

# Southeastern Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Friday, March 4, 2022  
Nashville, Tennessee, USA  
Bridgestone Arena

## South Carolina Gamecocks Dawn Staley Brea Beal Aliyah Boston

Postgame Press Conference

South Carolina 76, Arkansas 54

**Q. Aliyah, I wanted to ask, just 22 straight double-doubles now. Now that we're in the tournament, is that ever something, that streak on your mind, and what goes into just consistently playing your best ball right now?**

ALIYAH BOSTON: I'm just trying to be dominant, and that's scoring the basketball and rebounding, so I'm just trying to make sure that I do that.

**Q. Aliyah, Coach Mike Neighbors just said one of the things that really separates you guys is that your bigs can guard guards and your guards can guard bigs maybe better than any team in the country. How much do you think that separates you from other teams and how much of a challenge is that coming to the college game when you're a big and you guard someone you're not quite used to guarding?**

ALIYAH BOSTON: Yeah, it can be a challenge, but I think for us, we work on it every day in practice. We work on it if we have to switch, just making sure we're keeping them in front of us because we know we have help side. I definitely think that's something that separates us, so we're just going to keep doing it.

**Q. Brea, you guys are the vets now and you guys have a lot of young players who are experiencing this tournament for the first time. It's very different from the regular season. What have you guys been telling them just about how to manage this weekend?**



BREA BEAL: I think really just emphasizing that it's no different than our last games. We have to stick to the same routine, the same disciplined actions that we've been doing and just continue playing the basketball we're best at.

**Q. Brea, your ability to lock in on the opposing team's top scorer, walk us through, give us a little insight into your mentality when you step on the floor, and why is it that you feel like you've been able to -- it seems like this year and all year long, you've progressively gotten better and better and it pertains to locking down their top scorer.**

BREA BEAL: I think just knowing personnel, you have to understand who you're guarding. You can't just go guard a shooter the same way you're going to guard a driver. Like you really have to know the difference and really lock into that aspect. I think as years go on, I just really lock into that. Like I really just understood like I need to take scout serious, I need to study it on my own, I need to watch film.

I think that's the difference from my freshman year until now.

**Q. Aliyah, LA had such a good game in this. What's it like for you to have someone who come off the bench and put up 16 and 6 and you guys can relax knowing you've got bigs that can come in and be just as productive as you are?**

ALIYAH BOSTON: Yeah, it's great. Tiche played a really great game tonight. She's a great facilitator and a great communicator, so she just pushes us and helps us through everything, so I'm just really happy that she killed it.

**Q. Dawn, it seemed like the shots weren't falling early. Maybe not so great through the game. But the one thing you all did really well, getting to the line and finishing there. How key is being able to lean on that maybe when the shots weren't falling the way you usually get them to go?**

DAWN STALEY: Yeah, Coach Boyer pointed out at one point in the third quarter we were shooting 18 percent, and

I'm like, well, we are making free throws.

We need to be aggressive. Obviously our shots weren't falling, so we had to continue to attack the basket, continue to attack the boards and find a way to score.

You can't have too many empty possessions when you're playing teams in our league, so I felt we did a great job at balancing our missed shots with getting to the free-throw line.

**Q. What LA was able to do today, I know the game just ended just a couple minutes ago, but what did you notice about just her aggression and how she attacked the basket? And then too, what do you feel like you might have seen from her that you guys might can rely on for the remainder of this tournament?**

DAWN STALEY: I mean, LA, you have to look at LA. We put her in a mixer, so to speak. She started out the year playing the 4 spot, Henny got hurt early in the year, and we moved her to the point guard position, and then when Henny came back, moved her back to the 4, and then she ended up going with her Canadian national team.

She's had to adjust to being in different positions and places, and I think now things are just settling in. I do think going back with her national team helped her. I think it helped and hindered -- I think it helped her mentality. I think it hindered just being with our team, and I think now she's adjusted to this is what it is. I think she's slowing down, the game is coming a little bit clearer to her, and she's able to just utilize her entire skill set because she's long, she's athletic. I mean, she can do a lot of things with the basketball.

I think when she takes her time and sees the game coming, she can facilitate from being at the forward. I think she's still got a guard's mentality. She is a guard really. It's just unfortunate that we aren't able to play her at the various spots throughout the season because we've got 15 players, 15 eligible players.

**Q. With it being postseason play, how much does it help being able to play a lot of bench players and allowing starters to rest?**

DAWN STALEY: We like to call them reserves.

I mean, we've been building. We've been building and creating a lot of confidence with our second and third units. We've got actually three units of players, and I know they've been champing at the bit to play.

But we want to make sure when we play, we play good

basketball. They have a really good understanding of what we want to accomplish because it's all learning. We don't want this year to be a year in which they miss some steps, so when next year comes they're not repeating the same mistakes.

So it's pretty cool that in this type of setting you can utilize -- I think we played 11 players, so I think that's pretty cool, unlike a whole lot of teams that's here at the tournament.

**Q. Dawn, Arkansas is such a tough team. It just feels like no matter what the lead is, they're always capable of getting back into it with the way they shoot the ball. How did you like your team's focus throughout the entire game and how tricky was this opponent for an opener?**

DAWN STALEY: I mean, Arkansas is Arkansas. They're going to put you back on your heels. They're going to shoot threes. They're going to drive it down your throat. Very little in between as far as mid-range besides Ramirez, so you know exactly how they're going to play in their style of play. You have to lock in.

I thought we locked in for the most part. I thought there were a couple of lapses in the first half and second half where we didn't communicate early enough, and they made us pay for it.

But we've got a seasoned team that really rebuilt, touched on it -- they really lock into the personnel. They really lock in on the tendencies that we'll face, and there's not a whole lot of opportunities that we let our guard down from a defensive standpoint.

**Q. I wanted to ask for an update on Destiny Littleton. What happened there, and how is she doing right now?**

DAWN STALEY: She got the wind knocked out of her, but she came back. I just checked on her, she said she's fine.

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