

Southeastern Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Sunday, March 7, 2021

Greenville, South Carolina, USA

South Carolina Gamecocks

Aliyah Boston

Postgame Press Conference

South Carolina 67, Georgia 62

THE MODERATOR: We are ready to begin the South Carolina postgame press conference. We have Aliyah Boston first. We'll take questions, please.

Q. It looked like your teammates were trying to focus on getting you the ball, and Georgia knew it was coming. How tough was it to get started early? How tired were you at the end when you had to step up and make those free throws?

ALIYAH BOSTON: Yeah, I mean, my teammates did a great job of finding me the ball. I just had to be strong with my finishes and be strong with kind of catching the ball. At the beginning it was kind of hard because they were really expecting it to go inside. But as the game went on, it just got easier.

I mean, I missed the first two free throws (laughter). It was sitting on my head. All of a sudden there I was again back to the free-throw line. I was like, Okay, you got to make these, can't miss these.

Q. Coach talked all year about building up the identity of this team, being tough and gritty. Is this the grittiest, toughest game you've played this year?

ALIYAH BOSTON: I would say it's one of them. I definitely think it is because Georgia, I mean, they fought the whole way. Even when there was just 40 seconds left, they're trying to get steals, trying to press. It definitely showed, especially in the kind of ending to it, too.

Q. How does it feel to add 'MVP' by your name? Can you talk about that last sideline out-of-bounds play where you got the basket. Was that something you work on every day or was that an adjustment from something Coach Staley saw the way they were



playing you guys at the end of the game?

ALIYAH BOSTON: Feels great to be named MVP. I was really excited about that. But my teammates really just did a great job of putting me in the positions to be able to score and get blocks and stuff like that.

The last possession, I mean, she drew it up on the sideline. We were kind of just getting it in, waiting for them to foul. But then I saw the lane. I was like, I'm just going to go ahead.

Q. Obviously the end of the regular season was a little bit touch-and-go for you guys, some ups and downs. It looked like you found another gear the last three games. What did winning this tournament do for the morale of this team? How prepared do you feel for the NCAA tournament after this weekend?

ALIYAH BOSTON: I think after this weekend it just shows what our team can accomplish, how we can accomplish it when we really work together. I think that's definitely something we can look at.

Going into the NCAA tournament, I mean, we're really excited for it. I think this kind of helped us be prepared.

Q. The last two games you have played have been really physical games. This team seems to have changed their identity coming into the tournament now, are playing with a little nasty streak, playing physical, aggressive. I don't know if it was being seeded second or whatever, but you just seemed to have a different way of playing. Talk about that.

ALIYAH BOSTON: Yeah, in the Alabama game I would say coach, she told us nice teams cannot win championships. They can't even win SEC championships. I think that right there kind of set it off a little bit. We said, You know what, guys, we need to bring this energy the entire game. Teams are going to be physical. We know they're going to be coming after us. We just have to stand our ground and be ready for it.

Q. How does this feel compared to I guess last week,

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you had to watch Texas A&M cut down nets for a championship, but now you get to do it yourself here?

ALIYAH BOSTON: It feels great. I mean, not winning the regular season championship hurt us a lot, but we knew that we had to be prepared because the tournament was right behind it.

Q. Obviously last year got cut short, almost a year to the date tomorrow. Now you get a chance to go to the NCAA tournament, fingers crossed. What does this moment feel like as you get ready for the big dance finally?

ALIYAH BOSTON: I'm really excited. I know our team is really excited. Last year got so close for us to get our first experience with it. But now I think we're definitely ready and just excited for the challenge.

Q. The four losses you've had this season were all very close, competitive games. What does it do for the psyche of this team and the mentality to get through this one that was really close and competitive to the very end?

ALIYAH BOSTON: I mean, we knew we didn't want to lose. We knew we did not want to lose this game. We knew it was a big game, especially for going into the tournament, just winning this tournament was definitely going to help us there.

We just had to push through. I mean, we talked to each other the six minutes, all right, guys, three minutes, 40 seconds. We have to push through, lock in, no threes, make sure we get stops.

THE MODERATOR: That's all the time we have. Thank you.

ALIYAH BOSTON: Thank you.

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