

Southeastern Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 2, 2023

Greenville, South Carolina, USA

Bon Secours Wellness Arena

Missouri Tigers

Coach Robin Pingeton

Hayley Frank

Haley Troup

Postgame Press Conference



Arkansas 85, Missouri 74

THE MODERATOR: Coach, if you could give us your thoughts on today's game.

COACH PINGETON: Obviously first and foremost thank you to the SEC and this community and Greenville. They have done a tremendous job hosting this tournament, so definitely appreciate that. Pretty special place to be.

And obviously disappointed in the game tonight. We had our chances. I thought we really competed. Arkansas is a really good team. A hard guard, they shoot the three ball so well. We talked about Chrissy Carr going into the game, and just got off way too many three's on us that ultimately hurt us quite a bit.

But I was proud of our girls. They battled. I thought they competed. I thought they covered for each other. We missed too many spots going into that fourth quarter. We had too many shots at the rim, two layups, and then we got lost a couple times on our defensive rotations that I thought really hurt us.

But I love this team. I've said it from the jump. It's been an honor to be on this journey with them this season. I thought Frankie had a heck of a game. They have always guarded her really well, and I thought Frankie played just big time minutes for us.

And I hate this for Troup. She has been a special player in our program; has been our silent assassin and a great leader and just a tremendous teammate. So these games are always really tough. There's not a lot of words to say in

the locker room that take away from that pain, that heartache.

I'm proud of them. I thought they competed. Obviously disappointed in the outcome, but hats off to Mike and his staff and Arkansas.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student athletes.

Q. For Hayley Frank, can you talk more about you got so hot from the three, were just everywhere tonight. How does that feel? And being able to step up for your team in a big moment like this?

HAYLEY FRANK: The way they guarded me was a huge credit to my teammates, Saylor Poffenbarger sticking to me, trying to run her off as many screens as we could.

I think early my mindset was to be the willing screener and create for my teammates, and then once they were getting looks they had to play me a little different and I was able to free up myself.

I think it all came down to my teammates hitting nailing screens and hitting me coming off of them.

Q. Can you both reflect on the conference. What went well, what challenges have you had and how do you feel like this team grew?

HALEY TROUP: Like Coach said, I love this team. I love this group. It's a special tight -- we have had some ups and downs, some illnesses, injuries, but I think we have stuck together off the court, and that's really special.

Like I said, we're really tight. I think we have grown in a lot of ways, and even though we went through adversity, it's going to help us in basketball and also in life.

Q. Can you, going off of that, reflect on your career at Mizzou, what this school has meant to you, the fans and getting to play for so many years here.

HALEY TROUP: I'm a girl from Alabama, so for the community to embrace me like they did from day one, I



have a family away from my family. Whether that's all my teammates, the coaching staff, all the support staff and also the fans, they've embraced me.

It's a special, special place in Columbia, Missouri, and the University of Missouri is just so close to my heart, and I will be M-I-Z for life.

Q. For Hayley Frank, if I've got it right, you are a senior. Are you going to stick around?

HAYLEY FRANK: Yeah. I'm taking my COVID year.

THE MODERATOR: Ladies, thank you. Questions for Coach.

Q. Coach, you said Arkansas has had your number this season. What were you telling your athletes coming into the game and what helped your team get ahead in the first three quarters?

COACH PINGETON: We made some tweaks to our motion offense. We felt like when anybody other than Frankie were setting our pin-down screens, they were really going to sag it, they were going to chase her off screens, and then in any tight cut they were going to clog it up in the paint.

We felt like we could get her more on flare screen action, and I thought we did a good job of that. Our ball screen action, just really tried to flip those screens, and if they were going to stick to Frankie the way they had been, we thought we could get opportunities that way.

Mike and his staff did a good job and I think they made some tweaks, too, adjustments. At that point we talked to Frankie about just being really mindful about reading the defense based on predetermining based on how they had defended her in the past.

Obviously she did a really nice job for us. I thought we had better ball movement than we did the last time we played them. We got some opportunities to get some tight cuts on some screening action.

All in all I thought we did a much better job offensively. Defensively we had our challenges with Chrissy Carr. We had a hard time finding her, and we talked about it a lot over the last couple days prepping for this team.

But the thing about Arkansas, they have great shooters, they can spread the court. When we went man I thought they really took advantage of some isolation situations. The last time we played Arkansas, hit a big momentum basket going into the half, and then they did the same thing

to us today that just kind of zaps you a little bit.

