

**NCAA Women's Basketball Tournament
Austin, TX
#11 San Diego State 74, #6 Texas 63**

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS LONGHORNS

THE MODERATOR: We will open with two minutes of comments from Head Coach Gail Goestenkors, and then we will follow with eight minutes with the players. We have Kathleen Nash and Cokie Reed. Following that eight-minute interview with the players, we'll have Coach here for another ten minutes, and this part of this press conference will end.

We will now begin with the comments from Coach Goestenkors.

COACH GOESTENKORS: Just congratulations to San Diego State. I thought they played an exceptional game. The first half, in particular, I think, it's the best I've seen them play. I've seen a lot of tape on them. I could see they were gaining momentum and playing well through their conference tournament, had gone on a winning streak, so I knew they'd play well.

But going 8 for 10 from the three was certainly not something we were counting on, and it took the wind out of our sails. I give credit to my team. They fought back several times, but we couldn't get over the hump. We missed layups, and we missed free throws. To be successful in this environment against a great team, you've got to take advantage of every opportunity you get, and we did not. So we're extremely disappointed with the way things went today.

But I give credit to San Diego State. They made big plays, especially Jene Morris. We obviously couldn't do anything with her. She hit -- from outside she penetrated, hit from inside, and

she's also an outstanding defensive player. So she pretty much had her way with us.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the players.

Q. Kat, they obviously started 8 for 10 from the three. Did they do something differently than you guys expected? It just seemed like that was their game.

KATHLEEN NASH: I don't think we were expecting them to come out and hit their threes like that. We just didn't adjust well. We scouted them well, but sometimes teams make shots you don't expect. So we should have adjusted better.

Q. Did you think at the half that you guys would be able to do something differently to skim that tide? You didn't expect them to play that way for two straight halves.

KATHLEEN NASH: We just knew we needed to get the ball inside. Our shots weren't really falling that much. We needed to tie it up on the defensive end because they were getting a lot of points in transition, and we thought they'd cool off a little bit from the three. But we still wanted to put more pressure on them so they didn't get those open looks.

Q. Kat, what goes through your mind after a loss like that?

KATHLEEN NASH: I mean, it's a really tough loss for us. We weren't expecting to lose. It's just tough because you work all year long for this time, and it's a killer to lose. It's tough for our seniors going out like this, but we just have to get ready for next year.

Q. Cokie, can you describe the frustration part? There were so many layups that went in. Not just layup-wise, but their defense, your balls wouldn't go in. What was going on there?

COKIE REED: We just weren't making layups. You can't dwell on it. You have to just try to get it back on defense.

Q. For either of you, as the game was going on, you guys really came back. [Indiscernible].

Talk about the game plan the last few minutes and the game plan you guys were trying to play.

COKIE REED: We were just trying to get defensive stops, foul, hope they miss the free throw, and score on offense.

Q. You seem to get some spark when you came back in the first half and again in the second half. What were you trying to do out there?

COKIE REED: Just make layups and rebound really.

Q. [Indiscernible]. Was it unexpected?

KATHLEEN NASH: No, I just think sometimes shots don't fall. They definitely fell their way today.

That changes our game up a little bit because I think we're used to having those shots.

Q. Kathleen, you had a boot camp. You practiced two-a-days for a week to work on turnovers.

For the most part, you did pretty well with that. Their turnovers kind of kept you all in the game.

Can you talk about that a little bit.

KATHLEEN NASH: I mean, we didn't turn the ball over, but we also didn't make our shots. And when you don't make shots, you can't really win. We tried to pick it up on the defensive end. I think they had too many transition points on us. I mean, we tried to do the job. It just didn't work.

Q. Cokie, how is it in the locker room when you get down 14 at the half? What did you all talk about?

COKIE REED: Just coming back and getting defensive stops and just trying to win.

Q. For either player, it's tough to lose the first game. Can you describe the frustration you must

feel for the entire season with high expectations and not to get the win today?

KATHLEEN NASH: I mean, it's tough not to meet expectations. We were really frustrated today. Like I said, it's just you work all year long, and you have these expectations, and it all comes down to this. If you don't step up, in one game, it's all over.

Q. You guys played last year against San Diego State. Seemed like guard play was a bigger deal this year. [Indiscernible].

KATHLEEN NASH: I don't know. They were still a solid team. Their guard play definitely hurt us today.

Q. Is it tough for you to go out and lose it on your home court?

KATHLEEN NASH: I mean, it's tough with all our fans being here and they're all rooting for us. They've been there all year. We really feel like we've let them down. It was really tough because last year we lost too. So we want to definitely next year not let this happen again.

THE MODERATOR: This will conclude the player portion of the post-game press conference.

Thank you very much. We appreciate it.

We'll now open the floor for questions for Coach.

Q. What did you say to the girls at halftime, and did it help in the first five or ten minutes of the second half?

COACH GOESTENKORS: Yeah, I said -- I told them two other teams in this tournament have been down 18 points and come back and won. So we were fine. We've been down quite a bit before in games and come back. So not to panic but that we needed to do a better job with our defense. We were going to look to trap a little bit more because we needed to get some tips and some steals and hopefully get some transition points because we were not hitting our outside shots.

So we scored the first couple buckets of the second half, and we were feeling good, and we got the transition we wanted. We got the penetration and the layups we wanted. We were missing our layups. So we could never get over that hump. I felt like, if we just would have put some of those layups down, you know, it would have changed things. We would have had them back on our heels.

