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Arizona State – 67
Washington State – 48

An interview with:

WASHINGTON STATE

COACH JUNE DAUGHERTY MARIAH COOKS TIA PRESLEY

THE MODERATOR: Washington State Cougars here with Head Coach June Daugherty, Mariah Cooks and Tia Presley. Coach, an opening comment?

COACH DAUGHERTY: Yes, first of all, I want to shout out and thank the Pac-12, the Pac-12 Networks for everything that they've done throughout the year and this incredible tournament. It's been a great experience for our student-athletes. It's a conference of champions with so many great teams in it. It's been a wonderful, except for the outcome today.

Congratulations to Arizona State. They are as tenacious as advertised. They get after you defensively for all 40. They are in great shape. They are very strong competitors, and they just go to a whole different level once their defense is going.

I thought we really grinded it out in the first half. I know we didn't score I think the first eight minutes of the basketball game. I love the fact that the leadership to my right with Mariah and Tia and obviously Shalie, all along they brought this younger group along, understanding that show poise, play to your identity, which is our defense, and something good will happen. Stay with it, and we were able to be right in there after not being able to score the first seven or eight minutes of the ballgame.

Felt pretty good going into the half only being down five or six. The locker room was

excited about it. But second half we had to weather some adversity with Tia going down, Lia going down. Kind of ran out of gas, and they really took it to us inside in particular. Their front line is a very, very good front line and it was tough to overcome that.

Q. Coach, this team has always been sort of so go as the two guards, and when your two guards go down, how does that affect you and how does that change your game plan?

COACH DAUGHERTY: Yeah, gutsy performance by Lia and Tia to come back out and play. They were obviously in a lot of pain. They weren't themselves. They weren't able to be as explosive as they usually are. But we just kept rotating the bench in and trying to find an answer and today we just didn't find an answer, and that makes it tough for us.

But what a career Tia Presley has had. This is her second Pac-12 Tournament she's ever played in. For a kid to be the fifth leading scorer in this league at her size and to play the way she's played, I mean, hats off to her and the career that she's had. Just really, really proud of her and to be named All-Conference last year, honorable mention this year. Pac-12, we're going to miss -- obviously Washington State and Pac-12, we're going to miss the Tia part of the Tia-Lia show.

She's been phenomenal. She went out, I don't know if she broke the ankle or what happened, but she found a way to come back out and play, just a gutsy performance. That's what it's all about. I just can't say enough about Tia and her career.

Q. Tia, you had a great performance today, shot 50%, 16.7 steals. Can you please explain the mental process to this afternoon's game?

TIA PRESLEY: Yeah, I just think I wanted to be aggressive and try to help my team get this win. I knew it could be my last Pac-12 game if I

didn't play hard, so I just tried to come out and be aggressive. It's really hard to play against Arizona State and match their intensity. So I think that's what I tried to do and my teammates tried to do as well.

Q. What happened on that drive with your ankle? You were only out for a couple minutes there.

TIA PRESLEY: Yeah, I just landed wrong. It happens.

Q. Mariah, can you describe the emotions when you saw Tia and also Lia go down?

MARIAH COOKS: Initially with Tia, I thought it was her knee. Like I just saw her buckle. Yeah, I wasn't sure what it was, so obviously we were a little shaken up. But the coaches did a really good job of bringing us together to play through adversity, like we've been doing all season. So we had to continue to do that and the same thing goes with Lia. They're very tough players. Some of the toughest I've ever played with and you saw that today.

Q. Tia, just take a minute or two to reflect on your career at Washington State coming from Gonzaga prep, playing the two-plus years through the injuries and now the finale?

TIA PRESLEY: Yeah, it's kind of crazy that I just played in my final Pac-12 game. I feel like I've given this speech a couple of times, but it's been an honor to be a Cougar the past four years through injuries and all the adversity my team has faced and stuff. I'm just so proud to be a part of the group of girls that I got to play with and the strides that we made in Cougar basketball is amazing. To even be in the second round competing for a chance to play in the NCAA Tournament isn't something that was in the plan when I first got here. So, yeah, it's a lot right now.

Q. June, where do you feel you guys are in terms of what's going to happen now? What tournament and where?

COACH DAUGHERTY: Yeah, obviously our a body of work is done and it's up to the Committee to decide. We'll wait and see. Everybody's got to wait and see. But I'm excited about the fact that no matter what, this program will be back in postseason play for the second year in a row. Last year was the first time in two decades.

So together with Shay and Tia and Mariah and the rest of the group, they really have done remarkably great things for our program. Whatever it is, I'll guarantee that we'll play hard and represent Washington State as best we can.

Q. You still feel you have a chance with the NCAA?

COACH DAUGHERTY: You always have a chance. Just because of the schedule that we played and the success we had in preseason, knocking off Dayton and number 5 or whatever Maryland is, on and on and on. We had a great preseason at 9-2. We'll continue to always take on a challenging preseason schedule to put us in position.

I thought we improved greatly throughout the year. Every week we got better. Looking back I think maybe our best basketball was in January. But I thought we started coming out of that and dealing with all the adversity that we dealt with.

I mean, we lost five players this year, and I thought at home in particular against USC the week before in Seattle, I think we played some of our best basketball.

So I'm looking forward to whatever we do postseason to keep practicing, keep improving and get ready to make a great run.

Q. For clarification, I know she had tape on her knee. Did Lia sprain her knee? Is that what she did?

COACH DAUGHERTY: Yeah, I think Dr. Garcia was here with us and he's an amazing doctor. He was able to check her out and didn't feel like it was damaged in a sense that she couldn't go back out there. Of course you wouldn't have seen her go back out there.

So she definitely tweaked it a little bit, but what the extent of that was, I don't think it's that serious or there's no way they would have cleared her to go back out. But what a warrior. What a performance again by her and Tia to play with all the adversity that they were under physically.

Once again, to the Pac-12, and Pac-12 Networks, thank you for this amazing experience for not just our student-athletes but our coaches and fans. We really appreciate everything that you do to make it the conference of champions.

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