

# Southeastern Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Friday, March 5, 2021

Greenville, South Carolina, USA

## LSU Lady Tigers

## Nikki Fargas

### Postgame Press Conference

Texas A&M 77, LSU 58

THE MODERATOR: We are now joined by Head Coach Nikki Fargas. We'll take questions.

**Q. We've seen this before. Unfortunately you were not shooting the ball well at all, maintain some runs at all. They got going. It was very difficult probably the middle, latter part of the third quarter, to really slow them down.**

NIKKI FARGAS: Yeah, I mean, it's a two-possession game in the third quarter. We can't generate enough offense. Field goal-wise you have looks, you have layups, you have jumpers wide open. We weren't able to connect on them.

In the third quarter we 2-for-12. I really thought that that hurt our offensive production. Even though we got to the free-throw line a little bit more, but this game is also about the responsibility of everybody that touches the floor. So if you're a starter, we need to outplay their starters. If you're a bench player, you need to outplay their bench.

What allowed us to win a lot of our ballgames was because we did those things. Today against a very talented Texas A&M team, obviously No. 1 in our league right now, regular season, probably a No. 1 overall seed in the NCAA tournament, they showcased why they are.

We have, again, to examine how do we fill our stat lines when the ball isn't bouncing our way. That's where we've been struggling as far as players stepping up their defense. In the past we typically play A&M around in the 50s. Gary and I kid about the team, we kid about this, The team that probably gets to 60 first is going to win. We joke about that.

To give up that many points, I thought our defense really



failed us today even though our offensive execution in the third quarter really hurt us.

**Q. Faustine and Awa got in some early foul trouble. You were I think a minus 26 in the points in the paint tonight over the first two times you saw them.**

NIKKI FARGAS: You have N'dea Jones and Ciera Johnson, two veteran post players that bring a lot of size. When Trasi got in foul trouble, Aifuwa got in foul trouble the first half, we had to sit them. That's hard to muster up enough height and size when our two primary post players are sitting on the bench.

This game, still with that being said, you got a second half. You can come back and play and really showcase what you're capable of doing.

I can't say enough, I just really feel like Pointer needed some more help. I thought this was Rakell Spencer's best offensive shooting night. I felt like Rakell Spencer did everything she could.

We just couldn't get anybody else going. I really thought that that hurt us because we needed other guard play to step up because their post play outplayed ours. But you can't have them outplaying both. So that's where I thought our ability to knock down some shots that we had yesterday, we knocked them down; today we did not.

**Q. Is this kind of sitting and hoping, waiting, prayer, that there's maybe not too many upsets, there's an at-large for you somewhere or do you feel like you're done?**

NIKKI FARGAS: No. To me, I'm looking at the fact that we had to cancel two non-conference games due to COVID. That could have played either way with our schedule. Then we get into conference play and we finished eighth in our league.

We have quality wins against top-ranked opponents. We've got two wins against Texas A&M being one and at Georgia. So top one through 25. We've got four wins over 26 to 50.

What are your metrics that you're looking at? Our opponents' net strength of schedule is top five in the country. So we went out and played some talent, and we beat some talent. Again, what metrics are you putting teams in? If you're going to hold teams accountable because of their overall record, that's an interesting concept due to COVID.

If a team finished 20-2, they should automatically be in the tournament. Or are you going to stay consistent historically with eight, sometimes nine -- I remember we were 7-9, got a bunch of SEC teams in. We got two top -- potentially overall No. 1s in our league. LSU played Texas A&M three times, we played South Carolina twice. We also have been able to go on the road and showcase that we can beat a Georgia team at their court.

I feel like our résumé, if you just look at who we've had to play, if you're saying teams that -- if you have two top-25 wins and you have four top-50 wins, to me, if you're basing it off of that.

I just know that COVID is an interesting year for us. Seven wins in our conference at one point was automatic in. We went with six with a COVID year playing two less games in the non-conference and two less games in conference play.

I think our body of work as far as when you look at those numbers, RPIs, people talking about the NET, we have not lost with this loss, but prior to that we had five games that we lost less than 10 points.

South Carolina twice, Texas A&M once. So I think we've done some great things. I do feel like this is a tournament team.

**Q. It is your understanding the NCAA has waived the sub-.500 record rule this year?**

NIKKI FARGAS: Yes, they have. You need it, too. You have some teams that didn't even play conference play, non-conference play. Like I said, the way that our COVID hit us, we had to cancel two games, then I actually had a third one cancel and was able to find another game.

It is just what it was. You just went with it. But, again, if you're saying look at who you're playing and look at some of the top teams that we've beaten, then we've got to be in the conversation.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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