

March 8, 2015



Stanford – 61
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An interview with:

CAL

COACH LINDSAY GOTTLIEB BRITTANY BOYD RESHANDA GRAY

THE MODERATOR: We've got the California Golden Bears with Coach Lindsay Gottlieb, Brittany Boyd and Reshanda Gray. Coach, an opening statement?

COACH GOTTLIEB: Sure, first just want to start out by congratulating Stanford. Sometimes I think in this world we live in we focus only on our own team and our own season, but I think if we can change perspective, they've had quite a journey, and for them, this is a tremendous win. Credit to Tara and her program.

I've had a lot of times where I've stood up here with these two, and we've got triple-doubles and double-doubles, I'm just as proud of them sitting here today when their numbers weren't what any of us would expect. I thought it was a really good game. I thought Stanford was a little bit better than us in some critical moments and made some plays. But, gosh, we took a punch literally and figuratively. Our leader and our point guard goes out with blood gushing and everybody else rallied. That was something I'm proud of.

Then I thought when it could have gotten away from us in the second half, we rallied again. Just made too many mistakes and credit to Stanford, they make you pay when you make mistakes. We couldn't get it going on offense. I thought we had one more run in us, and we just couldn't get over the hump in the second half. Should have had a bigger lead at halftime. All

those little things I can go back, but right now is not the time for that.

It was a great championship game. We're sad we didn't win it. It's a lot more fun to cut down nets and dance and cheer, but you know something about your team when you still want to be with that same group and fight another day. That's what we'll do when we have a little rest, go home, and get ready for the NCAA Tournament.

Q. Lindsay, I want to ask Brittany how she was feeling, but I think she's probably going to tell me she was okay. What did you think about how she was feeling, because I saw Reshanda go over and you were kind of talking to her. She didn't look like she felt very well.

COACH GOTTLIEB: I mean, she took stitches to the face in the middle of the game; I imagine she didn't feel great. I think probably she was a little out of sorts, also. But I mean, I'm going to ride with these two till the end of time. She's still at one point in the second half I said, "Hey, affect the game how you affect the game. Don't overthink it. Just do your thing." I thought she got us going with some defensive plays. But you know, she's the toughest person I know, so I don't think there are a lot of other people you'd expect to play through that, and I just expected her to because that's who she is.

BRITTANY BOYD: Yeah, it's a little sore, but I just wanted to get back on the court and kind of mad that it happened because I kind of lost rhythm. But everything happens for a reason.

Q. When you talk about wanting to get back into it, too, do you kind of still feel that your offense hurt because of that?

BRITTANY BOYD: No, I don't like to make excuses or nothing like that but it just wasn't my night, I guess.

Q. Brittany, I was curious, is your face swollen? Is it hard to see when you came back

on the floor?

BRITTANY BOYD: No, not really.

Q. Coach, can you talk a little bit about how your younger players stepped up today?

COACH GOTTLIEB: I thought they were tremendous. Obviously, Mikayla, Jefflo, and Courtney have great numbers, but it was more like a feel. Like I said, I don't think anyone buckled when Boyd was out. I saw them look tough, and I saw them say, okay, we have to step up, and that's a really good thing because, No. 1, it's great to see growth, but also because we have more basketball to play. And I think we are at our best when our two All-Americans are surrounded by other really great players, which is what I think we have.

So we never quite could get it all together tonight, but I think there are pieces of that that bode well for us.

Q. Brittany, were you 100% coming into this game? You had taken some shots throughout the tournament.

BRITTANY BOYD: Yes, I was a hundred percent.

Q. Obviously you've played Stanford a lot. Was there anything different they did to you tonight?

BRITTANY BOYD: No.

COACH GOTTLIEB: They changed a little, sometimes they would sag in from the guards. I think this time there was a little pressure from the guards and they brought in a really strong double on Reshanda from the four player, which is a little bit of a different look.

Q. Coach, you have a tendency sometimes to start the game slow. Tonight you were getting a lot of shot attempts but just weren't connecting. Talking about that, was that something that you emphasized, to get a fast start instead of going slowly?

COACH GOTTLIEB: Yeah, we talked about being the aggressor, kind of punch-first mentality, and I thought we came out great. The shots didn't, like you said, they didn't fall right away, but they were good looks. I felt we were in a good rhythm early. Like our flow was good. I thought we controlled the first half, it's just unfortunate that we had a two-point lead instead of a 10-point lead, which is what it felt like. You know, second half we thought we were playing catch up a little bit, and couldn't get over the hump.

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Again, credit to them, they made big plays.

Q. Could you talk a little bit about after the stitches, the medical people back there, did they give you a choice of do you want to come back? How did they test to make sure you were okay to come back to the game?

