

**NCAA Women's Basketball Championship
First and Second Rounds**

**Stanford, Calif.
March 20 & 22, 2010**



19 March 2010

Rutgers Pre-Game Press Conference Quotes with Khadijah Rushdan, Brittany Ray, and C. Vivian Stringer

On being in the NCAA tournament...

Brittany Ray

It's great that we're in California, and it's a great feeling just to know that we're in the NAAs. It's just a blessing. I've been here for four years, and I've been fortunate to go to the NAAs for four years straight. A lot of teams don't get that experience to be able to play postseason, so I'm just grateful and thankful to be here.

Khadijah Rushdan

We're happy to have the opportunity to play another 40 minutes. Everyone knows that the way that we finished the season probably helped us a lot in getting here. So we're just going to go out and finish the best that we can.

Coach Stringer

Actually, [Stanford coach] Tara [VanDerveer], [Iowa] Coach Bluder and I were standing in the hallway thinking, "This is really ironic. Isn't it interesting that we happen to be playing each other? What's the probability of something like *that* happening?" Given that this is the 25th anniversary of the largest crowd to have ever seen a women's game between Iowa and Ohio State, and I was coaching the Iowa team, and Tara of course had the Ohio State team, so that was one little draw on that. Then, that we would be playing the Iowa Hawkeyes. I don't know if you realize, but Bob Bowsby who is the Athletic Director here [at Stanford University] came from the University of Iowa. There were many times when we would stand on the sidelines and watch our two sons play soccer. So there's a real personal kind of connection here. It's like a family reunion.

On Iowa...

Brittany Ray

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Their guards are very quick and they shoot very well. We're going to have to defend beyond the three point line coming into this game. Our defense is our staple. We're going to be relying on that a whole lot in this game.

Khadijah Rushdan

They're a great shooting team. We watched a lot of film and we witnessed that. They're shooting beyond three point range. We're going to have to defend the three and beyond that. We're going to have our hands full, but our coaches are preparing us really well. Probably the closest matchup that we've had to [Iowa] is Villanova in the way that they execute, their range that they have. I think Iowa has more drivers, so not only are we going to have to defend the three but we're also going to have to recover on the drop.

Coach Stringer

I'm going to be a professional because I can't help it but I still have a great love for Iowa. That's where my children were raised. It's like playing your cousin or your sister. But we realize in sports that you do what you need to do. So I haven't been enthusiastic, let's say it like that, about it, because I have a deep love for the Iowa Hawkeyes. I always will. I'm going to do everything in my power to prepare our team, but its not a happy thing. I'm not happy about that. But it is what it is...You do everything in your power to win a game, but at the end of the game, its about the relationships and how you care about people. I'm sure they're not going to cut me a break. If they're going to beat us by 15 or 20, whatever they have to do, they're going to do it. I want to do the same thing. I'm a Scarlet Knight coach.

On winning the last five of six games to end the regular season...

Brittany Ray

We just learned that we continue to fight. There's always that belief in us. No matter if we're down by 20 or 30, there's always a way that we can come back and get into the game. Anything's possible now in [the tournament]. It just shows that we've come from a great tradition of basketball players and the great tradition that Coach Stringer has laid down in her ability to fire us up, to get us motivated to win game. I just feel our defense has gotten much better towards the end of the season. That's what is going to propel us into the next round and into the future. Defense wins games. I think that if we emphasize defense a lot we'll be fine.

Coach Stringer

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I knew that we were in a difficult situation, especially with losing 22 points and a starter in Epiphanny Prince, that we didn't have time to recover that, and people's memories are a bit short. We've always had one of the toughest schedules, but people quickly forget that, so I was wondering how many people were going to be standing on my neck. I pushed [my team] really hard, and somehow we ended up here. I think the players finally got tired of losing and realized there's no magic wand out here. All we can do is present you opportunities for open jumpers.

On using the NIT as motivation for the team...

Khadijah Rushdan

Our coach, our coaching staff, they expect only the best. They don't allow us to settle for anything. We set expectations high. The NIT, its not our goal. We have great expectations. We just used it as motivation. We didn't want to end the season or end this route going to the NCAA with a bad record or having to go to the NIT.

Coach Stringer

With all due respect to the NIT, we should really thank the NIT organization because they have allowed many teams, men's and women's teams, to have an opportunity to one, extend their season to play, and two, to play in a tournament atmosphere which prepares them then for the following years when many teams have gone on to become Final Four teams. I think that the statement has been taken out of context. The statement that I made...it was about a high level of expectation, that you will accept what is the highest level of competition. We expect the best for ourselves. I expect the best for myself as a coach, and I'm not going to accept anything lower than that. Yet I have an appreciation for the fact that we're really quite young, so it wouldn't be bad for us to go to the NIT because it would give us the opportunity to actually have some more games, and that would help with this young team. I wasn't really trying to motivate them. I made a statement.