We regrouped. I thought our third quarter was solid, but that fourth quarter we had some empty possessions. I like the looks we got and we didn't convert on them. Arkansas is the team you better take advantage of those opportunities when you have them, and I felt like we let some of those possessions slip through our fingers.

Q. Could you speak to your team's confidence and intensity throughout the game today?

COACH PINGETON: You know, it's been a resilient team all year. We don't just talk about basketball in that locker room. We talk about life and the importance of just the resiliency you have to have when you go through adversity.

I think we went through a stretch there where our confidence really got rocked, and he talked a lot about -- I'm not a psychologist -- but we talked a lot about that little voice that creeps in and that self-doubt and the ability to be able to change the narrative in your head.

I think the last probably two weeks we kinda figured that out. I felt like we were getting our old team back and kinda building our confidence, too. We won a couple, lost a couple, but I felt we were in such a better headspace the last couple weeks of practice than we had been.

So, again, the scoreboard is important. I'm as bad of a loser as anybody, but I think it's equally important to teach life lessons, and there is an opportunity to do that every single day you step into that locker room. That's something that's really important to me.

Q. When a team gets hot like Arkansas did at the end, what do you tell your team? How do you motivate them to come back from that?

COACH PINGETON: Not only did we have a couple of empty possessions, but we gave up -- I felt like we got outworked there for about four minutes. They got some key offensive rebounds, and I think that can take the wind out of your sails a little bit.

I thought that was a game changer for us. We sent them to the free throw line. We talked a lot about the importance of keeping them off the free throw line. They ended up with 27 tonight, and I know a handful of those were at the end when we were trying to foul.

But they just do such a great job of explosiveness and getting to the rim, and the importance of making them hit tough spots versus bailing them out. I think those are the two things that really stand out to me. We had empty

possessions, we had good looks that didn't fall for us, and defensively giving up a handful of offensive rebounds that really came back to hurt us.

Q. Can you reflect now that conference season is over how the season has been, what you feel like your team has to work on, and what you as a coach want to work on in the off season?

COACH PINGETON: I think we had some highs and lows and some in between. It's been filled with a lot of different emotions, and like Troup talked about, just some injuries, whatever.

But we started off 14-2 and felt really confident, really strong having some good wins in that non-conference, and we hit that gauntlet and it knocked us back a little bit. We had a hard time regrouping from that. I think moving forward the importance of establishing some post play with our back to the basket.

We've got to continue to grow our point guards in regards to being a quarterback on the team and playing with pace and understanding. Understanding when there are opportunities to push and getting everybody organized offensively, defensively, whatever that looks like.

I think those things are going to be important as well. Excited about the kids we have coming in. They're big-time competitors and I think they add to the depth we have. That's another area I thought we struggled with this year, was our depth, so to be able to add more depth is going to be huge for us as well.

As a coaching staff I think we've got to continue to develop our players, develop that point guard position, and help them understand, you know, what we're looking for in our offenses, and being able to play with pace and poise and the organization that comes with that.

Just continue to help them grow, individually in their skill sets and collectively as a team.

Q. Sara-Rose Smith in this game and as well against Florida seemed to give y'all a big burst of energy a couple times. Can you talk about how she has come on this season and what she brings to create that energy that keeps you guys in games?

COACH PINGETON: Rosie has been great for us. She was in a different position this year than she has been her first two years, and with that comes with a little bit of pressure and learning how to deal with that pressure when you know that you're being counted on.

I think she is a young lady that's had some really good games and some tough stretches, too, but I think this is a huge year for her.

She did a great job all year lining long from a backgrounding standpoint for us, ended up being our leading rebounder and was more than half the season coming off the bench. So just the energy she plays with I think is huge. Her ability to get to the rim has been really great for us.

We have to work on her consistency from that 3-point shot, and she will. She will put in that work, but I've seen a lot of growth in her in her first three years at Mizzou.

Q. Arkansas did a good job of bottling up not just Hayley Frank, but also Lauren Hansen. What do you think helped them both get more points in this game against Arkansas?

COACH PINGETON: Yeah, again, hats off to Mike and his staff and that team. They've got our numbers, and I think that builds confidence when you're playing someone. I think just the adjustments we talked about earlier in the press conference that we felt like maybe we might be able to exploit some things here and there.

Saylor Poffenbarger has done a great job on Frankie the last three times that we have played. I think that length that Frankie has to go against on the perimeter, just no rotations off her has made it challenging.

I thought our girls did a good job in their turnaround of making adjustments to our game plan and obviously our kids some good shots throughout the course of the game. That fourth quarter is the one you wish you could have a couple of possessions back.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.

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