



Alyssa Martin Oral History Interview, May 13, 2014

Title

“The Hectic Life of the Student Athlete”

Date

May 13, 2014

Location

Valley Library, Oregon State University.

Summary

In the interview, Martin provides insight into the busy lives led by student athletes at Oregon State University. In so doing, she touches upon her training regimen, both in-season and off, as well as techniques that she has used to remain successful in the classroom despite the many demands placed upon her as a women's basketball player. Martin also discusses her recruitment to OSU, her decision to honor her commitment to the program despite the firing of the coach who recruited her, and her perspective on the current coaching staff.

Martin likewise reflects upon traveling with her teammates, preparation for games, the rivalry between OSU and the University of Oregon, and her experience playing in the NCAA tournament. She describes the facilities available to women's basketball players and remarks on the impact made by the new basketball practice facility and the Beth Ray Academic Center. She concludes with thoughts on social life as a student athlete in a small college town and answers questions about the contemporary state of women's basketball, including the dominance of the University of Connecticut and her interactions with Oregon native Shoni Schimmel.

Interviewee

Alyssa Martin

Interviewer

Chris Petersen

Website

<http://scarc.library.oregonstate.edu/oh150/martin/>

Transcript

Chris Petersen: Okay Alyssa, we're going to talk today about your experiences as a student athlete at OSU. The first thing I'd like you to do is introduce yourself with your name, today's date and your location.

Alyssa Martin: My name is Alyssa Martin, today is May 13th 2014 and we are at the Oregon State library.

CP: Terrific. So you have OSU in your blood from both your mother and father. Can you tell us a little bit about their background and their connection to the university?

AM: My mom actually grew up in Corvallis and so just kind of always been born and raised a Beaver. Both my parents went to school here. My dad played basketball as well, so just have always been a Beaver fan. It's just kind of ingrained in my blood.

CP: Yeah, your dad Earl Martin played for Ralph Miller. Ralph is a legendary figure obviously. Did he ever talk about memories of his time as a basketball player and playing for Ralph Miller?

AM: Yeah. Growing up we kind of hear stories about Ralph Miller, just how good of a coach he was and the team back then, and every now and then we'd walk in to his room and he'd be watching old game film of him and Gary Payton, so that was always cool to see.

CP: Did you know Gary Payton at all growing up?

AM: Yeah, we hung out with him a few times, like went to his kid's birthday party one year. Yeah, a little bit.

CP: So obviously you've been interested in basketball for quite a long time.

AM: Yeah, I started playing basketball in kindergarten, and my school didn't have enough girls to play, so I played on the boy's team until 6th grade. So that was, it was a cool experience.

CP: And that continued on through high school. Where'd you play in high school?

AM: High school I started out at Sunset High School in Beaverton and then transferred to Jesuit as a junior, and finished out my career there before coming to Oregon State.

CP: And did you like school growing up?

AM: Yeah, I've always loved school, and just the challenge of it. My mom always made sure I took harder classes and definitely, I've always liked it.

CP: So tell me about the recruiting process for you.

AM: I was originally recruited by Lavonda, who left before I got here, but I was actually offered a scholarship as a sophomore, I believe, in high school. So this was the only recruiting trip I took and didn't want to go anywhere else, didn't look at any other schools. I had seen some other colleges just on different basketball traveling trips, but this was the only school I looked at, this is where I wanted to go and so I verballed and waited until I was old enough to sign the letter of intent and came here.

CP: So tell us a little bit more about what it's like to go on an official visit to a school. You've been on one and I'm sure you've helped host them also. What goes on?

AM: Recruiting trips are a whirlwind two and a half days. You get here on a Friday, watch a practice, go out to dinner with the coaches, get up early on Saturday, kind of take a tour of school. I think I watched another practice. We had breakfast with the team and that night was like hang out time with the team and there was another girl on my recruiting trip as well, and just quickly getting to kind of see the school, and then you leave Sunday morning.

CP: Well you mentioned you were recruited by Lavonda Wagner, she wasn't the coach by the time you got here, things kind of fell apart a little bit and as it turns out you were the only member of your class to honor your commitment to OSU. You want to talk a little bit about how that all came to pass for you?

