



**2015 NCAA  
WOMEN'S  
CHAMPIONSHIP**

**DIVISION I  
BASKETBALL**

Second Round · UALR vs. Arizona State  
Wells Fargo Arena · Tempe, Arizona  
Sunday, March 23

**POSTGAME QUOTES – Arizona State**

CHARLI TURNER THORNE: Wow. I just want to start off by first of all thanking all of our Arizona State staff and the NCAA. It was amazing to get to host, and everybody, Rhonda Bennett and everybody, Cheryl from the PAC-12 office, thank you guys for an amazing experience. It obviously made it a little bit more amazing because of these young ladies over here and their ability to just stay tough and stay with things.

You guys like the movie Elf? That's a great movie, isn't it? Well, you know how they have to believe, right? I think our fans believed, we believed. We just all believed, and before you know it we're banking in 40-foot threes and finding a way to win. Just really happy for this team. They've worked so hard all year long, and just very excited to keep playing, keep coaching them.

**Q. Elisha, was that bank-in three the biggest shot of your career?**

ELISHA DAVIS: Yes, it was. Believe. That's all that was running through my head, believe, and that was God, though. That's why that went in. That was God. Yeah.

**Q. What happened in the first half? You guys were 6 of 28 from the field.**

PROMISE AMUKAMARA: I think we just needed to take our time on the shot. We were getting -- not wide open but contested two-footers and we just needed to take our time and make those shots. But we knew we were going to make them in the second half, so that's what we did.

ELISHA DAVIS: I would just say I needed to do a better job as a point guard that the floor was spaced and we were in our correct spots before even starting the play, and just knowing that if you look at your point guard and see if I'm antsy and nervous and not really on point then that's going to feed into my teammates, so I just have to do a better job as a point guard in making sure our plays are set and making sure we're executing to get better shots.

**Q. For Promise and Sophie, what was so hard about guarding their motion offense?**

PROMISE AMUKAMARA: I think the hardest part was just defending all the screens. They set weak-side screens, strong-side screens, and it was just kind of defending them because right when you get a screen you're getting another one. It really tested our communication and our ability to defend screens off ball.

SOPHIE BRUNNER: Yeah, kind of what Promise said, the screens were really tough, just knowing when to be in help and when not to be. Just getting caught, I got caught in no man's land a couple times and gave up offensive rebounds which wasn't acceptable. We had to

adjust to them the second half and adjusted and started boxing out a little bit better, but just glad we finished.

**Q. Elisha, you had a rough night shooting. You looked like you were a little reluctant to shoot the ball later in the game. Was that the case?**

ELISHA DAVIS: As you seen in the first time when we had four seconds left on the shot clock and Katie gave it to me, I wasn't ready because I wasn't expecting it but after that I was just like now or never, like what is this, you've missed 10, hopefully you make the 11th one so you never give up. And my teammates and my coaches believed in me and they said it's going to fall, it's going to fall. It's a really tricky shot for that to be the only one that really fell, but I was glad that it did.

**Q. Promise, was it ever in the back of your mind late in the game that this could be your last game as a Sun Devil?**

PROMISE AMUKAMARA: No, not at all. We've always battled back from tough games, so I knew that we were going to click and finish this game out strong. They're a tough team, but I've got to commend our team, like I feel like we're tougher.

**Q. How big was it to go 13 for 15 on free throws throughout the game and Katie's two huge free throws to almost ice it at the end of the game?**

SOPHIE BRUNNER: I just think it's really important because recently we just haven't been shooting free throws consistently well, so coming out today and making our free throws made the difference in the game, and because we weren't shooting well in the first half and that's what kind of kept us in the game, and in the second half things started clicking, but free throws, like you said with Katie's free throws, kind of pretty much kept us in the game and almost won us the game.

**Q. Sophie, after Elisha made her shot, you and Kelsey made several baskets down there low. Do you feel like you kind of wore them down at the very end of the game?**

SOPHIE BRUNNER: Yeah, definitely, because they were definitely keying on the guards more because they knew that Kelsey and I were just going to go and clean it up. They just kept doubling Katie and we just happened to be open and see each other, which was great. We just have a good connection in that sense.

**Q. Elisha, you said that was the biggest shot of your career. Was that the biggest blocked shot of your career at the buzzer?**

ELISHA DAVIS: It's very interesting, just from all the close games that we've battled back in or close games that we've gave up leads and we just had really close games we had to have, we had to have faith, that's what our culture is about. So just having those games and knowing we have to get this stop, we have to get this box out, we have to get whatever we have to get. I was just very, very focused on following my player and just being there, and because I felt comfortable doing that because I got a lot of deflections in the first half and a little bit in the second half, I just kind of put my hand up and the ball went to it. Yeah, I'll say I'm very excited I was able to get that and not foul, but I'm just more excited that our team was actually able to finish. Our defensive collectively did not have anybody iso them or not have communication and things of that nature.

**Q. Promise, you guys held Taylor Gault to only two points in the second half. What were you doing to do that?**

PROMISE AMUKAMARA: I think it was just a whole team effort. We were communicating on defense a lot better, and I thought I did well of getting over screens and just following her, staying with her, just making it difficult for her to get open and catch the ball.

**Q. Promise, you took a shot to the eye on a rebound. Was there ever any doubt that you were going to come back in the game?**

PROMISE AMUKAMARA: No, I knew I had to come back in. I had to come back in. The doctor gave me some eyedrops and I was fine.

**Q. I'm just wondering, how big of a boost was the crowd for you guys at the end of the game?**

ELISHA DAVIS: Yes, it was beautiful. Our crowd was beautiful. It just felt so good to have so much support and to see that not only our teammates and coaches believed in us but also all of our supporters and people that have been there since day one. You know, so it's just very good to see that even some of the students came out when they could have just gladly clapped us off from being at home or seeing if we won or not. So to see that big crowd it gave us that energy like we can't let this down and we can't let our administration down for doing so much for us to even have this game and host us. That crowd were a part of that win just as well.

**Q. Charli, you've been around this game for a while. One of the most incredible comebacks --**

CHARLI TURNER THORNE: Are you trying to say I'm old?

**Q. I'm not trying to say that. One of the more incredible comebacks you've seen?**

CHARLI TURNER THORNE: Yes, yes. We've actually been in this situation for those of you who have been with us through the season. That's what we talked about at halftime. Especially the last half of the season. We had a lot of bad halves offensively. We got in there, took a breath, just said, okay, just slow down. Really a lot of times we start talking about our defense but we were turning the ball over so much we couldn't even set our defense, and when you factored out those turnovers in the first half, they only scored 10 points on us. So we felt pretty good. We just needed to take a breath. And a ton of credit -- I don't want to play that team again. I don't. I mean, Arkansas-Little Rock is good. They're legit, and I thought they played an amazing game. It was really something like both teams deserved to win. So I just want to say that. My hat's off to them.

And we've been able to come out, but it's up there. That game ranks up big time.

You know, in our deep runs into the tournament we've usually had a game like this in the first or second round. In '07 we struggled to score -- we basically beat UC Riverside as a 3 seed in the first game and we had a one-possession game with Louisville. Like you said, I'm old. There's been a lot of games, and just so proud of this group for staying with things and finding a way.

**Q. What was your reaction after Lee Lee hit that shot?**

CHARLI TURNER THORNE: I joked about the Elf reference, but we did feel the crowd. They were standing, they were into the game, and I feel like we're a feel team. We feel each other. You know, I was elated, okay. I was just elated, because now that they're gone -- Katie was supposed to get the ball to Sophie on an iso. She gave the ball to the wrong person

and it got deflected, so now I took a timeout to set something. We didn't set up the 40-foot bank in the timeout. I'm just going to confess that. That was all them. Now we're down to two seconds and Katie didn't feel like she could make the pass, she gives it to Lee Lee, and -- Elisha Davis practices deep threes. We always have some of our better three-point shooters, like she probably did not quite that deep, but probably maybe two feet in from that, she probably shot 30 of those yesterday in practice and some in shoot-around. But for those types of situations. Kylan Loney we used to shoot from the Wells Fargo all the time, and it's amazing when you get to that situation and then just have confidence.

**Q. I know you've had bad first halves this season, but are you sitting on the bench wondering if you ever are going to make a shot in this first half? Were they just rushing their attempts because you got good shots?**

CHARLI TURNER THORNE: We did, and that's what you feel good about as a coach. If you're getting good shots you're fine. I mean, the turnovers were frustrating, but the missing of the good shots I was okay with. Big game, just a little tight, and again, we've -- down the stretch the last three or four weeks of the season, we had way too many halves like that for those of you that come every week. You know, it was familiar territory, so in that sense they didn't panic. They were okay.

**Q. In those nine minutes was it just that you were making more shots or was there anything else you noticed from your team?**

CHARLI TURNER THORNE: Well, we certainly were making -- we shot 54 percent in the second half, so we came out and I think played Sun Devil basketball and did a much better job. We got the ball inside, and I think someone referenced did we wear them down, and I thought we did because in the first half they were -- we passed to the post and they were coming and looking to strip. By the end of the game they weren't helping each other at all, so we had one-on-ones and obviously Sophie took advantage of that. They wore down a little bit, Katie got free for some good looks, and that's what -- and I think our team kept working hard to get their good looks.

