

# Southeastern Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 2, 2023

Greenville, South Carolina, USA

Bon Secours Wellness Arena

**Arkansas Razorbacks**

**Coach Mike Neighbors**

**Makayla Daniels**

**Chrissy Carr**

Postgame Press Conference

Arkansas 85, Missouri 74

**THE MODERATOR:** We are joined by the Arkansas head coach, Mike Neighbors and student athletes, Chrissy Carr and Makayla Daniels. We will take a statement from Coach.

Coach?

**COACH NEIGHBORS:** That fourth quarter is exactly like it's been coaching this team all year long. Wait until the last rep in practice, wait until the last team to get a stop or wait till this and we do it, so maybe that's who this team is.

We waited until the fourth quarter to play our best. I don't know what happened, so don't ask me any specific questions. I will tell you that I remember Rylee Langerman hitting a huge 3 and Mak having a very positive comment which we'll keep to ourselves and share only with our team. But had a very positive moment in a timeout that I'll remember for the rest of my life as a coach.

**Q. Chrissy, seems like there is something about Arkansas players have a huge moment in the SEC Tournament. Talk about your rhythm and how it felt to get your shot off?**

**CHRISSEY CARR:** When I came to Arkansas Coach told me, you don't have to be the type of player to press to get shots. We have good guards that will find you. And a lot of coaches say that until I stepped on the floor with Mak and Sam, and it was easy to believe.

My job is to run my butt down the court as fast as I can and



wait until they get it to me, and if I don't I will hear from Mak and Sam that I need to shoot it. It takes the pressure off of me, feeling the need to score, just being shot-ready, and know when it's my time I need to be ready to go, and when it's not, somebody else steps up, like Mak and Sam did today.

**Q. Chrissy, I believe tonight was your career high. If I've got that right. First of all, congrats. How are you feeling about it? Where do you feel like you were able to step up tonight for your team?**

**CHRISSEY CARR:** Honestly, just being able to take what they give me. Taking and making open shots. When we have games like today where it was really, really close up until the fourth quarter, you know, just whenever you're making shots like that the thing that was going through my head is I don't want to take bad shots. Just continuing to let them find me and continuing to stay in rhythm, because a lot of people can shoot their way out of it, and that's what I didn't want to do today.

Whenever it was Mak's time to drive in there and get and one's, or Maryam's time to get off rebound put-backs. It happened, and that's what accumulated into a win today.

**COACH NEIGHBORS:** Hashtag 34 for 34.

**Q. If you make the NCAA tournament, would that be your first one?**

**CHRISSEY CARR:** No. It's been a while, but I made it my freshman year.

**Q. For you to hit that career high today and getting a solid win with you guys on the bubble, what does that mean in boosting your chances?**

**CHRISSEY CARR:** It always feels good when there are positive outcomes and what we want. It feels good. I think it takes a lot of pressure off us, but honestly I think it rewards us for all the close games that we have not had go our way, and it proves that we are a team with fight and we deserve to be in the NCAA Tournament, because we have some great players and we are a great team.



**Q. Makayla and Chrissy, y'all are hurt players. Will you talk about the teams fight to stay out there even playing through injury?**

MAKAYLA DANIELS: I think it's that time of year. Everyone is beat up on every team, so it's kind of like it's your decision whether you go out there and play hard. If you're going to say this hurts so bad I can't play, sit out.

But I think all of us wanted to be out there on the court and weren't worried about what was hurting. Once we got it fixed we were back out there on the court.

CHRISSEY CARR: I think that shows who we are as people as well. These girls, I have not played with a more tough group of girls in my five years of college. People falling down, dang near in tears, but getting up and ready to continue to play because they want to, not because anybody is forcing them to.

Sam today when she got bumped down, we were all sitting there like, it's okay, stay down, and she was the first one who wanted to get up. That shows we want to do it for each other and we want to do it for Coach Neighbors, too. If that doesn't say anything, I don't know what else does.