AM: Well, I found out Lavonda was going to get fired, I think it was like a month before I was supposed to start school, and both my parents sat me down and were like, "it's up to you if you want to go to Oregon State. You don't have to honor that commitment anymore." But this is where I wanted to be. It was close to my family, I knew they'd be at every game and I've just always loved Oregon State and so there was no doubt in my mind this was where I wanted to go, where I wanted to be. I have friends here. And so I decided to stick it out, and then Scott Rueck got hired and I happened to have known him from when I was younger, so that worked out really well.

CP: In fact, he and your dad went to OSU at the same time, is that correct?

AM: Yeah, they went to school at the same time and I think Scott roomed with other basketball players, so I think they knew each other too.

CP: He's been very successful pretty much everywhere he's been as a coach. You want to talk a little about his technique? What makes him such a good coach?

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AM: Scott is a good coach because I don't think anybody else prepares as much as him and the rest of the coaching staff. Our film sessions, we are equipped with every single thing that the person likes to do, every tendency that they have we know and our coaches have scouted for it, and our game plan. He gives us a way to win every single game and it doesn't matter if it's a number one team in the nation or the worst in our league. And they approach every game the same and I think that that has really added to his success.

CP: Does he have any particular motivational techniques that he uses that come to mind?

AM: One of the things that he did for me, at least, was as I got older and kind of progressed that he really takes the time to help you mature as a leader and he - one of his things is leaders don't just happen, you kind of have to cultivate it. And so that was one of the things that I really liked.

CP: You chose to be a civil engineering major, was that from the outset when you came to OSU?

AM: I actually started as a biology major and just didn't really like it. And after the first term of college kind of sat down with my mom and she had always said, coming into school, "you know you should really look at engineering, you're good at math and science." And I was like pfft, I'm not going to listen to you. Eighteen years old, I know what I want to do. And so kind of took that to heart after the first term, looked at the different engineering disciplines we have here and went with civil and have just loved it.

CP: I'm really interested in learning more about the life of a student athlete from your perspective, and the first thing I'll ask you about is what it's like in the off-season, what kind of training regimen you stick to and how you prepare yourself for the season.

AM: Off-season is crazy, that's when you get better as an individual. Coaches spend time on what you need to work on, we have what are called "individuals" a couple times a week for an hour. Usually groups of four and you do a bunch of ball handling, bunch of shooting, you usually end with one-on-one or two-on-two. And then we always have open gyms, usually four or five times a week, and then gym's open for if you need to come in and use it. And we do weightlifting, conditioning still, and then I personally do triathlons as well over the summer and so that was a little bit different working out as well, but I like to stay busy and so it's a little bit more downtime in off-season but still just as crazy.

CP: Triathlons, huh?

AM: Yeah. One of my, my AAU coach had said "you know, you can swim, you can run, you should do a triathlon." Biking and I don't really get along but it's fun, I kind of like it.

CP: You mentioned AAU, that's become more and more important to college basketball. You want to talk a little about that, your experience in AAU?

AM: Yeah, I played on an AAU team based out of Portland called Clutch Players and I love AAU. I wish that you can do it in college. It was just a month and a half of traveling every weekend or week for basketball, and you get to know a group of girls who you don't go to high school with, which was kind of cool, and just play four basketball games in one day and you have college coaches watching you, so it's definitely a really cool experience and I got to see places I would never go to and play the sport I love.

CP: Something that's important probably year around is the Sports Performance Center. I assume you spend a lot of time there off season and on?

AM: Oh yeah, SPC is definitely our next home from the basketball facility. Do a lot of lifting in there, a lot of rolling out when you're sore. We do a lot of running out just on the football fields next door to it. And they say "once a Beaver, always a Beaver," so I get to use it now that I'm done, too. So I use it for the bikes and lifting a little bit. But definitely are in there a lot.

CP: Now in the off-season the contact you can have with the coaching staff is limited, is that correct?

AM: Yes.

CP: So how is all this organized?

AM: Coaches are allowed to be there for individuals and then open gym we kind of organize on our own. There's usually a set time that we have logged out of the day of when you're allowed—or when we do basketball stuff. And so usually after individuals are over we just go straight to open gym, coaches leave, do that on our own. And then weights when I was in school was always in the morning in the off-season, so we had weights at like 6:00 in the morning and then we had our weight coach there for that, and so it was always bright and early.

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CP: And people always made it, I assume?

AM: Yes. We were always there.

CP: And is training table a year-round thing as well?

