

# Southeastern Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Saturday, March 5, 2022

Nashville, Tennessee, USA

Bridgestone Arena

**Ole Miss Rebels**

**Yolett McPhee-McCuin**

**Angel Baker**

Postgame Press Conference



YOLETT MCPHEE-MCCUIN: I just thought that you just saw two completely different teams. You saw a team that was extremely experienced for the moment versus a team that was not. It's the only way that I can sum it up.

I thought our youthfulness showed coming out into the third. It's tough playing -- that's the only thing I don't like about girls' basketball; girls bow down too much. They see a shirt or a jersey and it's a 10-point spread before you even start, where guys, they're coming to play. I don't care, we're going to play. That's why you see upsets happen all the time.

I just didn't feel like our team believed as much as I wanted them to because things didn't go the way that maybe we wanted it to go in the first half. And I still thought the game was manageable, but when we came out in that third quarter, we were getting ready to fold. We kind of did for a little bit.

My whole conversation to them after that was, we've got to fight. We belong to be here. We're a 6 seed. They're No. 1 in the country. Show people what you're made of. That's what people were able to see the last 15 minutes of the game and spots throughout the game.

**Q. With the way they responded after that, does that give you confidence now as you wait to learn your seed in the next tournament?**

YOLETT MCPHEE-MCCUIN: I mean, like Angel said, we always -- we're a confident group. We are still trying to figure out how to grow in times of adversity, and adversity hit in the game and we did not respond well. If there's one thing that I was disappointed with, it would be that. Adversity hit, and we didn't respond well.

But I thought that after that we responded how we wanted to respond, so it's not like we're not confident. We've won 23 games. You've got to -- no one came down the chimney and gave us those wins; we had to go and earn them. So we know that we're capable. We just have to do a better job responding.

South Carolina 61, Ole Miss 51

**Q. Angel, this was a 25-point game. You cut it down all the way to eight, I believe it was. With March Madness and the tournament coming up, how much confidence does the way you guys ended that game give you going forward?**

ANGEL BAKER: I mean, just lets us know we've got a chance. It just lets us know we've got a chance to compete with the best. But I was confident, honestly.

**Q. What was different for you guys between the third and fourth quarters?**

ANGEL BAKER: I just feel like we lost ourselves for a moment, but we eventually got back to our identity, played some defense, got some stops.

**Q. The on-ball defense, the guards were able to piece together there in the last 10, 12 minutes, forcing some turnovers from South Carolina's guards, talk about the mentality there. What switched amongst you guys? Obviously we saw a little more aggression and a little more purpose in that particular aspect of y'all's game, that final stretch.**

ANGEL BAKER: Like I said, I think we just got back to who we are. We defend, so...

**Q. It seems like every time you guys have played South Carolina, you have something to take away from it. The first time maybe you weren't ready for the atmosphere and the environment. The second time that you guys could play with them, what was your takeaway from today's game?**



We're just going to take some time off, rest, and continue working. I'll probably do a better job of putting them in adverse situations in practice so that when we get into March Madness, the NCAA Tournament, we'll be prepared to respond the right way.

**Q. It took Shakira a little bit to get going offensively but then she kind of took over in the fourth quarter. What was different for her in the fourth quarter than the rest of the game?**

YOLETT MCPHEE-MCCUIN: I just thought she started moving the ball more, understanding how they were defending her. There was a time in the game where I was telling her, like, your usage is just too high and it's too stagnant and they're loading up on you. At halftime we talked about what that looked like.

Again, there was still some frustration on third, so I had her sit so she could watch the game some. Sometimes you just have to watch the game. And I thought she was able to see, okay, this is what's going on.

When she went back in, she had a more clear mind. She was able to take a step back and breathe and do what she's capable of doing.

**Q. In games like this, I know the game just ended, but can you recall maybe specific moments where you kind of can feel that momentum shift a little bit --**

YOLETT MCPHEE-MCCUIN: For us or them?

**Q. For you guys. How do you start the process of kind of maybe bottling that up and taking it into the next game?**

YOLETT MCPHEE-MCCUIN: Well, the momentum shift, there was a moment in the third quarter when I started to just say, ladies, it just looks like we're laying down, and we can't lay down. We're a 6 seed, Charlie Creme says. A 6 seed doesn't lay down. We have all these people here and we have to perform, no matter what. No one thought we were going to beat South Carolina anyway. But we need to perform. We need to look like an NCAA Tournament team. So we can't quit.

That was my message. So then you saw the response.

So I'm proud because they responded the right way. There were times at South Carolina -- at South Carolina, we didn't respond the right way, and we barely scored 20 points, and so we were able to come back and give ourselves a chance, but it was just too late.

**Q. What's the next step for you and your team while awaiting Selection Sunday?**

YOLETT MCPHEE-MCCUIN: Well, we're going to take some time off. We're going to rest. That's going to be important. And then we're going to work on moments of adversity. We started to do that last week, but I needed us to rest more than work on this stuff. So now that we have time to rest, I'm going to give them solid time to do that and then we're going to work on handling adverse situations.

Usually that's a young team. We're pretty young when it comes to the newness, Monk, Angel not being in the SEC before, Maddy, Snudda, our sophomores. I didn't really see South Carolina playing a lot of their pups. They go with their experience.

So as we continue to try to build our team -- because we don't just want to be a good team, we want to be a great program -- I have to keep putting them in situations to get the right response so in the game they will be able to self-correct quicker. Because I imagine had we self-corrected coming out in the third quarter, we would have given ourselves even a better chance.

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