**Q. Makayla, with how the season has went, and they started to take the lead and you could have let the game get away from you, what did you tell yourself that was different and got you back into the game?**

MAKAYLA DANIELS: We didn't get down on ourselves. We didn't focus on every little negative thing. We kept the positivity, and our bench was there to support us. I think we knew a run was coming just by the shots we were getting. They just weren't falling really, and we knew shots were going to fall at some point, and luckily they came.

The mindset didn't change from the beginning of the game to the end.

**Q. Makayla, you went down in the first. I see you are in a boot now. Can you give us an update on that injury?**

MAKAYLA DANIELS: Just a tweak, but it's fine.

**Q. Seems like this is the time of year that you have to have people stepping up, and Rylee had a lot of plays today and Maryam had an impact. Talk about those two?**

MAKAYLA DANIELS: They're probably the two nicest people I have ever met, and the whole year we have tried

to get Maryam to get mad and it's not going to happen. I think she realizing you can be nice, but on the court you can be aggressive. I think this is the more aggressive I've seen Maryam on the offensive and defensive boards today.

Once Rylee releases the ball, I know it's going in. A lot of times we have to tell Rylee to shoot the ball, but I don't think I told her once to shoot it. She shot it, it went in. Once it's out of her hands, we know it's going in. I'm glad today they felt confident enough to do those things.

**Q. Chrissy hits a 3 to bring it within 3, and then Makayla ties it. You had a few opportunities to take the lead and couldn't, and then Sam comes down the court and I saw you calling for the ball, Chrissy, but she just looked determined to get to the basket. Can you talk about the run and what you were feeling in that moment?**

CHRISSEY CARR: Like Coach Neighbors said, we're just that team. Once we get going in the fourth quarter we're hard to stop. I think everyone stepped up when they needed to, and it's not about how you start, it's 110% about how you finish. We hit shots when we needed to and stepped up when we needed to and that resulted in us getting a win today.

**Q. Y'all are facing an undefeated South Carolina team tomorrow. How are you feeling going into that?**

MAKAYLA DANIELS: I personally feel good. I think we have a really big opportunity and what we do with it is our decision. Obviously you have to play well against South Carolina in order to beat them.

I think just going in and fixing the things from our first game. It does help that they played them before, and I think if we go in and fix a few things we have a real chance.

**Q. Makayla, Sam made big plays down the stretch. How important is it to her to step up and to find that stride, how important is that for you guys this season?**

MAKAYLA DANIELS: It's important for Sam, and today when she shot that 3 three I was just looking and it went in and I was just like -- I was shocked, not that it went in, but she had the confidence to shoot that shot. She had the mismatch.

Even when Sam was having so-called rough games I don't think her confidence ever wavered. She is not afraid to shoot the ball no matter how many she has missed or made before.

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

**Q. Mike, closed this one out different than some of these other games this year that have ended up on the other side. What did you see from your team in the fourth quarter?**

COACH NEIGHBORS: Mak's leadership. Like I said, I will remember for the rest of my life her saying when we needed to do, and we did it. I don't remember -- other than the rally play, I don't remember play-by-play, and I'm normally pretty good at that. I will remember how Mak took that over and how proud I am that she has that confidence and how our team responded around it.

Yeah, we have had a lot of games we have not finished, so to get one when it mattered the most means we were doing a lot of right things, our results just weren't very good. I don't waver from how we were doing it or what we do.

We made a decision last summer to invest in the kids that were in our program. And Chrissy coming in after Sasha stepped away from the game. We weren't going to take anybody in the portal. We were going to invest in the kids that we had, and it was going to be us, but the upperclassmen came in and said, we think we need one more, Coach, and we found Chrissy.

So for this group to come together, we have never really peaked at the right time, and I think we are starting to do that. We will find out for sure tomorrow because we're playing the best team in the country.