AM: Yeah, for basketball it was year-round. Kind of the days change. In season we usually only had it Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, because we would be gone Thursday, Fridays. It usually changed in the off-season where we had it four out of five days a week.

CP: And is that three meals a day, or?

AM: We just did dinners. I think football has three meals but I don't know. It might be changing now because NCAA changed the rules on food. I don't really know.

CP: So is that just the women's team, women's basketball team eating together or were multiple teams there at the same time?

AM: Multiple teams. Us, gymnastics, football, baseball would be there every now and then at the beginning of the year. But just kind of a bunch of athletes sitting at tables hanging out.

CP: So it's probably a good opportunity to meet some new people too.

AM: Yeah. Meet some friends outside of people you see every single day for four hours.

CP: Okay, well now let's move to in season. What is a typical day like for you during the season?

AM: Typical day in season, I usually have morning classes with engineering, so have those from eight to eleven and then we usually practice. From noon to three is basketball and then three to four would be lifting, and we lift three to four times a week, practice every day but Sunday. And so that would be a typical day. And then the days we travel would be Thursday through get back to either Saturday or Sunday after a game. But pretty hectic. If I had classes after practice, which didn't usually happen, I'd have to hustle over there, feel bad for my classmates because usually didn't get to shower, sprinting over there. But usually pretty busy until dinnertime. Go home, eat dinner, do homework, repeat.

CP: What would be your routine for a home game?

AM: Home games we would do what are called shoot-arounds and they're usually an hour and a half, which happen, they just happen during our practice time. And so I have class before go to shoot-around, which is just a quick walkthrough, kind of go over everything we've talked about, what we're going to do for this team, how we scout everybody. And then get some shots up at the end. And we would get a pre-game meal and so we'd all go over to the training table area and eat as a team and then kind of had about two and a half to three hours after that to, everybody just does their own thing to get ready for the game. Some people take naps, some people go straighten their hair and then we have game time.

CP: What was your tradition? Did you have one?

AM: Mine kind of changed. My freshman year I'd always have to shower, do my hair, make sure that there were like no loose curly hairs out anywhere. But this year it was just kind of relax, I actually did homework a lot of the time and then I would straighten my hair this year. And then it was game time.

CP: Well one thing that you got to serve witness to that was, has been I'm assuming, very important for both men's and women's basketball is the construction and completion of the practice facility. Do you want to give us a sense of what life was like before and after the practice facility?

AM: Yeah, it's so weird to me that before we had three teams trying to coordinate practice times in Gill between us, men's basketball and volleyball. It was kind of an ever-rotating term where one team got to choose what time they wanted practice one term and then the other two picked after them and then it just rotated. But we'd always kind of heard that "guys, in the future we're going to have a practice facility," and I didn't know if it would happen when I was still here. And then they started building it and that went up really fast and so we were fortunate enough to be able to use that this year. It just opened up a ton of free time. You can go in there at any time of the day and use the court, and so practices were also able to be a little bit flexible this year too. If we had an earlier flight we were able to practice earlier instead of being stuck with "no, this is the only three hours you get." And so that was pretty cool. But I think it just helped elevate our game to a whole new level this year.

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CP: So you mentioned that people could come whenever they wanted. Obviously you had practice, scheduled practices, but you have access to whenever you want to go?

AM: We still had our three hour practices a day and there'd be people in there later that night or earlier in the morning. I know a couple people find it hard to sleep at night if they haven't done something active and so they would go in and use it like right before they went to sleep. But there were people in there all the time.

CP: Tell me a little bit more about the rest of the facility complex that you use. The locker rooms, relatively new locker rooms I think, is that correct?

AM: Yeah, we have the locker rooms in Gill, which is like a miniature house. I mean I could live down there, and that is awesome. I remember seeing that on my recruiting trip and being like, "I've never seen anything as nice as this." So we all have our own lockers in there, full showers, bathrooms and everything, and then we have what we call the classroom and it's two rows of desks and chairs. We have a big huge projector and what I think is really cool is what looks like a wall but it's a whiteboard, so you can write on the wall and that's where we would do a lot of our scouting reports and just kind of team meetings happen in there. We have a ping pong room and then we have a room with three TV's lined up next to each other that we could use during cold football games. We watched the games in there after halftime. And then we have another little section with a TV and a Wii and so have little games over there, and then a fridge, a little pantry. That's only

at Gill. And then we have a new locker room over in the practice facility which is just lockers and bathrooms and showers and everything, but still super nice. And then upstairs in the practice facility we have another classroom with just kind of tables and chairs out and the big projector. So lots of nice facilities.