Our defense was very good in the second half. They made five buckets, I think, in the second half. We did a good job defensively. We got what we wanted to. But the bottom line is you've got to make some free throws and make some layups, and we did not.

Q. Brittainey had missed some layups and a couple of times tried to come back in. Can you describe what she must be going through.

COACH GOESTENKORS: I feel for Brittainey. I feel for all the seniors. This is their last opportunity. And especially for Brittainey, she's such a great player, to go out with such a bad game. That's the only way I can describe it. She could not seem to do anything right. We kept trying to take her out. Sometimes players can shake it off and get refocused. And her heart is willing, but it just wasn't to be for her. So I really feel bad for her because I know she takes a lot of it upon her shoulders.

You know, tonight was not her night. One of your best players having one of her worst nights, it's tough to overcome.

Q. Obviously, you want home court, but at the same time, is there extra pressure on the player to produce?

COACH GOESTENKORS: Perhaps. But I still feel like there's a comfort of being at home. We love playing at home. We love our fans. And you could feel them when we started to make our run. They got into it, and they were so emotional for us and trying to help us through. I felt like they were really a huge advantage for us.

Now, I can't say if some of the players felt pressure. I don't think that's what caused them to miss shots. I just -- I would always rather play at home when you get the opportunity.

Q. Can you talk about getting your defense back in the second half, but struggling against Jene Morris [Indiscernible].

COACH GOESTENKORS: We were trying to stop her, believe it or not. And down the stretch, we weren't supposed to be fouling -- we didn't want to foul her because she's their money player. She's the go-to player. We talked about it, but they were smart. They got the ball in her hands, and she wasn't going to give it up. I mean, she was very -- she played, I thought, a great game overall.

We tried trapping her. We tried switching screens on her. She's just a very heady player, and she took advantage of just about everything we did. If we had a post on her, she drove and drew the foul. If we had a guard on her, she took it to the basket. And obviously, she hit all the threes as well. When somebody's doing that, they're very difficult to defend.

Q. What's going through your head when they were getting all those threes and you were down by 15, 18 points?

COACH GOESTENKORS: I was stunned. They make about 4 1/2 threes a game, and they had 8. I mean, 8 for 10. It's just remarkable. You don't usually see that kind -- I don't think I've ever seen that kind of shooting half from somebody that's more of a penetrating team. They're a transition, a penetrating team. They'll take the open three if they've got it.

They were just on fire, and it became contagious for them. We couldn't hit it, and I think it became contagious for us as well. I kept thinking, they have to cool off. Obviously, they cooled off in the second half from the three. But usually, at some point the percentages will start to work the way they have all season long.

Q. As hot as they were, if you'd been able to make half a dozen layups, you would have been

in the game.

COACH GOESTENKORS: Yeah, back to just the layups and free throws.

Q. Coach, talk a little bit about the final minute as you were trying to just keep the ball more on your side.

COACH GOESTENKORS: Right. We were trying to get one good trap. We've done that before, one good trap. We go for the steal. If we don't get the steal, then we were going to foul. We didn't want to foul Morris, but unfortunately that's the way it worked out many times. Then we were doing a better job at fouling some of their other players, but they made their free throws.

When you've got a team that's such good ball handlers, they've got great guards. Senior leadership, great guards. It's hard to get steals off of them. So you have to make a decision. Are we going to let the clock run for 25 seconds and let them get a shot, or are you going to foul early and hopefully get the ball back and get a score? And they hit their free throws.

Q. Coach, obviously on any other night the defense will get you to tomorrow night's game. Forcing turnovers and not turn the ball over in the playoffs will help. Just talk about the play.

COACH GOESTENKORS: Especially in the second half, we took care of the ball. That's what we've been working on. That was the good thing. And our defense in the second half, I thought, overall was good. However, you've got to make layups. I don't know what else to say, layups and free throws. I felt for the kids because they're layups. They've been shooting those probably since they were in second grade and couldn't put them down.

So when that's happening, you know, you're going to have a long night, and you're going to have a short season.

Q. From a personal standpoint, how much did this bother you in your third year of the program, you wanted to make that next step and get to the second round?

COACH GOESTENKORS: It's very difficult. As someone who's used to going to Final Fours, I'm really -- I don't know that I've been out in the first round before. So it's very difficult going back to back out in the first game. So we go back to work.

I feel like we have turned a corner with this team. I think San Diego State is a much more difficult matchup than we had last year. Last year, obviously, we were missing Carla. But they were picked to win their league, and they really could have. They hit a tough stretch where they lost several games, but the way they're playing right now, they're a very, very good basketball team.

You know, in the Big 12, you look at the things we did and over the course of the season, I feel like this team did turn a corner, these players did. They understand more what's necessary, but now we've got to take another step forward, and that happens in the postseason, the summer, and the preseason. That's when you really make the big strides.

Q. What did you tell your players after the game?

COACH GOESTENKORS: I told the seniors I felt terrible for them. My heart goes out to them. I love them very, very much, and I feel very proud to have had the opportunity to coach them for three years, and I'm just sorry that I couldn't help them to go further in the tournament because I think they deserved it. I feel bad for them the way they had to go out.

And then I challenged everybody else that's returning. I said, if you want to get more, you've got to give more, and the giving starts in the postseason and all through the summer when nobody's watching you, it's what you do so you are mentally tough and physically tough. And when things don't go your way, you can dig down deep because you know you deserve to win.

THE MODERATOR: That's a great way to wrap it up, Coach. Thank you very much.