

NCAA Women's 1st and 2nd Rounds: Stanford

Friday, March 22, 2019
Stanford, California



Jeff Judkins

BYU Cougars

JEFF JUDKINS: You don't know how often you're going to be here, especially in a Mid Major conference. You don't know how many opportunities you're going to have to be able to make the NCAA Tournament, and so I've told them to go out and relish this and go out and grab it, the bull by the horns and just come into this tournament and be excited.

We respect and have a lot of respect for Auburn. They're a very, very good team, played in a great conference, very well coached, play hard, play together. We have not seen their style really in our conference and that is pressing and trapping and all that. So it'll be a new thing for us to be able to try to attack that, but I'm very confident in what we've been doing this whole week to be able to prepare for that. But we're excited to be here, and I'm really proud of these young ladies. They've worked so hard. Nobody thought we'd be here. We are a very, very young team, second youngest team in our league, and I just think these guys came together and decided they want to win. They didn't want to lose, and winning was more important than stats or playing time, and that's what it's all about.

Q. Jud, lessons learned from the last NCAA Tournament game in 2016.

JEFF JUDKINS: Well, we came in, I think, feeling like we really accomplished something, and we just came out and played -- we played all right. We played flat. We played Missouri. And same conference, same seven and ten seed. So I brought that up with my team this week for sure and said, hey, we were in the same position there. The game was very close. It came right down the wire, and they made plays and we didn't. But we didn't come out and play our game. And that's kind of what I told my team this whole week is we gotta come out and play BYU style and BYU game, and if we do that and a team is better than us, then so be it, but most of the time we can win those games.

You've got a lot of kids that are like -- it's like Christmas to them. They're just really excited about being here and being a part of it. And we want to represent our team, but we also want to represent the university and our conference, and hopefully do a good job with that. I like to brag about this a little bit, Greg, and say our

conference has been to Sweet 16 more than anybody else in the Mid Majors, and hopefully the thing will continue with both Gonzaga and us in this tournament.

Q. Coach, you mentioned you need to play BYU style and your game. Can you describe what that is?

JEFF JUDKINS: Well, you guys so it hopefully in the Gonzaga game. You know, we push the ball. We take outside shots if we have it. If we don't we get to the basket either through triple penetration or passing. We don't really use the post as much as we have in the past where we just padded inside. So it's more of screening, rolling with our bigs. Sara is not a real big strong player in the post. She's more of an agile -- kind of reminds me of Gobert, where she likes to screen and roll and use her size to be able to do it.

Shalae has been a little different. When she comes in the game, we're a little bit more getting the ball inside to her. Defensively, we change our defenses quite a bit. We play man mostly, but we play sometimes pressure man. Sometimes we containment, we play a zone where we play it aggressively or we play it soft. And so I think for us, it's a little bit difficult because you don't know really what we're going to do and tell you the truth half the time when the game starts, I don't know what we're doing either. Just a feel. If I see a team struggling and I'm going they didn't shoot the ball as good as I thought they do in watching film, I'm going to zone or whatever, or fouls. We have a very good inside group. They don't get a lot of credit. We rotate four bigs, and they're all different. And those four do a lot of the dirty work.

Our guard line is very strong, and they score the majority of the points, but our bigs have been a big key to our success this year. Beating Gonzaga was important. Beating TCU with our bigs. We had California down and lost right at the end and didn't do a real good job at the last six minutes of that game. But this has been a team -- you talk about let's have a team, let's be together. This team is like that. They really, really enjoy each other, and they do a lot of things together, and we do a lot of things as a team together, and I think it's really showed on the court.

Q. Coach, you're playing an Auburn team that's known for their defense, so as a team how have

you prepared for that and what are some of your keys against that strong pressure defense?

JEFF JUDKINS: Well, we're hoping that John Stockton will show up and help us out tomorrow. We just have to get in position and get in the right areas, and my players need to know where their outlets are. There's no way I can go out and make my team practice like Auburn in press and do those things like they can, but what we have to do is get the ball in positions where we can make plays where we can read it and be able to do that.

The one thing I do have is my three guards can all handle the ball. They can all pass it, and they all three have very good feel. And in this kind of a game it's going to be a feel, no matter what. They're going to trap and you gotta have a feel to be able to attack and be able to read that and really make the great play.

What I've gotta tell my team, we're going to turn it over. I mean, we're not going to go the whole game without a turnover. We just can't have it in bunches. We can't have turnovers where they make baskets. The most dangerous pass in basketball is from the winning to the top and if we can be really careful with that and not throw crazy passes up there, then at least we are not giving them an easy basket.

As I notice in their stats, 21 percent of their points are scored on steals and fast breaks. So if we can cut that to 10, that'll make a big difference.

Now, the one thing that we do very well, we're very good half-court defense, so if we can make them play that game and they don't get up and down and make them play half court, that'll be to our advantage.

They have played against a really good center, the girl from Mississippi State. But Sara is a little different. She's more kind of active and she runs out and she can guard you off the dribble, and she's got really, really long arms and anticipates really well. So hopefully her presence will cause a lot of issues.

Q. Coach, you talked about the youth with your team. Are you surprised at how well they've played this quickly?

JEFF JUDKINS: Yes. But you know, you get a point guard like Shaylee Gonzales, who is a special, special player. And coaches dream of having a player that.

When I saw her in 8th grade coming to the BYU basketball camp, I knew that girl was going to be good. And she's surprised me a lot. She's surprised me because of her poise, her feel for the game. She reminds me a lot of a player I coached at Utah, Andre Miller. She reminds me a lot of him. Great rebounder, gets to the basket, can shoot it. So I've been very

fortunate. And then my two wing, Brenna was a really good player last year. She's had to kind of do some things a little different for us. And she's done that. Paisley has been a big surprise. People that know Paisley saw the girl, and that girl is like aggressive, athletic as all get out, but sometimes she was totally out of control. And it's been a real tough two years of me just harping on her all the time, no, you can't make that pass, no, you can't do that. And, you know, she took it, which was I think has made her a lot better player. She took the coaching and put it into her game, and it's really changed. And now she becomes a force.

You know, and I think, too, these guys had a great off season. They worked really hard. And they didn't have a very good year last year and they didn't like it. And so they did something about it. So I'm very lucky. We want to keep getting better. You see a lot of teams that are good at young and they get this opportunity and they just stay there. Hopefully this will just be a small step for us as we can get better and better and better.