CP: Where does the film study happen?

AM: Depends. Now we use, if we have a home game we would practice in Gill before that game, and so we do film usually in the Gill classroom. And then if we had an away game we'd just stay in the practice facility and do film up there.

CP: Well another thing that has come to pass fairly recently is the academic center, now called the Beth Ray Academic Center. You want to talk about your experiences with that and the impact that that's had?

AM: Yeah, when I first started at Oregon State we had study hall over in Reser and so you go up to third or fourth floor of Reser and that's where study hall would happen. They'd just kind of lay out a bunch of tables and say "everybody go." And I stopped doing study hall my freshman year, but then once they built the academic center, study hall got moved over there, so they have their own special floor for student athletes. All of our little counselor people are over there and they have their own offices, so that's where we would meet with them as well, to just kind of make sure we're on track with everything. It's where we go to get our book stamps and return our books every term, and then I've used it for when I have to get exams proctored if we're gone or whatever. They can proctor exams for you so, and they have little special rooms where it's just you and your proctor, so I've definitely used that. And then we have our little computer lab that lets us print and everything, and so that's been utilized a couple of times.

CP: You mentioned study hall, you didn't—it's not required? It wasn't required for you at some point?

AM: It's required when you first come and then as long as you get a certain GPA you can opt out of it, and so after that first term I was done.

CP: Well the student athletes, especially basketball players, have to travel quite a lot. I'm wondering if you could tell us a little about what the routine is like, life on the road.

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AM: Yeah, travel every other week for four days, so usually miss two full days of class. And so, I mean I always had to kind of talk with my teacher to make sure they knew I was going to be gone, if I could take—I took multiple tests on the road. But once we're travelling, I love in-season because you're on a plane with twelve of your best friends, and I'm sure people think we're so obnoxious, but just having a good time. We eat a lot of really good food. I think we go to Cheesecake Factory whenever we have a chance. Always beg for cheesecake and never get it. We do P.F. Chang's a lot. Everybody loves that on our team, and so I think we always make jokes about how all we do on the road is eat. We eat and play basketball and then we kind of spend our few down minutes at the hotel, everybody trying to get homework done. Every now and then we have just group study hall where everybody just goes into one room and try to get homework done. But it's just a lot of fun on the road.

CP: How does Ruth Hamblin handle flying coach?

AM: Oh, poor Ruth, her long legs. A lot of the places we go are actually pretty like "oh you're really tall, let me try and get you a bigger seat," and so her and Coach Eli sometimes get those exit rows. But a lot of the time she's crammed in there with us and we always hope she's not behind you because you just get those knees straight in your back.

CP: Well, one of the, I guess hallmarks of the program while you've been here is terrific success against the University of Oregon. I wonder if you could talk a little bit about the rivalry with U of O.

AM: Oh yeah, I mean growing up a Beaver, I hate the Ducks, and so I think it took a little bit of time for the team to kind of realize like nobody likes the Ducks, and this is a true rivalry. And so I think the only time we lost to them was the first time my freshman year when their new facility opened up. And I mean I just remember being down 20 here my freshman year, coming back and winning is one of the games I will never forget, and I love playing them. I think no matter where

either of us were seeded in the Pac-12 it was always going to be a close, good, hard-fought game. And so I love playing them and I think our team has kind of grown into that "okay, this is a heated rivalry and it's going to be a good game."

CP: Do you have any other stand-out memories of playing at opposing team's gyms?

AM: Stanford. My junior year, maybe sophomore. We were up 7 at half time and I just remember going into the locker room and everybody's like "we need to take pictures, we're up at Stanford right now," like nobody knew what to do, like this is unreal. Their crowd was just silent. I mean we played fearless and just coming out in the second half we were up for a while as well and they, I just remember they hit a 3 and their crowd erupted because they understood the game of basketball and this, that was the turning point. And so that was a really cool game even though we didn't win. I think just making it to the NCAA tournament, that's pretty unforgettable. But there have been a few really cool games that we've had.

CP: You guys have travelled to some interesting places too. You went to Hawaii, is that right?

AM: Yeah.

CP: And I think you've been to Mexico as well.

