



**Pac-12 Women's Basketball Media Day Press Roundtable
California: Associate Head Coach Charmin Smith and Brittany Boyd**

Opening Statement:

Coach: "Hi everyone. We're extremely excited to be here. Looking forward to a great season and especially to answering all of your questions."

On any changes that came from reaching the Final Four...

Coach: "I think right off the bat our standards are a lot higher. That's a good thing. We expect more from everyone. I think we are a lot more confident as a program. Obviously when you get that type of experience, it's very helpful in terms of confidence level. I think the level of national experience we received is a positive for the program. In terms of things that have not changed, it's still Cal basketball. We still want to grind, be tough, be athletic. Nothing's going to change about our style or our character and I think you saw that. The personality of this team, the young women were really on display. Those are the things we really want to keep the same."

On the ranking in the coaches poll and if it heightens expectations...

BB: "Not necessarily. At the end of the day, who knows what could possibly happen. I don't really take the polls too much into consideration. When the ball goes up, it's a 50/50 chance of who's going to win. At the end, it doesn't really faze our team at all. But it's just another sign that it's time to get another Pac-12 championship."

On losing Layshia Clarendon and being responsible to step up...

BB: "I believe that, yes. Just by saying that, those are some really big shoes to fill. I'm still learning how to fill those shoes, but I believe that I am capable of filling that, and yes, I guess you could say if the ball needs to be in my hands at the end or to make a big shot, I'm going to find the best option for my teammate or myself, whatever is the easiest play to make. I wouldn't say just leave it all to me."

On Brittany's china trip:

Coach: "I think Lindsey was strategic in when we took that foreign tour, because last year we didn't lose anyone and didn't have anyone coming in so it wasn't the right time. So she particularly picked this summer when we had freshmen coming in and losing those four seniors. We used it as team bonding as well as for the basketball experience. So it was a tremendous experience. I was blown away; I had never been to China and didn't know what to expect. I think from a cultural standpoint, our team enjoyed it. We stepped outside of our comfort zone in terms of different types of food; Mikayla was eating snake on a stick. It was everything you want your players to get out of an experience of going to another country like that. In terms of basketball, it was sneak peek into what we're good at and what we need to work on. It was first glimpse of Brittany on different level. She's put a lot of work into her game but I think the biggest stride I've seen is the leadership piece and understanding that Layshia isn't on the court. So at times when Brittany may have been silent I hear her being more vocal. We've been yelling at her for two years to be vocal and I think she realizes now is the time for her to be doing those things. I think you'll see that from a lot of our players with us losing seniors, so there's not time to hold back."

On working over the summer...

BB: "I first took some time off, just after a long season and dealing with all of that. But after I took some time off I was in the gym shooting jump shots off the dribble, and I don't just stand there and shoot but I was moving and doing stuff, dribbling and shooting, just trying to get my jump shot better because that's where the weakest area of my game was. Also finishing better through contact and controlling myself when I go to the basket. Working on the things I need to improve, and then working on things I was good at that I want to be great at. But more importantly my shooting and being on the shooting machine, having people rebound for me, coming of dribble and using a ball screen. I feel like I'm more confident in my jump shot. I'm more confident going to the rim and finishing through contact. But I'd say it's much more my jump shot. I have a lot more confidence in myself with that."

On how to make up for the points lost by departing players...

Coach: "We've had a lot of weapons outside of Layshia and I can't say Brittany is going to average five more points a game and Reshanda Grey is going to average 11 more points, but I do know we've had weapons for quite some time and people are ready to step up. I think with additions we've had with freshmen and transfers, we have more depth than we've used in the past. I think we're more athletic than we've been, and with the addition of the 10-second line I can see defense alone creating more points for us to make up for that void with Layshia leaving. I think Lindsey [Gottlieb]'s done a great job of looking at offense and ways to tweak things to open our floor more and open things for players."

On newcomers...

Coach: "Brittany Shine, a transfer from Florida and Kyra Dunn from Pitt. Both juniors. Brittany is extremely quick and athletic. She brings an immediate impact defensively with that length and athleticism. Kyra is a tall, lean 4-player with great shot-blocking ability. She's got a great face-up shot, a bit more finesse than Talia Caldwell but defensively she can be effective for us. Freshmen coming in, a fun group, in terms of their personalities. Ben [Abdelkader] is from Belgium, she's a combo guard 1-2, great perimeter shot. People will be guarding her, she can knock down the three, she has a great feel for the game and handles it well. Courtney Range is a 3-4 player with long legs, I say it looks like she's on stilts, she is so long. She is from Manteca, California. We expect her to have an immediate impact for us. She's very versatile. I think she could be really special player at Cal. Mercedes Jefflo, also a combo guard, playing more of the 2 for us at this point but who knows down the road. She is also a great perimeter scorer, can do it all. And KC Waters, a local from Bishop O'Dowd High School, is an undersized post player but similar to Talia [Caldwell] she knows how to use her body to create space for rebounding, scoring and things like that."

