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CORVALLIS - As Oregon State public address announcer Mike Stone so eloquently put it, following the Beavers' 65-62 overtime win over Stanford in the College Basketball Invitational semifinals Wednesday night, "it ain't over yet."

The longest OSU season in 60 years just got longer, because OSU (16-17) opens up the best-of-three CBI championship series Monday night at home against UTEP, an 81-69 winner at Richmond in the other semifinal. [Here is the link](#) to the Richmond Times-Dispatch story on that game.

Wednesday's Game 2 in the championship series, and Friday's Game 3 if necessary, will be at UTEP.

"Are you kidding me?" said an excited OSU coach Craig Robinson.

"The finals? That is just amazing. I never thought we'd be there. Absolutely not. I just wanted to play one more game."

If the championship series goes the distance, the Beavers would get six more games.

They beat Houston in Round 1, Vermont in Round 2, and now Stanford (again) to crash the Finals.

"What is comical to me is, I think that most of the people out there thought we shouldn't do this," said Robinson. "And I do not care about that. I wanted to play more games and I'm happy that we did. This is a terrifically run tournament and we've played good basketball. We've gotten so many good things out of this."

After a pulsating 71-70 win over Vermont Monday night in the quarterfinals, the Beavers had more drama in store Wednesday for a stomping, cheering Gill Coliseum crowd of 4,759 - again, an impressive show of support with the school on spring break.

OSU had this game, then blew it, then fell way behind in OT, then pulled it out.

"This is probably the guttiest group of guys I've ever been a part of," said Robinson.

OSU appeared to have Stanford (20-14) beaten in regulation, after Monday hero Calvin Haynes hit a pullup jumper with 15.7 seconds left to give the Beavers a 54-52 lead.

But Hill, after collaring an offensive rebound, tied the game at 54 with a shot in the key at the horn.

"I almost needed an ambulance," said Robinson of his reaction.

OSU's Roeland Schaftenaar, who felt he should have blocked Hill out, had his head down near the OSU bench afterwards.

Robinson called Hill's shot "demoralizing" but he told Schaftenaar to keep his head up and forget

about it because the Beavers had five more minutes (or more) to play.

Stanford, which had lost two of three games to the Beavers during the Pacific 10 Conference season, jumped out to a five-point lead in the OT at 61-56, but OSU roared back and took a 63-61 lead on Schaftenaar's three-pointer, a Schaftenaar putback, and Seth Tarver's driving layup.

"I thought the other night (against Vermont) was a prizefight, this was like two welterweights taking turns smacking each other," said Robinson.

The Beavers - as they often do - missed some free throws late, and the Cardinal still had a chance to send the game into another overtime after Haynes made one of two with 2.5 seconds left.

Hill's desperation shot from the corner wasn't close, and OSU celebrated as if it had just won a game in the Final Four.

"Just think about all the good teams in this conference that went to the NCAA tournament, and now they're home, watching the NCAA or the NIT on TV," said Beavers' point guard Rickey Claitt.

"Us and Arizona are the only teams left playing, so it really does feel good. ... this is just phenomenal for us, and for this program going into next year. And compared to what we did last year?"

He didn't have to finish the sentence.

The Beavers went 6-25 overall and 0-18 in the Pac-10 last season.

Even with a four-game losing streak to end the regular season, they were still one of the best turnaround stories in college basketball.

Now, they could finish with a record better than .500, and claim a championship.

Claitt said it was apparent that the two teams - playing each other for the fourth time this season - knew each other chapter and verse.

"They know who our shooters are, they know our weaknesses and our strengths and we know theirs," said Claitt. "It's just about who wants it more."

Stanford got double-figure scoring from Goods (20), Hill (14) and Landry Field (11) but the Cardinal made only 5 of 13 free throws.

Lathen Wallace slashed inside for 16 points for OSU, with Schaftenaar scoring 14 and Haynes 10.

Robinson was thrilled that the CBI championship series is against UTEP.

And not you-know-who.

"I said upstairs (on TV), you mean we're not playing Stanford in the finals?" joked Robinson.

"I'm actually happy to be playing somebody that doesn't know everything about us."

Notes: OSU hasn't played this deep into March since its 1949 Final Four season. the Beavers' win total is the school's second-highest in the last 17 seasons. ... OSU hasn't won this many games in the post-season since 1981-82, when it made the West Regional final against Georgetown. .. **Robinson** said playing Stanford over and over, "is like playing your brother." .. **Josh Tarver** made his first 3 since last November. ... "What got him going was, they dared him to shoot. They wouldn't even come out on him, and he had to take it," said Robinson. ... **the best of three format?** Robinson loves it. "That's one of the cool things about the tournament. ... all these guys wish they were NBA players." ... Robinson said, "it will be interesting to see how you play in a series like this because I've never experienced it. I experienced it as a player in Europe but that was 20-some years ago." ... Robinson said Northwestern played in the Sun Bowl basketball tournament in El Paso when he was a Northwestern assistant coach, "so I've been to El Paso." ... Robinson re-iterated the fact that critics of the CBI outside the program have no clue about what a benefit this experience has been for his program. "Even if everybody in the entire state of Oregon didn't want us to be in it, I would still want to be in it," he said. ... Robinson, again, thanked the crowd for plunking down \$15 to \$20 to watch the semifinal game. ... perhaps the crowd noise was one of the reasons Stanford biffed so many shots at the line. ... Claitt said he noticed the crowd reaction after Hill's clutch heave at the end of regulation. "It gives the whole team a good vibe and a lot of energy when a dude hits a shot like that, and they're still behind us," said Claitt. ... coach Rob said **the players** may get Thursday AND Friday off. "They deserve it," he said.

So yes, a big day on campus Monday. The start of spring football, and the start of the CBI championship series.