

March 6, 2015



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An Interview With:

COLORADO

COACH LINDA LAPPE LEXY KRESL JEN REESE

THE MODERATOR: We've got Colorado Buffaloes. Coach, I'll have you open.

COACH LAPPE: Great game for our team. Really excited for our three seniors who have been battling all season long. So fun for us as coaches to be able to see our team, so excited about a great win, and really playing well. We thought for about three weeks now that we're playing our best basketball, and we're really preparing for this point. We felt ready going into this game and you've got to credit the heart and hard work of our team, and for them to go out and do what they did was pretty amazing.

Just really, really happy for our entire team and our university. It's all about surviving, and we survived. Now we get to move forward.

Q. Lexy, you look at your record, and you guys haven't had the kind of season that would suggest that you guys come in here and knock off the No. 1 seed. What happened tonight and where has this team been all year?

LEXY KRESL: What happened tonight is we just played together. We had a lot of confidence. We don't really view it too much of an upset because we knew it was something we've been capable of when we play well and we play together.

Q. Coach, there were a couple times in this game it looked like you guys could have really folded when Oregon State went on that 15-0 run going into the second half, and then another run later in the second half. What happened that your team was able to not fold?

COACH LAPPE: Well, we've been through a lot of situations this year. We had a really tough non-conference schedule. This conference is tough. By the time you get to this point of the season, you're tested. You've been through everything. I feel like we've faced a lot of adversity so far this year. It's one of the things that we thought that we could cause OSU to be able to see if they could handle adversity. We've been able to do it.

You know, you really at that point really rely on the togetherness of your team. At no point really this season have we ever come apart as a team, even in tough situations. Even though we maybe haven't always handled them the right way, we've attacked it the right way, and now it's starting to come together. Ultimately you want to be playing your best basketball in February and March. We're playing our best basketball. And we have for a few weeks now, even though maybe we haven't seen the wins come, we've seen it in practice. We've had fantastic practices and you rely on your seniors, Lexy, and Jen, and Jazz have been in so many different scenarios in their four years that they took it in stride.

When we went into the half, we could have come out at the half with our heads down, feeling like we let go of the lead, and we didn't want to come out feeling like that. We wanted to reset at halftime, forget about the first half. Get ready to play 20 more minutes and try to limit their runs. I thought that's what we were able to do in the second half, is they had very few runs, and we matched every run that they had.

Q. Can you talk about Jen's stretch in the second half, hitting shots. How huge was

that for you during that stretch?

COACH LAPPE: Great momentum. We needed to go offensively a little bit. By the time the second half rolled around, she was ready to go. I thought our team did a nice job of hitting her when she was open. She did a nice job of moving off the basketball.

I thought her focus, she had laser focus in the second half on that basket. She scored in different ways. She didn't just take her jumper. She got a couple nice drives and some post finishes in there. Our team rallied behind our three seniors, and I thought they really rallied behind Jen in that segment. They rallied behind Lexy to start off the game, and it was a lot of fun to watch.

JEN REESE: Yeah, it's credit to all my teammates. Great passes and you've just got to find open gaps and knock the shot down when you have open shot. But when we're moving the ball and playing great basketball like that, it's easy to knock down shots like that, no matter who is shooting down our team.

Q. Lexy, Oregon State came in here and said they felt you guys had way more energy to start the game. How did it feel for all of you guys and then for you specifically, since you started off with 11 points in the first three or four minutes?

LEXY KRESL: Yeah, it definitely helps to start strong, but we were really focused coming into the game, and that's why we were able to start with so much energy. We knew the game plan. We were playing their personnel. And we just came out with a lot of intensity, and that just came from being confident and knowing that we could win this game.

Q. Judging from the statistics and scores, you've been playing better lately. But it looked like a pretty rough game against Oregon State down at your place. What was the difference between -- I didn't see that game -- what was the difference between that game down there and today?

LEXY KRESL: The second half. We were tied with them at halftime the last time we played, and we kind of had a little bit of a mental letdown in the second half defensively. We gave them shots that we knew we should have taken away, and we didn't execute our game plan as well due to fatigue or just not focusing enough. This time around we came out stronger, actually, in the second half.

Q. It was very apparent sitting behind you guys on the bench that your entire staff and team were completely locked in and focused for the entire game. How were you able to come into this tournament as an underdog and win and come and beat Oregon State and stay so focused throughout the game? What did you tell your team?

JEN REESE: We're just a team, and we all love each other and we're family. Our coaches do a great job of drawing up plays and personnel, and we listen to them and understand the game plan. But we focus more on ourselves. We don't consider ourselves underdogs because we know what we're capable of, and that's kind of just how we do it.

Q. Coach, when they say they don't consider themselves an underdog and they don't consider this an upset, there are a lot of teams that live on that underdog label because it fuels them competitively. Are you sort of the originator of, don't feel that way? Don't feel be an underdog? Don't view this as an upset?

COACH LAPPE: Well, we have high expectations. I think this group understands. These guys have both been to the NCAA Tournament, so they understand what high-level competition is. They understand what high-level basketball is. To be able to stick together even through adversity, it is really key. If you came and watched our practices in January and February when we were on maybe a five-game skid, you wouldn't see anything different than if we were going to the NCAA Tournament. That is a credit to these guys for coming to work every single day, playing hard.

It's kind of like Jen said, it all goes together. Our staff is a really tight-knit staff, and our team is a tight-knit team. We think of ourselves as a team that has more to prove. We haven't proved anything yet this year, and we've got more to prove of who we are as a team and what we want to do.

Q. Oregon State is a great three-point shooting team but tonight they were awful. Was that something that you focused on in this game to shut them down?

COACH LAPPE: We wanted to take away Weisner and Wiese's threes. We thought that was a huge key for us, not letting them get open shots.

Felt like they got a few too many attempts in the first half. We wanted to do a better job with them in the second half. And then I felt like a lot of their other players also had open threes that you kind of bank on them not knocking down.

But our defensive intensity, that is the reason why I think we're playing our best basketball. Our defense is finally playing better. We were giving up far too many points at the beginning and middle of the season. We've started to understand the importance of being able to lock down and making teams uncomfortable. Making them rush. Anytime a team gets comfortable, they make shots, and then everybody makes shots.

So I feel like just our focus. Like Lexy, we have a different focus level. We didn't give up things that were easy to Oregon State all night long. Once you stay in that and stay in that and stay in that, it plays to our side mentally.

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