

Pac-12 Women's Basketball Media Day

Monday, October 7 2019



Jody Wynn

Missy Petersen

Amber Melgoza

Washington Huskies

JODY WYNN: It's great to be here. It's great to bring Amber and Missy to the Pac-12 Networks. We're excited for this upcoming season.

Q. Is it possible to carry momentum over from one season to the next? The last time that we saw you guys was obviously at the conference tournament, and you lit the place on fire. That was seven months ago. Can you sort of rekindle that as you go into this season?

JODY WYNN: I think that started back in spring workouts. You know, I believe that the momentum on which we ended the season on a high carried us into our spring training and our summer training. And so I definitely believe that you can carry momentum from one season to the next. I think a lot of confidence was gained. It ignited an incredible work ethic for our players to be able to taste success again in this upcoming season.

Q. Amber, when did that mentality change for this team?

AMBER MELGOZA: I think -- our mentality. It definitely is something to know that after all these games and the wins, and I mean, our loss at the end of the season -- but it was something that, like you said, gained us confidence, and that's something that is carrying on from spring workouts to summer and now to the preseason that is coming up.

Q. Amber, I've watched you go off and have amazing scoring output, specifically on the offensive end. Let's talk about your teammates, how they can help support what you can do. What's the growth you've seen? Who are you expecting more to step up and be that supporting cast member?

AMBER MELGOZA: Yes, definitely. This girl right here next to me, Missy Petersen. She's doing a great job. She's becoming an all-around offensive player as well as defense. Haley Van Dyke, Mai-Loni, and then our transfer Rita. I think that's going to be something that --

they're all very good scoring, they know how to score and they know how to get the ball in the basket, and I think that's going to help us out definitely.

Q. Missy, for you, that shot was so iconic at the Pac-12 tournament. Being on campus, being around others, how have you heard that reaction kind of carry over this summer, and are people still saying 2.3 seconds, that shot?

MISSY PETERSON: Yeah, I wish I could relive that moment a million times. But I kind of get to a little bit when I see a lot of friends and a lot of people. A lot of times it's one of the first things they ask me about: What was going through your head, how does it feel? My answer is always: I was numb. I was in shock. It was so much fun.

But yeah, I get it a lot. I talk to a lot of people about it.

But aside from the shot, the whole game was so much fun. You know, the shot was great, but everything leading up to it and the feeling of proving so many people wrong and doing something that not a lot of people thought we could do, that was my favorite part about it.

Q. You proved people wrong in that game. How do you prove them wrong again this year? And not just one game, but no one picks you to win, but where you guys show up every day and nobody wants to play you because they know you guys are capable of that type of game. How do you carry it from one game and make it a repetitive movement, if you will, during the season?

AMBER MELGOZA: I definitely think it starts in practice. Practice is where you practice how you play, and I think that's something we have. You play with heart in practice. You have a strong mentality. You have confidence in yourself that can carry on into a game, and I think that's very important to do.

Also I just feel that we are more -- we have that chemistry bond, and that's something that's going to carry on, as well.

JODY WYNN: I agree with Amber that it begins every single day. It's not just something that we turn a light on when the games are on, and all of a sudden we can out-perform this monstrous opponent that's next to us. I

believe it's every single day. We always talk about effort combined with performance equals wins. And so it's not always just performance, but you have to have effort, and that's every possession of every practice. You know, it's easy for young people to take possessions off -- and we work really, really hard about not taking those possessions off until there's a water break in practice or a time-out -- to be able to play through mistakes. Because mistakes are going to happen, we're going to turn the ball over. But it's the next possession.

Just training ourselves that we're always moving forward, the next possession, the next opportunity, and not really dwelling on a missed shot or a poor possession. You know, it starts every single day, and it's nothing like we can just turn the light switch on. I think we have the know-how. I think we believe in each other, and now it's demanding of ourselves and being accountable to each other as teammates and as coaches to give our best every single possession.

Q. We all know what Amber can do and we've seen her have some amazing games last season and the season before, actually. Do you feel like on a national scale she's underrated? And what do you feel can be done to maybe put her more on the national scale? She is one of the best.