On changes from making the Final Four...

BB: "I don't think anything has changed. It's still the same standards we had. It's just how we do we use the weapons we have to get to where we want to go and that's the Final Four but nothing has dropped for us. We still plan on being Pac-12 champions and getting to the Final Four. We know it's not going to be easy, just like it wasn't easy last year. I don't think our mentality has changed at all."

On Gennifer Brandon's recovery...

Coach: "She's doing really well. The surgery went extremely well and she's pushing through. If you saw her you'd never know she had this procedure. She had the rod because of stress fractures and it felt like for her long-term career it was best to do that surgery now even if that meant we wouldn't have her because we expect her to be playing well beyond Cal. But rehab is going extremely well and we do expect to have her back during non-conference season, hopefully sooner rather than later, she's working hard though. She's doing some running at lower impact. She is on the court, when we see her she looks really good, but we want to take our time and make sure she's good and not throw her into things prematurely, but she's able to do some on the court as well. We hope to have her back as soon as possible but that should be in non-conference schedule."

On Brittany Boyd's ankle sprain earlier...

BB: "I'm doing pretty well now. It was after we came back from China. It was a high ankle sprain and those take a long time to heal and I got it pretty bad. But I was back practicing the first week. I wouldn't say I'm 100% but in the 80s, almost in the 90s. I just have to keep going to rehab like I've been doing and get my ankle back strong. But other than that I'm fine."

On returners...

BB: "With Mikayla [Lyles], her jump shot is amazing right now. It's amazing. If someone's on her, she can knock it down, a one-dribble pull-up, or she will just hit a wide-open three and you know it's going in. Reshanda [Gray], since USA Basketball she has really taken that next step and she's so assertive down here and you have to give her the ball. Afure [Jemerigbe] has stepped up her game tremendously attacking the baseline hard, one-dribble pull. Justine [Hartman], she has to step up and she definitely has stepped up. She's asserting herself in the post area as well. Avigiel [Cohen], she's doing pretty well, just her voice on the court and in practice and how positive she is with helping us, it's just like having another coach on the floor."

On integrating newcomers with the current squad...

BB: "It has been [easy]. They're leaving a whole new offense and coming to a brand new offense and I believe they're adjusting pretty well. I'm still learning offense and trying to figure out the right moves. So it's all a learning experience but as for them they're doing pretty well with the plays and where to be. We're definitely on the same page. I believe we had all of last year to practice with them as well. So this year they can play, so I guess they see the passes. But they know it's coming."

Coach: "Just an example, the other day in practice, I think it's more freshmen getting adjusted to pace and speed. With Brittany, I've started seeing the "China pace". The first time we saw Brittany at this level was in China and the pace she was playing at was incredible. And coming back, the freshmen have to get used to China pace. The other day, the freshman post was on the weak side and Brittany comes through and we heard her say, "Get your hands up!" And it came right at the freshmen. They love that about Brittany and that she'll set them up and they have to be ready. She is an unselfish point guard. When you talk about go to play at the end of the game, Brittany can make that play, or she can draw and dump it off to someone who can. I think everyone will be ready and can adjust with this pace."

On how much Brittany has grown the past two years...

BB: "I have grown so much. It's amazing how somebody can grow so much in over two years. Not necessarily on the court but also off the court. I still have a lot of areas to grow in but freshman year was pretty good, my sophomore year was even better and I'm expecting my junior year to be even better. Keep moving on up as I continue to grow as a person and as a basketball player. And I continue to set high stands for myself, meet those standards and exceed them."

Closing Statement:

Coach: "As we talk about what the Final Four did for us, yes, our standards, we want them to be higher. We have the regional trophy and Final Four ring in the conference room and the players see it all the time. They say to people, we want another one of those. They tell recruits to come here so we can get another one of these. Yes, we want to strive for those things but one thing we learned from China and every day life is that it doesn't happen overnight. It's one day at a time, accomplishing really small things like having freshmen remember the out-of-bounds play. That'll lead to the next thing. But we know we're not jumping ahead. We're a long way from Nashville, from cutting down Pac-12 Championship nets. Do we think we have potential to do that? Yes. But we understand this process and we're excited about being on another journey to accomplish those things."