



## 2017 NCAA DIVISION I WOMEN'S BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

First Round · Temple vs. Oregon  
Cameron Indoor Stadium · Durham, N.C.  
Friday, March 17, 2017

### Pre-Tournament Quotes

#### Tonya Cardoza, Temple Head Coach

##### ***Opening Statement***

“We’re really excited to be a part of the 64 selected for the NCAA Tournament this year. I thought we had a really great season and to cap it off this way for our seniors is something really special for them because they’ve been through seasons where they didn’t have postseason. For them to be part of the NCAA Tournament in their last go-around is something I’m super excited for them.”

##### ***On challenges Oregon freshman Sabrina Ionescu presents to her team:***

“She’s a really good player, an awesome scorer. They have a lot of guys who can actually score the basketball. We’re going to try to mix it up with her a little bit. Feyond [Fitzgerald] is obviously going to start on her. I know she has a size advantage, but maybe just getting up on her body will help. She can score in so many different way. It’s going to take more than just one. One of the things we pride ourselves on is not letting their best players get off. So it’s going to be a team assignment trying to keep the ball out of her hands as much as possible. But in doing that there are other guys on the floor you have to worry about as well. All five guys who are starters out there can score the basketball, so we’re going to have to use our quickness to cover up when we are scrambling around.”

##### ***On status of Donnaizah Fountain:***

“She’s not going to play tomorrow. Obviously that’s a major piece when you have one of your top scorers, your top rebounder and the point of your press – that’s a big loss. But we’ve played four, three games without her. We’ve won a couple of those basketball games. At this point,

we're focused only on the guys who are playing. I think our guys mentally are really getting after it. They're just really excited about being here at this moment."

***On the difference in styles between your team and Oregon:***

"We're totally different in styles of play. They have a lot of size; we have a lot of speed. Early on they had two freshmen who were just thrown into the mix. I think they've gained a lot of experience. It's just going to be one of those wills. Right now, it's about trying to stick around. Giving everything you have. For us, it's always been we have to make shots. If we're making shots we're a dangerous team."

***On memories of Cameron Indoor Stadium***

"The ones that are wins are always my favorites. The losses are definitely not. This is just an exciting place to be. When we were here the last time, when I was at Connecticut, it was sold out. It's loud. It's just a wonderful place to be. I know my players are excited. They're snapping and super excited about being here because it's Cameron. But I'm excited to be here as a coach again, as a head coach, and am just trying to find ways to win a basketball game on Saturday."

***On the challenges Oregon presents and anything they've been working on:***

"Every single one of their guards can knock down a three at a high percentage. They have post players who can score inside. They're really good passers. They don't really turn the basketball over. They're really smart and they play within themselves. They don't try to do too much. We're just going to have to get into them, get into their body and try to frustrate them as much as possible, try to create as much havoc as we can. The thing is at this point in the season, we have to do what we do best and that's get up and pressure. If it works, it works. We're not going to try to change our gameplan because that's what got us here in the first place."

***On both teams not having experienced the NCAA Tournament making an even playing field:***

"At this point everyone is just excited and wanting to win. I would hope the experience wins out, but their freshmen are really good. They're younger guys are really good and they don't play like they're freshmen. They play like they've been around for quite some time, so it's just going to come down to who is making shots, who's getting stops. I'm hoping our defense is really tied in trying to create havoc and getting stops and then boxing out because they do a really good job of getting offensive rebounds."

***On the increased intensity at practice:***

"I think we switched it up a little bit because we've been down a couple of players at practice so our assistant coaches have been going at it so that makes it a little more competitive. Most of the time in practice it's hard for Feyonda and Alliya [Butts] to be on the same team, so throughout the year they always had to go against each other. The last week we've let them play together. In order for them to play together, the coaches had to play so it's been really competitive. They've really been getting after it. That's probably the biggest thing because they want to show up Coach CJ [Jones] and Coach [Willnett Crockett]."



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### Temple Players

#### **Feyonda Fitzgerald, Senior, Guard**

***On coming full circle from freshman year with no postseason to the NCAA Tournament as a senior:***

"It's a great feeling. Like you said, when I first got here we weren't all that great, but we always worked hard. I felt like we kept our cool and we made sure to work hard every summer up until now. This is what we've been waiting for so I feel like our hard work is finally paying off."

***On the two different styles – Temple's speed and transition and Oregon's size – matching up:***

"We're just going to play our game. I'm sure coach is going to give us a great gameplan for Oregon and we're going to try our best to stick to it. But we're just going to make sure to go out and play our game and do what Temple normally does."

***On what has been successful for the team this season***

"I think something that has really helped us win games this year is defense. I think we really thrive off of our defense when we can get out in transition and get easy buckets. Getting stops gets us all going and gets us hyped and from there it's only up. So we have to make sure we get stops and hopefully it will turn out to be a great night for us."

#### **Tanaya Atkinson, Junior, Guard**

***On how playing in the WNIT the past two seasons has prepared them:***

"I feel like we took postseason and preseason seriously and worked hard to get better. It was basically mind over matter at this point just to get our coaches and seniors to the NCAA Tournament. I think us working hard paid off. It's a great feeling now that we're in the NCAA Tournament."

***On what Coach Cardoza has told them about playing in the NCAA Tournament:***

“When we found out that we were selected, the first practice we had after that, she basically told us that it’s go hard or go home at this point and we only get one chance. So I feel like from then we’ve just been playing hard, practicing hard and getting ready to compete.”