JODY WYNN: Yeah, I mean, Amber is extremely talented, as all of you in this room know. She's pound for pound probably just as strong as any off guard in the country. Fun fact: She just like deadlifted 341 pounds the other day, so she's a beast. She's been that way since she was seven years old winning National Championships, BMX racing. But she is a talented basketball player. Amber's challenge is to be -- and what she wants to be is to be an overall complete basketball player on both sides of the floor. And she's been working really, really hard. She studies game film. She's improving her basketball IQ and understanding how to score when the ball is not in her hands. I mean, she believes and we all believe that she can score at any time on any possession, so it's just taking the high-percentage shots and the right shots for her to be successful.

And you know what? We don't really get into rankings and where she stands nationally. Her job is every single day. It's every single practice. We're not looking at the dessert. Whether she plays after her college days are over or not, we're looking at every single day with Amber and how she's improving on a daily basis. Because then at the end of the day, she's going to be able to go off and do what she chooses to do.

Q. I wanted to go back to talk about the Pac-12 Tournament. Utah had beaten you pretty handily

just 13 days before you turned around and kind of just took over the tournament. What transformation happened in those 13 days, and could you tell that there was a shift of any kind?

JODY WYNN: Let me just tell you, something came over us at the hotel, and all of a sudden we were just like, a crystal ball -- no.

Honestly, I think one of the best attributes is having a short memory, right, good or bad. On any given day, anybody can beat anybody, and that's why we play sport, right?

We remembered that as well as we remembered the Oregon State 32-point loss a couple weeks prior. But we also believed. A testament to these two ladies here is last year as they were -- Amber has kind of been a leader, and as Missy was emerging as a leader in the program -- is they took hold of their opportunity as a new opportunity, a new season. It was our third season, and we were 0-0 just like everybody else, and we really believed in studying game film and how we could perform much better collectively as a group and what we needed to do to secure a victory.

But it starts with the desire and the ladies not wanting the season to end. It's easy to want your season to end if maybe you're not as successful as you want to be, but these two -- and they led the rest of the team -- they wanted to keep playing. They had a desire to keep fighting, and they liked the underdog role.

Q. Amber, Missy, we always see Jody on the sidelines walking up and down. If there's a piece of gum in her mouth, you feel sorry for the piece of gum. It's that kind of intensity and relentlessness. How much of that do you guys bring to the floor with you every time the ball gets tipped up?

MISSY PETERSON: I think one of the reasons our team is scrappy -- we dive on those balls -- we are the way we are because of her and the staff behind her. I love playing for that type of energy. You know, I've played for a lot of different coaches growing up. I've played for the ones who stay seated the whole game, the ones who are super -- let's stand up, and then I've played for Jody. She puts her all into everything she coaches.

I think she's probably the funnest coach I've ever played for. She pushes you. She wants to get everything out of every player, but she has fun. She's going to fight for you, and she's going to do everything she can to help us win that game, and I wouldn't trade her for the world.

Q. Coach, have you ever won a pedometer, and how many miles do you walk during a game?

JODY WYNN: No, but I think my body should look a little bit better. I feel short-changed.

No, I can't help it. I tell myself, too, like I'm going to stay seated or I'm going to be calm. But I tell myself because then I watch and I look like an idiot, and so -- especially when my shoe comes off.

MISSY PETERSON: I feel worse for the heels than the gum.

JODY WYNN: Honestly, I want to be out there. It's like the kid in me. I'm like that every day in practice until my body tells me not to move a certain way. But yeah, if I could slide with them on the floor or --

AMBER MELGOZA: Sometimes she does.

JODY WYNN: Yeah, I have to kick my foot out so the ball can kind of go in. I don't know, it's just -- I don't know if it'll ever go away. I tell myself that I need to -- I'm getting older. I need to calm myself down a little bit. But it's just who I am. I want to fight for them, you know, and I think that they know that. They fight for us every single day. My goodness, every practice they're in there running and weight training, and I know I've walked their shoes and I understand the grind behind the scenes.

And so I just feel like I owe -- that's my way of giving back to them all that they're giving me and our fans and our university.

Q. Jody, what do you want your team to be known for?

JODY WYNN: Grit, toughness, camaraderie, connectivity, that we can do anything together. You know, never quit, pursue the glass ceiling. I think these are life lessons that they're going to take well into the working world. And if somebody tells you you're not good enough, you're not pretty enough, you're not tall enough, you're not smart enough, just keep pounding on that door and fighting through and believing in yourself so you can then believe in each other.