BRITTANY BOYD: Yeah, I took a -- I'm not sure. Something similar to a concussion test. That took me a couple of minutes, and then I was good to go.

Q. Brittany, a lot of us didn't see exactly what happened. How did you get that?

BRITTANY BOYD: I was going up for a rebound and caught an elbow coming down.

Q. When you talk about big plays that Stanford made, they were 0-for-5 from the three-point line in the first half, and then Taylor comes out and hits that. Can you talk a little bit about Taylor and just her play today?

COACH GOTTLIEB: She's had a great tournament. She's kind of been a role player for them over the course of her career. But she's still in it. Sometimes that happens with seniors. We talked about Lili and Amber needing to score for them. For Stanford, that's what they do by not letting anyone else sort of be a hero. I think we've done a great job on Bonnie when we've played them. And we really were focused on trying to stop Taylor's production, because I don't think as good as Amber and Lili are, I don't think their 25 points is what beats you combined. It's somebody else. And we just weren't able to do a good enough job.

Q. Reshanda, to be out there without Brittany for a long stretch in the first half, obviously you were competent in your teammates, but what did it change for you guys in terms of being out on the floor and not having her out there?

RESHANDA GRAY: I just told my team to just do the normal stuff that we do. Even though Brittany was out, we still had Jefflo and Gabby to run the point. And our main focus was just not to fold and go under pressure just because our point guard was out. So basically stay composed the whole time.

Q. Looking forward to the NCAA Tournament, despite this disappointment right

now, what can you take from this tournament moving forward? What did you know about your team now that you didn't know before this tournament?

COACH GOTTLIEB: Yeah, I told them I'm really proud of who we are now. We didn't like start the season as this perfect team. I think sometimes there is a lot more significance and growth, and I think the team that we've been this weekend and really over the course of the last month, some hiccups here and there, we've improved a ton. I think you know we want to be jumping and celebrating and cutting down nets, but I think there is significance in who we've shown who we are and on this platform. We've always bounced back well from a disappointment this season. So we're fortunate that we're going to be in the NCAA Tournament and have a chance on the next stage.

I wanted really badly for these seniors and this team to feel this because I think that would have been great for them, but it doesn't change where we are as a group and a team, and I think we've come a long way. I'm looking forward to the next time we get on the court in the NAAs. I do think they've earned it.

I think everything we've been through this weekend will help us when we step on the floor for the NCAA Tournament. I don't think there are going to be a lot of teams that want to see our name come up as their opponent.

Q. Coach, do you feel that you guys lost an opportunity to host the tournament? For a long time you were in the discussion to host.

COACH GOTTLIEB: Do you feel we have? From what you've seen here? I think if you're watching games and you're following women's basketball, and you've seen us play, and you don't get to see us live that much, I think you would think, wow, that is a team that's a top 16 team in this country and they should be hosting, as is Stanford. At some point the discussion was one of us. I think we both deserve to host. And we were both in the final, so I think that solidifies both people as some of the top 16 teams in the country.

I don't know what's going on around the country, but I don't think we've done anything this weekend to make ourselves seem any less worthy of hosting. If anything, again, I think if the Committee is watching these games and we just lost the final with our best all-around player gushing blood and playing not as much, I think

they'd say that team is a host. That is my feeling. That being said, if they send us somewhere, we'll get on a plane and we'll be a tough team to knock out in somebody else's gym, too.

Q. When you opened you commented a lot on Stanford's journey. There are a lot of links between your programs. What is your impression about that journey that they've taken?

COACH GOTTLIEB: You know, there is a lot said about the rivalry and stuff. I see it as, No. 1, my relationship with Tara; she's been great to me. What I've learned in these four years is that it's really, really hard to be that good for that long. We've done some -- these kids up here have never finished lower than third in the Pac-12 Conference. We've finished tied for third this year, we've been first or second every other time. We've gone to the NCAA Tournament, and we've done some great things. It just teaches me how hard it is to be at that level all the time, and Stanford has been winning championships.

So this year to have a little bit of not quite the same level of dominance how I think they've handled that, to be standing at the end as the team that wins it, great for them. I think that's significant, and I think that speaks to Tara's ability to run that program, and the players in their program.

We root for them except when we're playing one another. It's a fun rivalry. It's good for women's basketball. The Bay Area is the best place in the country for women's basketball. I believe that. So to be part of that, I think we've raised their level, and they've raised our level. We wanted to win today. We wanted to be the ones cutting down the nets. But if you can get outside yourself for a second, I'm happy for their success, and we'll be rooting for them in the NCAA Tournament. Just disappointed that we didn't beat them today.

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