

Southeastern Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Wednesday, March 1, 2023
Greenville, South Carolina, USA
Bon Secours Wellness Arena

Florida Gators Coach Kelly Rae Finley KK Deans

Postgame Press Conference

Kentucky 72, Florida 57

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Florida head coach, Kelly Rae Finley and KK Deans. We will start off with an opening statement by Coach.

COACH FINLEY: Well, obviously that's not how we want to represent ourselves, as Florida women's basketball and in the competitive spirit.

So first and foremost I apologize for that, because that is not representative of the SEC, University of Florida, or how we compete.

Beyond that, though, I was very, very proud of our student athletes for how they finished the game. I think we talk a lot in our program about we can do hard things, and when adversity hits, how you respond says a lot about your character.

I was very pleased with how we fought until the very end of that game.

Q. KK, will you talk about the season generally, what it's been like? Has it met expectations? How do you think it went?

KK DEANS: I think our season was up and down. We had highs, we had lows. I think my teammates did a good job coming together in hard moments to finish and fight through.

There was a lot of times we could have quit and it could have went worse. But we stuck together. So, Yeah.

Q. Can you speak to the intensity of today's game?



Obviously playing in high stakes and then after what happened in the second quarter, where do you feel like the intensity was brought from your team?

KK DEANS: Um, intensity, the will to win, the will to want it, it's bigger than that. It's more than a game to us. It's more than a game. We're sisters at the end of the day. So that's what you saw, sisters wanting to help a sister out.

I think that's the intensity it came from.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, KK. Questions for Coach.

Q. Similar question. Can you talk about the intensity of this game, how you felt like it went, both from whistle to whistle?

COACH FINLEY: Yeah, I think KK stated it perfectly right there. We have a team that's very connected, they're very close. They care deeply for each other, and sport is competitive. And she is exactly right, that's exactly what you saw there today.

We're going to compete for and with each other. That's Florida basketball. I think that was the intensity that you saw.

Q. How did the limited numbers affect the game after the second quarter? Particularly in those last five minutes it looked like the last five minutes of a game. What were your thoughts on that?

COACH FINLEY: Well, we had -- it was more so positionally, you know, and so we had a lot of student athletes that were asked to do something that they had never done, and that's where I say I was pleased with how we competed and adjusted, you know, to do things that you practice sometimes for adverse situations.

But it's ironic. I told them at halftime we have been playing five-out offense in practice, adjusting and trying new things and just learning how to play and move together. That's what you saw in the game.

Q. Just to follow-up, you said asked to do things they



had never done before. Can you speak to that?

Particular players?

COACH FINLEY: Yeah, like Jeriah has never played the five. She did it with attitude and great effort.

Jordyn has not played the five for us all season. She did so for about 25 minutes. That's a long time to be out of your comfort zone. I could go down the line.

Myka had to play the four. That's a freshman. We are extremely pleased where she's at.

Positionally having five guard on the floor and being able to adapt and adjust, that's what we had to do.

Q. Can you talk about this season? How has it gone? Did it meet expectations? Looking at the off-season what are you looking to build on both for yourself and for the team?

COACH FINLEY: Oh, man. We have had so much growth. I don't think -- you know, the win and losses haven't gone exactly as we had hoped, but you know before you start a season every team hopes to win all their games, right? You have to work for that and you have to earn it.

This team worked diligently on building great habits, and we'll continue to do so. They worked hard together on individual skills and collective skills as a team that are needed: strategy, time, score, situation, all of those things, you know?

We returned two players that had played significant minutes in this conference this year so we had a lot of learning and growth to do. That's what we will continue to build on in the off-season.

But like I said, you know, our last two weeks of the regular season I was really pleased with our effort, our intensity, our focus, and most of all our togetherness.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Coach.

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