AM: Yeah, we did Hawaii my freshman year for a tournament and I had never been there. There had actually only been two people between like our coaching staff and the team that had ever been to Hawaii, so that was a really cool trip. We got beach time so that was cool, went swimming in the ocean, saw some turtles. Then we did Mexico and that was over Thanksgiving, so we had Thanksgiving in Mexico and I think we won that tournament or got second. And so I've been to Mexico before but a lot of the people on our team hadn't so that was another cool experience of getting to see somewhere you don't normally travel to for basketball. And then this year we actually went to the Bahamas for a tournament and I don't think a single person had been there. And it was also during Thanksgiving and they had a big huge feast for everybody, they dressed up nice and all the teams came and had really good food, and that was a really fun tournament as well.

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CP: Well tell me a little bit more about your progression through the civil engineering program and your impressions of it.

AM: Civil engineering, when people talk to me about it they're always like "oh, that's so crazy, you're doing civil engineering and basketball," but it actually hasn't been as crazy and hectic as I think it comes off to be. All my teachers have been super understanding about "okay, I understand you're travelling, don't worry about it, here's what you need to—you can turn in your homework online, just email it to me." I've gotten quizzes, just take this on the road, email it back, get it proctored by somebody, and so a lot of just working around, "when are you going to be here, when can you take this test, early or when you get back?" So that has been very helpful and I think it takes a lot of the stress off. And then I think on the flip side I've also kind of had to learn how to say "no, I can't hang out tonight, I do have to do this and get it done." And so, I mean I really like the program and the people in it and I've made some friends outside of basketball, and so I'm glad I did it.

CP: Is there a particular area that's emerged for you of interest?

AM: I think the transportation side of engineering; I've really enjoyed those classes. Unfortunately we only—or at least the way my schedule worked out, I didn't get to take them until this year. And so I kind of wish I had noticed that earlier and got to take more technical electives with it, but I like that and kind of the hydrology side of it and so I don't know, we'll see.

CP: How about any particular mentors or professors that have emerged for you?

AM: I really like Kenny Martin. I had him for statics and he was one of the ones that really worked with me, just to kind of make sure I understood the whole concept of statics and that you carry with you. I think I've done that in every single class. And I really enjoyed him. I think yeah, he really stood out for me.

CP: And it's strictly speaking not civil engineering, but it must be interesting for an engineer to see all the construction happening right now on this campus.

AM: Yeah, there's so many construction projects going on and just being able to walk by a lot of them every day too, you see how much has happened in like the span of a week. It's pretty cool.

CP: We've kind of touched on this a little bit, but I'm interested in knowing more about how—the techniques that you use to maintain your studies when you're missing this much class.

AM: I think what I use is kind of, I met a group of friends and kind of plead to them that first week "hey, I'm on the basketball team, I'm going to be gone, can you please help me out?" And so kind of having those friends in every class that are willing to kind of give you those notes that you miss and not only "here's the notes," but "okay, here's kind of how we did stuff and if you want we can work on homework together, check our answers, just to kind of make sure. You weren't here when we learned it, but I want to make sure that you get it." And so that has really helped and yeah, just being able to set aside time to focus on school and not with friends, even though that might be what you want to do.

CP: Yeah. Well, you mentioned this a little bit, but engineers do a lot of projects as groups and that must be difficult to make sure the logistics work out there.

AM: Yeah. I'm always afraid my group members are going to hate me because I'm like "okay, I have this set of time blocked out for practice, I can't work on anything, I'm going to be gone these days." So it's like a span of two days with three hours to just try to get stuff done. But I think all of our group projects have ended up really well. I think the biggest one has been our senior capstone project, which the bulk of it started last term in the middle of basketball season and we just kind of set aside one day a week for a chunk of time that we were like "we're going to work on this and get it done," and then we'd meet on Sunday nights, which we were usually home for. And so I think that group projects have worked out pretty well and just kind of having to communicate with your group has been a big thing.

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CP: What is your capstone project?

AM: We have Timberhill Natural Area up off of 29th and we have to build a maintenance bridge, a parking lot and a bathroom for the park area up there. So we're almost done, we've got two weeks left before we present it.

CP: I'm interested in knowing a little bit more about social life for student athletes, as busy as they are.

