

Pac-12 Women's Basketball Media Day

Monday, October 7, 2019



JR Payne

Mya Hollingshed

Quinessa Caylao-Do

Colorado Buffaloes

JR PAYNE: First, I'd just like to say how excited we are to be here at Pac-12 media day, and we're just thrilled to get the day going. About the University of Colorado women's basketball team, I'm really excited about where we are right now, but the cool thing is that I'm really even more excited about who we are right now. Our team faced a lot of adversity last year and just a ton of injuries and different things throughout the season, but I think that's been an incredible motivator for our team throughout the summer.

A large portion of our team spent the entire summer in Boulder training and really getting ready. So we feel very prepared and truly excited for the upcoming season.

Q. (Inaudible - question regarding Kennedy Leonard)

JR PAYNE: She is officially gone, but the good thing is she's officially a fantastic pro now in Germany.

Q. Let's talk about life after Kennedy. Obviously you mentioned that you had to go through a big chunk of last year without her and a lot of your young kids stepped up. What's the identity of this team when so much of it was on her shoulders? How do you move forward without her?

JR PAYNE: Yeah, well, I'm the type of person that is always looking for the blessing in the storm, so while we wanted Kennedy to be healthy and would have been a more experienced ballclub with her in the lineup last year, the blessing is that we had an incredible opportunity for a lot of young players to step up and play key contributing minutes that simply just wouldn't have been available without that injury. But there were times throughout last season due to several injuries that actually these two on stage really carried us offensively, defensively, from a leadership standpoint. And so the great thing is that we actually do have a lot of experience even through the struggle of injuries last season.

Q. Quinessa and Maya, do you take a look at the preseason polls? Being picked to finish 12th, do you take that as motivation?

QUINESSA CAYLAO-DO: I think it's exciting. I think it's really motivating for the team, especially for the younger players and the culture that we have created. I think it will upset a lot of people, and we're looking forward to being good this season.

MYA HOLLINGSBED: Going off what she said, I totally agree with that, but also we're really focus on just making each other better every day, so we're really not focused on what everybody else is talking about. So we're really just getting in the gym every day and just working hard to be a better ballclub every day.

Q. Quinessa, since you're the only senior on the team, now the de facto leader, what has it been like taking on that leadership role and what do you expect from yourself as a leader?

QUINESSA CAYLAO-DO: I think it's been a good experiences. I think it allows me to step up. I feel like -- even last year, I was the only person in my class, so I feel like it's just a good opportunity, especially for me having experience and being able to help the younger players too, and giving them knowledge too. And I think just everyone is being able to step up some. I'm just not the only person that's going to be a leader on the team.

Q. Q, what did you work on this summer to improve your game?

QUINESSA CAYLAO-DO: For sure the weight room and my outside game. So just shooting threes and my pull-ups, so just shooting more.

MYA HOLLINGSBED: Everything really, everything -- the part of my game needs to get better, so weight room, outside, inside, making moves off the bounce, moving off the ball, everything.

Q. Who's the strongest player on your team in the weight room?

MYA HOLLINGSBED: It's between like three people.

JR PAYNE: But before we go there, let's say we have this thing that is a big deal for us in the weight room. We want everyone on our team to be in the plate club, the plates meaning the 45s, and you've got to be able

to bench plates. That's a big deal for us, we print T-shirts and all that stuff. When we first got to Colorado, we might have had two players in the plate club. It wasn't as big a priority. I think now we only have one or two that are not in the plate club, so we've actually gotten a lot stronger, but as far as who's the strongest.

QUINNESSA CAYLAO-DO: Annika Jank, she's a freshman, but she came in really strong. She works out with football players.

MYA HOLLINGSBED: And then Peanut and Kai.

JR PAYNE: We've got a lot of really strong kids.

MYA HOLLINGSBED: There's too many people.

Q. Coach, what excites you most about this team heading into the 2019-20 season?

JR PAYNE: I'm in love with my team. I mean, we have an incredible group. That's why I said I'm excited about who we are. We're a group that is very -- like Mya kind of said, really dedicated to each other right now. So we're at a place where we have great accountability within our team. People are pushing each other really to be the very best that they can be. We're challenging each other, and we've just got tremendous energy. And sometimes youth is not a bad thing. Sometimes youth sort of gives you that youthful energy to keep going and really try to get better every day.

