

# Pac-12 Men's Basketball Tournament

Wednesday, March 8, 2017

## Bobby Hurley Obinna Oleka Tra Holder Arizona State

Arizona State - 98, Stanford - 88 (OT)

THE MODERATOR: Coach, an opening statement and then questions.

COACH HURLEY: It was a gut-check game again. Just having the read that we had down the stretch. The last three minutes we were stuck on 81. We didn't play as well as we had played through most of the game on offense. And they made some big plays to get it to overtime.

But that's -- you know, it shows the character and the determination of my team and the heart of my team to rebound from being tied at the end there and even Tra had a great look at a shot to win the game in regulation and to respond and be able to keep playing well and putting them away.

It was a tribute to how they've been competing and battling this whole Pac-12 season.

**Q. Coach, can you just take us through your emotions at the end of the game and seeing your team do so well in overtime?**

COACH HURLEY: I just trust my team. I believe in them. They've given me every reason to believe in them just the way we've won some dramatic games down the stretch. These guys are playmakers. Tra Holder, Torian Graham, Shannon Evans, Kodi Justice and Obi Oleka, 27-13, just did what a senior needs to do. Played an extremely high level against two very good interior players. So even though it was overtime, I still kind of -- I trusted that we were going to get it done, and I know that they would find another gear.

**Q. Bobby, if you could talk about decision-making down the stretch and getting into overtime, decision-making in overtime?**

COACH HURLEY: I thought that when they switched to their zone that we got a little bit stagnant with that and the ball didn't move as well as it had been moving. We tried some high-degree-of-difficulty shots over there



from core players, and we just stalled a little bit at that end of the floor.

But just to recover from that, and to, again, step up the way the guys did in overtime was great. Obi got us going right away with a basket in overtime, and Tra was getting to the rim with regularity and making plays all night. Shannon hit a big three, I believe, after they hit a three, which is always an important thing. I think he pushed the lead back to five. So, like, everyone was making plays, Kodi's shot with like five seconds on the clock when the ball was bouncing around.

So these guys have been doing it the whole season. They're really good players. They've always sacrificed so much to make up for some of the things we don't do as well.

We're not traditional. We're different, but different in a really good way.

**Q. Coach, when Obi's throwing down dunks like he does, how do you see your team feed off that?**

COACH HURLEY: Yeah, Obi plays with a lot of passion and is always -- someone could always be on his poster. He's got those type of explosiveness to the rim. He did a little bit of everything. He hit the threes today for us, which is big. He'll stretch the defense and open the defense up more for the guards. Just the six offensive rebounds, seven defensive rebounds, he's been an anchor for us around the basket and just really good all-around effort.

**Q. You guys talk about coming off this and getting Oregon tomorrow, a team you guys played pretty close in Eugene. Just your thoughts coming out of this with a match-up against Oregon for the two?**

TRA HOLDER: I think that was our game to win in Eugene, but down the stretch, Dillon Brooks took it over. And he's a player here, so we respect him. We're going to watch him and see how we can correct our mistakes, so hopefully we'll give ourselves a better chance to win.

**Q. Obi, your thoughts on that first game?**

OBINNA OLEKA: I think we played hard, and just at the end of the game we just lost the momentum because Brooks took over the game. But other than that, they're beatable.

**Q. Obi, I wondered what you try to do, they have some pretty big bodies underneath. What were you trying to do against them today, and what did you think worked well?**

OBINNA OLEKA: I mean, I was just playing as hard as I can no matter what. I didn't look at the game or stats, I just played hard to win the game.

COACH HURLEY: Obi's a match-up nightmare, too, by the way. As good as these other guys were, and Travis had a great year, he was a handful again. Humphrey, a handful. Obi is a match-up nightmare for people because of the mobility and his quickness and the physicality. So the combination of size and quickness and ability to go away from the baskets, just all the things that he brings, gives us great confidence too.

**Q. Tra, just the last couple minutes seeing them come back and rally and tie the game, how important was it for you to get recentered in overtime?**

TRA HOLDER: I just remember my last two years we kind of had the lead and we kind of froze up and didn't find the way to win the game. I don't know. I try to make plays for the team, and luckily I made some shots. But I don't know. I just felt like as a point guard you've got to make some game-winning plays, and luckily my team and my coach trusted me to make those plays down the stretch.

**Q. Bobby, your thoughts on the match-up with Oregon? Do you sort of come out of this and take some momentum? But also you had to play the guys a little longer than you probably wanted to have to in an overtime game? How does it set you up for tomorrow?**

COACH HURLEY: Yeah, they're an elite team and one of the best teams in the country. So, I mean, we have to try and play our style and got to take care of the basketball. They're very good with mixing their defenses up. We have to -- we've got to be able to score. I think that's my biggest takeaway from our performance today was just the bounceback effect from 60 points against Arizona to getting back to how we're capable of attacking and making plays at the offensive end.

But they have a lot of -- obviously, a lot of great players. They're very well coached. Great shot blocking. And Brooks, over the last two years, there hasn't been anyone in the league that's made as many big shots for a team.

So we have complete respect for them, and we'll just try and get our edge back, try and recover, get our guys rested and get ready for tomorrow. See if we

could have our starters score 96 out of 98 again tomorrow. You guys sign on for that? I'd be happy if you guys could do that again. That would be great.

**Q. Obi, when you heard Coach say that he trusts you guys completely to get the job done, what is your reaction to that?**

OBINNA OLEKA: Just taking the challenge and just embracing it and going out on the court and doing it. That's about it.

TRA HOLDER: I mean, we have an equal and mutual respect for him. We believe in him, he believes in us, so we just take what his game plan is and just follow it, and hopefully we can execute it to our best ability.

**Q. Bobby, you were saying the other day how much dribble penetration was going to be important for you. Can you just talk about -- and the Stanford coach said he thought that was one of the keys to the game. Can you just discuss that a little bit?**

COACH HURLEY: Yeah, it was Shannon, it was Tra, it was Kodi, and those guys just making plays off the dribble and the ball screens. Putting pressure on the defense. Obi was rolling and popping, and Torian is always a threat. The teams have to know where he's at, so it just opens the court up.

So that's how we play. The guys play with freedom, they play with confidence, and they believe in themselves. So it's great. It was terrific too, by the way. This venue, T-Mobile, was unbelievable. I think it's terrific for the league. What a great place. This is an exciting environment. Great for the student-athletes to get a chance to play in this type of atmosphere with this floor and Vegas. I know my guys are loving it right now.

**Q. Coach, I think you guys hit three straight threes on three straight possessions in overtime. Is that when you feel you guys locked up that game?**

COACH HURLEY: We didn't rely on the three-point line tonight. We didn't bomb away from three. I think we took good threes for the most part, and that's what the defense was giving us. We got into the seam a few times against their zone and kicked the ball out and made some clutch three-point shots. But we've done it most of the year. This is nothing surprising that we had ten in this game. We're certainly capable of doing that and more.

**Q. Your box scores, do you ever look at your box scores? You mentioned 96 of 98 points from your starters. Do you ever look at your box scores and say how are we doing this?**

COACH HURLEY: Not really. Because those five guys are as fit as any five players in the country probably.

Yeah, maybe. They share the ball. They're unselfish. The shot distribution is very good between the five guys. Then we got good minutes out of Andre Adams and Ramon Vila tonight. It didn't result in points, but it did in post defense against Travis. Rebounding, especially Andre late in the game, I thought made some plays on defense that helped us. So they're going to have to do similar-type minutes moving forward and contribute when they're ready to do that.