AM: Social life. Well, I, for myself since I'm from Portland, I have a lot of friends coming here from high school anyways and so I think it was a little different for me as opposed to somebody else on our team from California who doesn't know anybody. But I, for myself, social life really just includes the basketball team. Especially the group of girls this year, we were so close that even on days off it was like "hey, what are you doing? Miss you, come hang out." And so hung out with them all the time. I've had a boyfriend since high school so he was kind of my other half of social life where it was "I'm going to be travelling all the time, would like to see you." So, I mean, never really been into the whole party scene, so I never did that here. And then the other part of my social life was "hey, got group projects to do, let me go work with them." I think that it was kind of everything.

CP: Was there any hangout for the group or did they just go to different people's apartments?

AM: I think this year it's been, there was one house that has four basketball players in it, and so everybody's like "meet at Ali's house," and so everybody kind of goes over there. Last year Ali Gibson and I lived together and so we kind of had people over. But no, it just kind of varies on what everybody feels like. We do go out to eat a lot as a group and we'll go see movies. So that would kind of be the other half of our hangout.

CP: Yeah. And I've noticed that the student athletes do a good job of supporting one another at different events, going to football games, volleyball games, whatever.

AM: Yeah. We did a lot of volleyball games this year. I love going to football games. And, well some of our team will go inside at halftime if it's too cold. Like me, Deven and Ali, we'll sit out there with blankets. And do go to men's basketball when we can. It just depends. Our schedules are usually the opposites of one another. And then I like going to the soccer games a lot too. But yeah, we definitely go support one another.

CP: Well, you live in a small town like Corvallis and you're in the news, you become sort of a mini-celebrity, you have people recognizing you at Fred Meyer and places like that?

AM: Yeah, I think my favorite memory was I was at Fred Meyer one time, just in line actually with my boyfriend, he kind of taps me, was like "hey, I think this kid wants your attention." And this little boy was there with, I don't where this notebook came from, and he was like "you're playing on the women's basketball team, right?" I was like "yeah." He goes "can I please have your autograph?" And I've never been asked for my autograph in a store before and that was just like a surreal experience. I thought it was awesome, and he was just the cutest little kid. I was like "yeah, of course!" So that was really cool.

CP: Something that's relatively new for everybody and has made a big impact on athletes at every level is social media. I'm wondering if you can talk a little about how that has impacted you and your teammates and student athletes in general.

AM: Yeah, I know now there's different rules with like texting potential recruits and stuff like that and the rules were different when I was getting recruited. I know I got texts every now and then, just after like a game when they'd say great job and whatnot. I've never been huge on the whole Twitter social media thing and so don't really use that a whole lot. I have one but I mean, I tweet maybe like once a month, so I can't really say anything about that. And I really only use Facebook to upload pictures and every now and then stay in contact with somebody, so I haven't been huge on the social media aspect of sports. But I know it's there and I know a lot of people use it.

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CP: Well you were the only senior on this year's team and you mentioned that your coach asked you to be a leader. How did that play out for you? How did you feel about your senior year, a kind of bittersweet year I think, in some ways, for you?

AM: Yeah, senior year was different. I had gone from starting and playing a lot to taking a different role this year. And I've always said basketball's a team sport, I want my team to do well and we made it to the NCAA tournament, so couldn't have asked for a better way to finish it. And I think being the only senior, we only had one other upperclassman that we were kind of the leaders; "okay this is how we do stuff, this is how we conduct ourselves." And just kind of paving the way for those freshmen and sophomores that we had on the team. I think it was a different leadership role than what some people might think of, being a senior leader is. But I was willing to do it and it's a team sport.

CP: Yeah. At what point did you realize that this was a pretty good team this year?

AM: I think just as soon as we started practices. I've never been a part of a team where practices were so competitive. Usually we have to have, or we would do loser runs and so that kind of makes it like okay, you don't want to lose. And while we still did that with this team, it was nobody wanted to lose no matter what. And I mean things got very physical and I think that just right there you knew that this team was going to fight until the end.

CP: You had a little bit of a choppy start to the season, maybe it's a choppy start to the conference season, and then you guys started winning like crazy and at some point it became pretty clear you guys were going to make the tournament, that must have been a great feeling.