Q. Coach, what are some of the messages? You mentioned the energy, you mentioned accountability, you mentioned kids in the weight room, the locker room. On the floor, what are some of the things that have to change to get you guys -- it's muscle memory when you lose, sometimes it's muscle memory when you win.

JR PAYNE: Sure.

Q. How do you change some of those close losses? What has to change to get them into the win column?

JR PAYNE: Yeah, one thing I'm really going to like about this team is that we'll have a little bit more spread-out as far as productivity. We need to be better defensively this year. We really struggled to get stops when we needed to consistently. So that's an area that, as a group, we're paying a lot of attention to from the coaching staff.

And then the other thing that's really important that we're continuing to try to instill and really getting our team to understand is discipline is unbelievably important for this group. When you've had some real play makers in Leonard and Robinson, there were times when it kind of is like give the ball to Lexie and

just let her go to work. And she could do that. That was sort of her makeup. And same with Ken.

But with this group, we have the potential to have a lot of great scoring options on the floor at different times. But in order to really establish that, we've got to be disciplined in what we do.

Q. Since you're studying communications, the Pac-12 media day experience, what's that like from your perspective, some of the things you study in class that you may want to apply to real life?

QUINNESSA CAYLAO-DO: It's kind of interesting. It kind of reminds me of like my public speaking class, and just practicing interviews, so I just took a class last semester, so it was like professional and calm. So it's just like how do you answer questions, how do you handshake people? So I feel like it's just like applying to media day today.

Q. Do you get home very much?

QUINNESSA CAYLAO-DO: Not too often, but my family comes to like all the games. Like my mom tries to come to every game that I have. I get to see her more often, so I feel like I am at home.

Q. Tacoma to Boulder is kind of a hard commute. That is impressive. What is it about having your family close that makes your Boulder experience even better?

QUINNESSA CAYLAO-DO: I feel like it's really cool, but I think that my teammates too and the coaches, they really help me feel like they're a family, too, so it's kind of like I have my second family with me all the time. And then I talk to my mom all the time and like my little brothers. So especially when they come, it's just really exciting having them all home.

Q. I'm just curious, you guys play at the highest elevation of any team in the Pac-12. Do you actually notice when you play teams that that's a real advantage for you when other teams come into your building?

JR PAYNE: Yeah, there's places all throughout the building where it reminds you that you are at 5,345 feet. It's scripted everywhere. Do you want to speak to that?

MYA HOLLINGSBED: Yes and no. Like sometimes when we play teams, like they'll keep up. I'm like, y'all aren't tired yet? Sometimes it hits them. They have like the little tanks on their benches just in case anybody passes out or they can't handle the elevation. They have it all set up. We're good on our end, but it's really cool to see other teams --

QUINNESSA CAYLAO-DO: Yeah, I think it's good going

to other places, like going away from us. So if we're in Washington or something, we're at sea level, so I feel like we breathe a lot easier out there.

MYA HOLLINGSLED: Running for days.

Q. Looking from a national perspective, do you see where Sabrina coming into this year has kind of become the face of women's college basketball and potentially even the face of college basketball with the name recognition for coming into this season?

JR PAYNE: Oh, yeah, certainly. Any time you can name an athlete and everybody knows who you're talking about with just their first name, it's a pretty big deal. You talk about Kobe, you talk about Sabrina. So I think it's remarkable to have a woman of that caliber in our conference. And then for us to be able to play against someone like that, and I love that Sabrina celebrates all of the other great teams in our league. She's a great ambassador for our sport.

Q. I know you love music. What do you have in your Beatz or your iPhone? What gets you going before a game or practice?

MYA HOLLINGSLED: Really everything, but I play it all. We just put it on the speaker and we just dance to anything. A lot of people don't know, but I like country music a little bit, so I'll play a little bit of that, but not all the time. It's just a little dabble.