is -- although she's young, she made really good post plays, and their group really battled, so getting those boards wasn't easy. Again, trusting my teammates. Like they really have my back this game. I don't know if I could have performed in the second half like I did without them.

Q. Asha, Kristine said that you always seem to play well on this floor. Is there something special about Waco and being in this environment, or is it just kind of a coincidence?

ASHA THOMAS: I would definitely say it's a coincidence. Sure, two years ago, I was hot. That's not my plan to just come in Waco and shoot well (laughter). I want to come in every gym and shoot well the best that I can. Just happens to be I'm shooting well and hopefully I can shoot well the next game, too.

Q. Asha, ESPN said that your brother tickets were left under somebody else's name. Did you know he was coming? Was that a surprise?

ASHA THOMAS: I had no clue but I think this one here had an extra ticket for him. When I found out, the whole team, or at least the majority of the team knew that he was coming.

During shootaround Reece' said, "Is that Q?" I looked at her -- hold on. I seen him just walking over and I just started smiling.

Q. Coach Hatchell was in here and said that your team just wore down in the second half. Did you sense that? Obviously it had a lot to do with what you were able to do to them. Did you sense that and feel the game shift?

COACH LINDSAY GOTTLIEB: I did. You know, I thought they came out with a really terrific game plan. To be honest, I've watched a ton of film on them and I haven't seen them play any post player like that.

So I thought it might be a little easier for Kristine. I don't mean that in a disrespectful way. I just haven't seen them load up on the post like that.

We played a lot of teams try to create a game plan for her and it often wears down in the second half because it's hard to stay disciplined in what you're trying to do.

The second thing, I thought at halftime, one thing we talked about is we weren't exploiting them in transition well enough. I thought we could run harder. I thought we could get some more easy looks, and so whether

that was a concerted effort by us to push more or maybe they wore down a little bit. But I think we put pressure on them on the offensive end because so many people contributed. I thought CJ West's minutes off the bench were huge. It's just another big body and it's hard to handle two of them in there.

And again I thought our guards were terrific. They knocked down shots. Our most assists on the year, 23 assists to 13 turnovers, resay was a maestro with three assists and 12 turnovers and Jaelyn and Teze (ph) and Kianna, they knocked down shots.

Q. That three-pointer at the end of the third quarter, it would have been a four-point game without it; it's a seven-point game. How much of a difference was that?

COACH LINDSAY GOTTLIEB: I think it was a huge emotional lift.

So Jaelyn is like our long-range, three-point, last-second person, and she hasn't hit one in a game that's counted. I think she hit one after the buzzer in a game, after practice. I've subbed her in a couple times in those situations she wasn't already in. Sometimes we didn't find her -- so I was really proud, they were all locked in, get this ball to Jaelyn: I think we threw it to C.J., who threw it back to a guard and over the top to Jaelyn and she nailed it.

Things like that are huge momentum shifts. The three points on the board is really important. Four to seven is a big difference but gave us a fun, emotional lift but felt like the Magic of March. That's neat. Maybe it will make the SportsCenter Top 10.

Thank you, guys, for your coverage.