

Southeastern Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

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

Kentucky Wildcats

Kyra Elzy

Rhyne Howard

Treasure Hunt

Postgame Press Conference

Kentucky 78, LSU 63

Q. You guys forced 13 LSU turnovers tonight, in your guys' first game you only forced 8. What was the difference for your defense out there?

RHYNE HOWARD: We were just clicking on all cylinders we were very aggressive from the jump, and we knew with our pressure defensively and we could force a few turnovers, which would lead into easy buckets

Q. I think there was 90 seconds in the third quarter there they had trimmed the lead to 9 and Coach called a time out and it wasn't within less than double digits since then. When you think back to that time out how did that shape the rest of the game? Directed to both Ryan and Treasure.

RHYNE HOWARD: We basically just said let's lock in. The game is not over yet. You never know like what could happen with that much time left in the game, and with them cutting the lead, we knew we were losing focus and we just needed to regroup

TREASURE HUNT: We just needed to lock in and keep doing what we was doing and just play better D.

Q. For Rhyne, the way you all started that game knocking down threes, I think you had three there in a short period, were you just seeing the hoop easily tonight? What was the key to getting that start and how key was it to get that jump in this game?

RHYNE HOWARD: Yeah. Usually I don't have that much



space to get my shot off, so when I see it I'm taking it and it was just going in tonight.

Q. When Rhyne is hitting shots like that, what does it do for the team both from a mental perspective but also on the court? How much does things open up for the rest of you?

TREASURE HUNT: I mean, you know everybody tries to guard Rhyne, so she can't score but obviously that don't work. But when Rhyne is hitting her shots, we try to give it to her, let her keep shooting, and when everybody is on her, we just get open and knock down shots just like Rhyne.

Q. Rhyne, in the grand scheme of things hitting that basket with one shoe on your foot, probably wasn't the difference in the game, but at that moment did you know, I probably can't miss today?

RHYNE HOWARD: Yeah, so my thought process is if you lose a shoe, socks don't have any grip. So if I don't shoot, we have to play a whole possession with one shoe. But if I shoot, it felt good oh. I was like, yeah, that's in. I had time to put the shoe back on before we go back on defense.

Q. Rhyne, we've seen you wear Blair's jersey the last couple of games, but today she was on the bench with it and you're back in your usual No. 10. What went through that decision and do you plan on wearing the 5 anymore this year?

RHYNE HOWARD: Yesterday I wore it because it was my close friend Terrence's last game at Kentucky against Mississippi state in the SEC Tournament, so that really meant a lot to me. I had to put it on one more time for him.

I don't know if I'll wear it again. I could but I don't know. I'll talk to Blair. We talk about everything, so I get her consent before I just throw it on.

Q. You guys were for the second game in a row celebrating out there when you're hitting shots, dancing after the win. How much do you think the positive energy is contributing to this run you guys are



having?

TREASURE HUNT: When we celebrate it brings a lot to us, like, I would say it makes us play better, play harder and continue our run.

RHYNE HOWARD: I mean, I would agree with Trez. Like when we're high energy and, you know, just having fun, that's when the game is easier for us, and when we're like stressed out or just like trying to do specific things, so if we know we can like dance around and have fun, then it's like oh, so we can just go out and continue this energy and keep this energy and use it to our advantage.

Q. For both of you guys as well: A month ago you guys were two games below .500, 2-8 in SEC and nowhere near the tournament picture and everything has changed since then. What do you think has been the biggest contributing factor for why that's been the case?

RHYNE HOWARD: I would say our confidence, most definitely. After we got back healthy and got everyone back, it was like all right, it's go time. It's either we go to the Tournament or we go to the Tournament, and there was no other option than for us to starting winning and just having fun with the game.

TREASURE HUNT: Like what Ry said, I'm pretty sure we had a team meeting after our last loss when everybody was back and was like we have to win, we have to play hard, we have to do the things we have to do to go to the tournament and I think that's what transferred.

Q. Kyra, I guess Treasure mentioned it there, it would have been after the South Carolina game you guys coming together and sorting things out. As much as you're willing I guess, what went into that team meeting and why do you think that's translated so well to 8 in a row and maybe the biggest win of the season right now?

KYRA ELZY: Well, you know, during that time we were on a losing stretch and even though we did not beat South Carolina, I felt our confidence grow in that game. And when we came back in the fourth quarter, I could physically see the confidence in us. And, you know, we just talked about it from this point forward, this is what we need to do. We all need to hold ourselves accountable. You know, the staff said this is what we're going to bring. We went through each individual player, what are you going to bring? And it's do or die right now. So it's either win or go home. And we don't want to finish the season like this.

And I was confident in this team I knew we had enough.

You know, we were down and out early due to injuries and different reasons. But this team is resilient. We didn't have any quit in us. So we just continued to battle.

Q. Kyra, 21 points for Jada today yesterday, just 4 today. To get wins with both of those situations, to win in such different ways, what does that tell you about this team and this roster?

KYRA ELZY: Next man up. And that we can pick each other up. It's not just one person. So Jada carried us yesterday. And what she did defensively today we needed her, but we have talented scorers on this team. And the depth has really helped us come a long way

Q. Kyra, I asked Rhyne and Treasure about this but I guess 90 seconds to go in the third quarter they trimmed it to 9, you called a timeout, Dre gets a lay up after that and you guys went to a zone and forced a violation shot clock. What went into that timeout and how do you think that carried over switching things up and making sure they didn't get that close the rest of the game?

KYRA ELZY: You know, LSU had went on a run. I thought we had lost our focus defensively. We were giving up defensive assignments, offensive rebounds. They were driving the ball. When I called the timeout, I said there's a lot of time left in this game, we have to refocus. What got us the lead was our defensive intensity. I thought we played too slow offensively. Go downhill, make them defend the dribble drive and then Dre scored a layup. Yeah, it worked.

Q. Obviously you don't know who you will be playing tomorrow but when you look at tonight's game, is there anything you want to do differently by tomorrow night?

KYRA ELZY: You know as a coach, there is always room to grow. You know, I thought we started standing offensively a little bit in the third quarter. But I'm proud of this team. Man, the resiliency, the toughness, the togetherness. They believe in each other. And, you know, no matter who wins tomorrow, we have to do what we do best and that's transition offense and being relentless defensively.

Q. Robyn Benton has really stepped up, especially on the defensive end. She just seems so much peskier now, so many more steals. Her energy is through the roof. What have you seen from Robyn in this back half?

KYRA ELZY: Now that's the show time. Her nickname --



she calls herself prime time. I call her show time.

I just told her in the locker room that's the show time we're looking for. You know, she brings us another guard with athleticism that not only can score but what she can bring on the defensive end, the energy. And we need everything that she brought today.

Q. Kyra, Rhyne came up limping early and had to go to the bench get retaped. The way she came back -- how worried were you when she came off of the floor at that point? And how do you like the way she came on and just started knocking down shots?

KYRA ELZY: I'm worried when any of them are limping. When she came off, I asked her if she was okay. She said yes, I just tweaked my ankle. Let me go to the end of the bench but I'm okay. She gave me the heads up she was going to be okay. And she's pretty tough. So for her, at this juncture of her career, she's going back in the game if she's capable. So -- but I'm glad. I thought she stepped up in a big way and got us started early and we needed it.

THE MODERATOR: That's all we have tonight. Thank you, Coach.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports