

# PAC-12 Men's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 10 2016

## Cuonzo Martin

## Jabari Bird

## Ivan Robb

### California

California - 76, Oregon State - 68

THE MODERATOR: Coach Martin, opening comments, about the game?

COACH MARTIN: It was a hard-fought game. Both teams battled. We knew it would be a tough game, just like the previous two. They make you take tough shots, they put pressure on, they're physical without fouling, And one of the best guards in all of college basketball. He does a tremendous job of making plays, rebounding, defending, getting steals. Really good shooters.

So just we knew it would be that. This time of year it's anybody's game, and we had to be locked in, and I thought our guys did a great job down the stretch finding a way to get a win.

**Q. Jabari, can you talk about the fact that in each half you guys stretched out the double-digit leads and you had to fight them off? Talk about those three-pointers that you kept hitting every time they took the lead late in the game?**

JABARI BIRD: Oregon State, they're a tough team. They're scrappy and they always fight back. So once you get a lead, you can't get comfortable with them because they always find a way to get back in the games and they find a way to make things grimy. But they're a talented team and it's a good win for us.

As far as my three point shots, my teammates did a great job of finding me. I just did my job.

**Q. Can you talk about the challenge facing Utah? You guys split during the regular season, and obviously they post some unique challenges, Coach, with their size down low.**

COACH MARTIN: Well, I think the first thing when you have one of the best bigs in college basketball, he can score, he can pass it, rebounds the basketball, makes a great decision with the ball, so when you double him,



you have to be very careful. They have guys that can make shots.

I don't think Brandon Taylor gets the credit he deserves, in my opinion. A tough, hard-nosed guy. Makes big plays, makes big shots. I think those two guys make them go.

Other key guys, they understand their role and they know what to do to be successful as a team. So that's one of the teams that you have to beat them. They won't give you the game.

**Q. Ivan, can you also talk about what you expect out of Utah tomorrow? You looked like you were ready to play tonight, but it's going to be another big game tomorrow for you guys?**

IVAN RABB: Right. I mean, I think we know what to expect from Utah. We played them twice and we split, but we know going into the game it's going to be a physical, tough game. I mean, you have to make the right decisions, take care of the basketball, finish around the basket and just take the challenge because they have big-time players. And we have big-time players as well. It comes down to who wants the game more.

**Q. Ivan, can you talk about playing in the Pac-12 Tournament for the first time for you, what the atmosphere was like and just the general emotion you were feeling out there with the fans and your teammates?**

IVAN RABB: First of all, I wanted to say the stakes are really high. That is the first thing I noticed coming here is win or go home. That's the way I play. I play with that same mindset. The atmosphere is great. I'm sure tomorrow night's game will have a lot more fans, but at the same time we had a lot of support tonight as well as Oregon State, and we took care of business. I'm just glad to be playing tomorrow.

**Q. You guys had trouble during the season at neutral sites or on the road in general. Is it kind of not a weight off your shoulders, but does it build confidence to win a game like this?**

JABARI BIRD: It's a good win against a good team. The fact we did it in a neutral site, it helps a little bit. But we're not too concerned with that right now. We're just trying to move one game at a time. Whoever we

play next, tough opponent or not, we've just got to go in and win ballgames.

**Q. Can you talk about the challenges of facing Utah? It's like a completely different kind of team than the team you just played tonight. I know last time you played them you had quite a bit of trouble with their pick-and-roll with Poeltl. Can you talk about what the challenge is that you'll face?**

COACH MARTIN: Just when you're talking about the pick-and-roll defense at their place, we have to do a better job of tightening the screws up. I thought we had a lot of break down and the their guards picked us apart off the high ball screen. They made plays and he dunked off the -- he made plays if he didn't have a shot. They did a great job executing what they were trying to do.

Obviously we have to watch film on that and make sure we tighten where we need to tighten up to be ready for them. But they have a lot of different options. They do other things. I think we're a better ball screen team defending at this point than we were at that particular time, but they made plays.

**Q. Coach, what did you see from Ivan? He had a bunch of rebounds and blocks, especially in those last three minutes, I think?**

COACH MARTIN: Well, because they were so spread out, it's almost as if they had five guards on the perimeter. Everything's wide open, so he did a great job. He switched off on the ball screens. That means in most cases late in the game he was on the guy that was handling the ball trying to take him one on one so now if he missed the shot he gets the rebound.

I just thought he did a great job keeping balls alive, chest to chest, defend those guys. That's not an easy for a guy almost 6'11" guarding smaller guys attacking off the dribble. But I thought he did a tremendous job rebounding. The long rebounds, he's getting most of those balls 50-50, he's getting the ball.

**Q. Did you think that was the best game Ivan's played for you? Secondly, how concerned are you with the fact that early in the game it looked like you were ready to put them away and you couldn't do that?**

COACH MARTIN: I'm not concerned about that part. At this point in the season, it's win basketball games. The most important thing I thought we got careless with the ball in the first half. Got loose with the ball and turning the ball over. I thought that contributed to, I guess, when we had those lapses in the first half.

But I don't know if it was necessarily his best game. I think when you look at production-wise, I think he

becomes the all-time rebound leader as a freshman in Cal history, but I don't know if it's necessarily his best game with my eyes. The numbers say that, but I've seen him play really good games, and he might not have the numbers that he's had.

**Q. Jabari and Ivan, could you talk about Gary Payton? You both ended up guarding him from off ball screens and the switches. The challenge of trying to defend him tonight?**

IVAN RABB: I would just say he knows how to play the game. He knows where to pick his spots. For me trying to guard him, he's lightning quick, so it was kind of tough for me to keep my hands off of him.

But it goes to show what I need to improve on. I take that personally, so when I get a chance I'm going to work on my lateral quickness because I want to switch on guards and get stops.

But he did everything he could to carry his team. I think he had 16 rebounds. 17. 17 rebounds. He controls the game. He's a great point guard.

**Q. I don't think I've ever seen that before. 17 rebounds?**

MODERATOR: Jabari, do you have a comment?

JABARI BIRD: Yeah, basically what Ivan said. Great player, great point guard. He leads his team and does everything for him. Staying in front of him is hard, but he picks his spots. Really smooth player.

**Q. Coach, what do you remember most about that last meeting in Salt Lake City against the Utes?**

COACH MARTIN: One, we left out of there with a loss, I remember that part. I guess that's the most important thing. But they played well. They protected their home court. Now it's a neutral site and here we go. But they did their job.

**Q. I know it's still an evolving process, but when you look back at November, December, the trip to Australia and everything, how far have they come just in terms of cohesion and things they've done together?**

COACH MARTIN: Come a long way. It's hard when you travel with your team. Even though we have young guys -- I don't think you can use the word "young" anymore, because everybody has some youth. We had so many new guys. When you look at the team, Tyrone Wallace was an All-League guy that played for three years. Jordan Mathews played for two years. Jabari was injured most of his sophomore year. Sam might average 15 minutes a game.

Now you bring in new pieces, so it's not as if you had

nine guys returning on a team and then you bring in two high-profile young guys and you try to gel it in with what they do well for the team. It takes time to just understand what it means to win ballgames and what it means to be a team and have team success. Not to say anyone was selfish, but the adjustments you have to make.

Even for me as a coach, it was a process. I was learning it and going through it. Your job is to put guys in position to be successful. So there were so many unknowns of what guys strengths and weaknesses were, and you have to work through it, and obviously they've done a great job adjusting, and you see the results of it now. Won nine out of the last ten games, and that's a result of those guys understanding what they need to do to be successful as a team.