

**2011 NCAA Women's Basketball Championship
First Round --- March 19, 2011**

An interview with:



THE MODERATOR: We welcome University of Utah head coach Anthony Levrets.

Q. Opening Statement

COACH LEVRETS: First off I'm really proud of my team, and how hard they competed today. For most of the game we played a really good No. 8, or whatever they [Notre Dame] are ranked, to pretty much a dead heat except for one stretch in the game, and I am just really proud of my team and how hard they competed.

Q. Just about the stretch where you overcame a big Notre Dame run, what did Notre Dame change that didn't allow you to do it again once the score was tight at 43-41?

COACH LEVRETS: They're very good defensively. We tried to mix and run motion along the way with pick and roll stuff and as the game went on they just stopped going 2-1. They didn't want our pick and roll and they switched it and then on our motion stuff they didn't help anywhere and we had to go play make plays one-on-one. Right now that's not our strength, they were a little more physical and a little stronger down the stretch and I think that was a huge key, they made baskets against us one-on-one and we weren't unable to finish some of these plays.

Q. On the other side before that eight-point run, you hadn't scored in the second half yet,

so what does that run show you for next year about the players that you have?

COACH LEVRETS: They are a really, really talented young group. They talked today about their heart, their hearts are huge and if you watched any of our MWC tournament you know they weren't going to quit playing. One of the things that we have to get is transition stuff and it was hard to do against Notre Dame because they like to play fast.

Q. Talk about Michelle Harrison, she had 16 rebounds, nine of them offensive, and 10 points.

COACH LEVRETS: I'm really, really proud of her, she played her tail off. She's our only senior who plays. She played really, really hard. They helped off of her and her job is to go get us second chances and she got nine offensive rebounds tonight. Getting nine rebounds at all is amazing, but getting nine offensive boards, well that's just an amazing night.

Q. Talk about fan support

COACH LEVRETS: Oh it was awesome, it's not always something that we always have here. It's been a great week, ever since we won the tournament and we got home, the buzz around SLC and the around our campus, and department, all of the people who put in the work to make this a fabulous day for our players and the people who are here. I really appreciate the fans and I hope this is something that we can build some momentum from going forward next year.

Q. Coach could you talk about the level of play your team has reached the last couple of weeks and why that is?

COACH LEVRETS: I think it was just a matter of time, whether it happened this year or next year, I wasn't sure, but we're talented. When Taryn went down we'd already had 30 practices and three games and when you have everything built around Taryn and Janita at the one and everybody else fitting in, when that happened we had eight games in 16 days and we were learning all over again who we were, and trying to find an identity. The great thing for our team was that we defended all year and then offensively at the right time we have talented players that caught up.

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THE MODERATOR: We welcome University of Utah student-athletes. Let's direct questions to University of Utah student-athletes.

Q. What was and wasn't working during your game?

IWALANI RODRIGUES: I think we should've been better on defense and then offense would have come easier for us.

Q. What happened during the stretch when Utah got really close to tying with Notre Dame?

MICHELLE PLOUFFE: I think that was all just our defense and it's always starts with defense for us. When we can't put a string of stops together, that lets our opponent get ahead. When our defense is not going very well and it is not coming together, it affects our offense. We just needed to defend to get on a roll on offense.

Q. What was Notre Dame doing that made it hard to get the ball whole game?

MICHELLE PLOUFFE: They were pretty long and were tough in the posts. But also, we were hitting shots from the outside. It's whatever works at the time we go with and Iwalani [Rodrigues] was hitting her shots so we just kept getting her the ball.

Q. Is there any kind of victory you can take from a game like this when you came so close?

JANITA BADON: I am a really competitive person so if I lose, I lose. I think it's important to look at the stats, watch film and focus on next year. Notre Dame is a really good team, but for the most part, we stuck with them so I think that is telling the world a little something about the University of Utah.

Q. How was the physicality of Notre Dame affecting you in general?

JANITA BADON: They were all a lot taller than me. They are all athletic and they play great defense. They were at the spots they needed to be and were smart defensively.

Q. What was it like to play in this challenging of a game?

MICHELLE PLOUFFE: For us, we were just playing another game, it didn't matter who we were playing. That shouldn't affect us. We just needed to keep playing our game and focus on us. We were in the game of the whole first half. They really came out in a couple of stretches and put together baskets.

Q. What was it like coming up against [Skylar] Diggins?

JANITA BADON: She is an all-around player. I don't think I have played against a player that can shoot and drive, both ways. She knew when to back-cut and knew how to run her team.

Q. Was there any talk of not being intimidated by Notre Dame?

JANITA BADON: This is March. I don't think any number before any team matters. And I think for the most part we proved that tonight. You see No. 2 seed teams playing No. 15 seed teams and losing by 30. It didn't matter to us.

Q. How did the home crowd support you tonight?

JANITA BADON: I thank them. They kept us in the game. There were stretches where Notre Dame scored and we didn't, but they were cheering and keeping our heads up. They made us play with heart. [Notre Dame] had height over us, but we had heart over them. I wouldn't trade anything in the world for our fans.