

2019 Big West Women's Basketball Tournament

Game 1 - First Round Quotes

Final - No. 5 UC Irvine def. No. 8 UC Santa Barbara, 53-46

No. 5 UC Irvine

Head Coach Tamara Inoue

(Opening statement)

"In tournament play, it doesn't matter about the preseason or conference, it's who the best team is on that day. UC Santa Barbara, they fight and they always have. I don't think there's been a game since I've been a coach here where we've blown them out. So, today we knew it was going to be tough. I thought our defense came out ready to play and I'm really proud of the team for finishing the way we did."

(On addressing the team's recent offensive struggles)

"I think we just need to keep shooting when we're open. We only had 52 attempts, so obviously we'd like to see more than that. I thought winning every quarter was a big deal because the last couple games winning quarters was difficult for us. It was a grinder. First quarter we came out ready to play, but the game became a game and we just needed to grind it out, and I thought we did a good job doing that."

(On advancing to play CSUN)

"We needed to make sure we won this game first. I think the biggest thing for us was playing better every day. Jordan is a 20-plus point scorer for us and tonight she came in and didn't miss a beat with 17 points and 12 rebounds. In our last game against Long Beach, I thought we did a good job of finding ways to score without her. Today we kind of deferred a little bit, which is fine, but we need to all step up together."

Sophomore forward Jordan Sanders

(On coming back from injury)

"It feels great. Being off for as long as I was, it was hard and not something I've ever had to do before. But, my teammates and coaches helped me through it."

Senior guard Andee Ritter

(On the team's success over the last two years)

"It's really exciting. I've never actually made it past the first round in the tournament, so I'm really happy for this team and I think we can make it pretty far."

No. 8 UC Santa Barbara

Head Coach Bonnie Henrickson

(Opening statement)

"You win games in the 50s, you don't win games in the 40s. We've struggled getting off to bad starts. Every player in that locker room has to work between now and when we come back to change the scouting report on themselves. You have to do that when there's nobody in the gym."

(On the season)

"We've repeatedly commented on the respect we have that they didn't give up. We started 1-7 in conference play but we dug in and played better. They were coachable. These guys wanted to get it right and they tried to get it right. Trying to get it right, not be right, is what gave us a chance to get better. Not good enough, but we got better. The girls coming back were still young but we've got to get better. As I said, we've got to change the scouting report on ourselves. I don't think most of them knew what it was going to be until it happened. I knew it. I didn't say that but I knew it. The coaches and the players in our league are good. It's challenging."

Junior guard Coco Miller

(On the season)

"We had a young group and would get down and stay down. We grew our runs as the season went along and we need to keep that going into next year."

Junior center Natalia Bruening

(On next year)

"Next year is going to be huge that we have more experience with everyone coming back. I think a key thing is going to be consistency. Like Coach said, we had trouble starting off games and not starting as strong. If we can start strong, it's going to be a brand new team."