The biggest difference was just taking care of the basketball. It's hard to score when you don't get a shot up.

**Q. Same question I had for the girls. How important is it as a coach to see the girls hitting free throws the entire game?**

CHARLI TURNER THORNE: Well, I mean, you hit on something huge. One, that we didn't foul them because we were very disappointed in our first game. We gave Ohio 21 free-throw attempts, and that's not us. We really work hard to not be in the bonus either half and we've done a great job of that all year long. It was one of our big areas of emphasis going into the season. All the best teams can play great position defense, no matter how good and athletic you are, so that we did a great job of, and for us to step up and make those free throws was -- I mean, especially when you're not making field goals. You had to take advantage of it. And Sophie Brunner has struggled a little bit and for her to step up with that level of confidence just shows you how tough these kids are, and we probably couldn't have scripted it better to miss that one and get the rebound and be able to pull it out.

Just the rebounding off the free throw, and boy, we've talked about that, too. Everybody is watching the men's and women's tournament. How many games have been decided by a

rebound off a free-throw attempt? I know at least four that I've been watching. It was great hustle by Kelsey and our team.

**Q. You touched upon this in the last answer, but how do you practice not fouling?**

CHARLI TURNER THORNE: Well, we just work on our defense, and we play great position defense. We move our feet, and we call fouls in practice. If you foul, you come out of the game that you want to play, and you don't foul. When we played Notre Dame in the second round last year, that's when you really see it. Like if you can't guard a great team without fouling, and I think for us, we wore them down and they did foul us, and we were able to stay tough and keep working. Now, they got some good shots down the stretch, don't get me wrong, but the fact that we had the discipline to not foul them has been a great strength of this team all year long. It's discipline. It's just discipline.

**Q. What do you tell the kids at halftime, and also, will you be bringing back any of the former players to talk to them before the Sweet 16 like January or anyone?**

CHARLI TURNER THORNE: No, I think Bree is still in Brazil. We had a lot of former players here at the game and we always invite them in the locker room. We're going to be turning around and leaving here pretty quick, so I don't know if I'll have an opportunity for that. Well, again, I kind of alluded at halftime that I just tell them to take a breath. We just needed to slow down on offense, take our time. We felt really good about our defense because they were just mainly scoring off our turnovers, not off our half-court defense. We had a few adjustments, and to make our transition defense was pretty tragic for stretches. We weren't getting to the ball. We weren't getting anywhere, and they ran it right up our you know whats. But we adjusted. We adjusted like this team does. I've mentioned that a lot. I mean, they're just really coachable. Joe Foley was funny before the game, we were talking, he's like, I love this time of year. They listen to you because sometimes you're in the grind and they're tired. But this team, they've listened to us, the coaches, all year long. They've been just so respectful, so coachable, so mature about things, and hopefully we've had a few good things to say and it's helped them.

Yeah, we've been pretty good at evaluating and adjusting at halftime. Good to see. And that's to their credit.

**Q. You guys faced a Little Rock team that had three really versatile, experienced seniors. What was the biggest challenge in trying to defend those three?**

CHARLI TURNER THORNE: Well, when you're playing against seniors in March, just the banking of the three from the non-shooter, you know, just the stepping up and doing things that they haven't done all year because they're just willing it in because they don't want their season to end, and I thought they did that. They just stepped up and made plays, and some of those plays I don't think are plays that they always make. You know, and that was our concern. That's always my concern. I look at who are the seniors. Who are the seniors and how big a role are they playing, and all the great teams, usually the seniors are the ones that do step up in this time of year for sure.

**Q. Can you just give us an early -- some early thoughts on playing Florida State next?**

CHARLI TURNER THORNE: You know I don't look ahead. I'm going to tell on Debbie Antonelli. She told me to look at us -- no way this team is -- I was prepared, but I haven't actually -- obviously Sue Semrau, head coach at Florida State has done an amazing job. They've been in the top 10 for a lot of the season. I'm not that familiar with their team. I

watched them play Washington on tape early, and they lost to Washington, and they didn't play well and they didn't have their point guard Romero who was a transfer who got eligible, transferred from Kansas State. I know she's a big difference maker for them, and then they have a bunch of other transfers, they have like five transfers from other schools. They're kind of a whole new team this year. I think they're very talented and usually play man. I think they've pretty much played man all year long. That's kind of consistent with us. I think that's kind of good. We started playing a team that was all zone with one day of practice, that would not be ideal. But I think -- usually to be honest a lot of the best teams in the country are some of the simplest to prepare for because what they do, they do really well. They don't do a lot of things, and I think Florida State, they have great personnel, they execute really well, really good man defense team, but I will be getting on that as soon as we're wrapping up here.