AM: Yeah, even though we won those nine straight, I think everybody was still kind of like "well, everybody thinks we're an underdog," nobody knew if we were going to get picked for the tournament. And I think we all wanted to believe like, "we're in, there's no way we can't make it, we made it to the Pac-12 tournament championship." So you'd think like "okay, we're in, we have to make it." Once we got to that viewing party we had we were all kind of like "okay, when are they going to show our name?" And so it was like we want to be really confident that we're in but at the same time it's Oregon State, nobody's heard of us, are they going to choose us? So it was kind of both, a little bit of both sides.

CP: Yeah, in the video of you guys reacting to the announcements, you look euphoric almost.

AM: Yeah, once they showed it, because I think they got through a whole half of the bracket before ours got shown and we were like "thank you. Finally." But yeah, it was, that was really cool how many people showed up just to support us.

CP: Well, talk about playing in the tournament.

AM: I think we got really lucky getting to go to Seattle and we had tons of fans there and it was loud. It was almost like it was a home game for us, just how many people showed up and the procedures to even get in. I mean, usually at home games we just walk right in, go to your locker room. This was check your bags, get a little tag, can't go anywhere outside of the locker room, once the game's over you're in the locker room for thirty to forty minutes, whatever your set amount of time is. And so it was a little bit different with that, just kind of the rules, but it was such a cool experience and one that not many people get to have when they play a college sport, so I'm very thankful for that.

CP: Somebody else who finished up her college career this year from—an Oregonian who grew up out my way, I grew up in Pendleton—is Shoni Schimmel, did you have any connection with her over the course of your career?

AM: Yeah, I actually played Shoni three years in high school and pretty sure before that as well, but my last two years of high school we played them in the state tournament. Most memorably, my senior year we played them. They came down to Jesuit once and we played them and then we played them in the state tournament as well. I think they were our first game, and so the way the Oregon state tournament works is you win, you're in the winner's bracket. You lose, the best you can get, I think, is third. And so I just remember we beat them. We got to make it to the—we made it to the state championship that year, so that was really cool. And then we also played her and Louisville out in the Mexico tournament. And so that was a pretty cool experience. I think Shoni and I have always kind of had this little rivalry where neither one of us wants the other one to kind of do well, so it was always fun playing her, 'cause you know she's going to score some deep threes and just, some her shots are crazy.

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CP: Yeah. Well another memorable game for this year was the Notre Dame game at home.

AM: Yeah, we—when we found out we were playing Notre Dame at first, I think before the season started, we were kind of like "whoa, why would we schedule that game?" And then the closer it got we were like, "okay, let's go." And I think we kind of scared them a little bit. Ruth got, I think that's when she started getting all of her blocks and she kind of broke out that game and I wish we could have played them again later in the season, just, we had kind of come together. And I mean we played them so early that I think we were a totally different team then than how we finished. And so it would have been cool to play them again just to see how it turned out. But that was another awesome game.

CP: Well the team that has dominated women's basketball for many years is Connecticut. What is it about them that makes them so good do you think?

AM: I think UConn just, you never know who's going to score. I mean you do, because they all are going to score, but they have threats at every single position and they're such a hard match up for teams. Whereas most teams have maybe two people that you just need to worry about, UConn has everybody, even people that are coming off the bench. And so, and they hold teams to thirty points, and you're going to win games when teams aren't scoring. So I think they just, their scoreboard pressure and their ability to score is kind of what sets them apart.

CP: Well as we kind of close up here a little bit, I'm wondering as you think back on your time at OSU, what are some things that you're proud of?

AM: Some things I'm proud of. I think just being able to say I—hey, I played four years of the highest level basketball you can in college while getting a civil engineering degree is pretty cool. I don't think many people can say that they did that. Proud of our team for making it to the NCAA tournament, winning a game. I think a lot of people didn't even think we would be able to win a game. And so just kind of being able to prove people wrong over the years. I think when I got here nobody expected anything, and especially in the four years that I was here, they probably thought "oh, you'll get there

someday." And just ending up where we are and the team's just going to keep growing, and so I think that's something to be pretty proud of.

CP: Yeah, bright future ahead for the program, for sure.

AM: Definitely.

CP: Well what's next for you?

AM: Next for me. I am going, I actually am doing an internship in Corvallis this summer and I have next Fall just to finish up classes and then it's off into the real world. So hopefully finding some type of civil engineering job. I'd like to be in Oregon, Corvallis, Portland area, so we'll see.

CP: Okay. Well, best of luck to you Alyssa. Thanks very much.

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