**Q. Mike, you are on the bubble for the NCAA. What do you think you need to do tomorrow to boost that even more?**

COACH NEIGHBORS: Just play well. Again, you're going against -- I think everybody has got them on that 1 line. No matter what happens here, they're going to be the overall No. 1 seed.

So you have to show them you can play. We didn't do that down there. We were coming off a really rough week. If ya'll want some context, we had played a Monday game against Vanderbilt that we had to hit a back-back half-court shot, then went to LSU and lost by three, and then we had to get on a plane and go to South Carolina.

So it wasn't the most conducive environment to perform. Hopefully tomorrow we will be a little better and we'll show a little better. We have to continue to give bullet points to people talking about us in the room, and when they start getting ready to compare to other teams that are there, we

have to have enough positive things.

It will be hard. We know that. We've played ourselves into the situation and we're fully aware of it, but you got to go play well tomorrow. I know that, we know that, and I anticipate that we will.

**Q. After Georgia a couple weeks ago, you said that the confidence of this team had dipped.**

COACH NEIGHBORS: Yep.

**Q. What was the confidence today and how are they feeling now?**

COACH NEIGHBORS: Good. I got a text message from a friend that said -- because I've been saying you can't give anybody confidence, you have to do it. I got a text message that said, you can't give them confidence, but you can give them encouragement.

So we went and allowed very little negativity around. We had to block a lot of stuff out. We did that. We started giving encouragement from that point on, and I think it's starting to settle in.

Like today we tried to stay as positive as we could. We kept saying, stay after it. The talk has gotten better and encouragement has led to a little bit of confidence, and you've seen our kids when they get a little bit of confidence, it's a lot!

We start doing things I wish we didn't do in transition. I wish we would sprint back and get in defense instead of celebrate, but you've got to let them do that to get through the tough times that we went through.

But a lot of encouragement from themselves and their teammates, and when we make 12 out of 29 from the 3 and 23 for 27 from the free throw line, it makes a lot of stuff look good and look right. That fourth quarter, again, I can't wait to get to the bus and watch it.

**Q. Coach, at the 5:41 mark you called a timeout and then you proceeded to go on a 16-0 run. It just seemed like you could hear the fans start to shift and it felt like you were playing at home. How much did that play into the come-back as well?**

COACH NEIGHBORS: I think a lot. We were gassed at that point and somebody made a 3 in front of us, so I took the timeout knowing that we had to close there. We were in a little bit of foul trouble. Erynn got in foul trouble, and you have to hit a reset and see where you are at at the time, and it gave our kids -- again, because we had been

so positive, it gave them a chance to talk to each other again.

We tried to give them that. At some point in time in the fourth quarter we had a 16-0 run, and hopefully that's that compounding effect that we tend to have on people when we are able to play fast.

We couldn't get any stops in the third quarter. Oh, yeah, they shot 70%. There is not many stops to be had there. But in the fourth quarter when you're holding them 4 for 17, there is lots of opportunities to run, and I think that compounding effect had a lot to do with it.

**Q. Chrissy hasn't been to the NCAAs since her freshman year. To see the effort from her today to get a really great win for you in regards to getting in, what does that mean to see her step up like that?**

COACH NEIGHBORS: I just hope she gets rewarded with it. She is a great kid. She has fit perfectly into the maturity that we needed, the way she has been coachable. She talked about it. To hear her say the words she said, those are things I said to her earlier in the year and she is repeating them. That means she heard them and she's tried to do them.

I think her teammates realized that. She made a lot of changes and she earned her teammates respect by doing so, by making some changes.

As a result tonight, I mean, they were looking for her every time. You look up, Sam is looking for her. In the past there were times when we would look up the floor and we weren't. Now we are. But she has earned that right, and I look at that stat line, that's probably a lot of the reason why.

And also we haven't talked about Saylor. She did a good job on Hayley Frank. Didn't shut her out this time, but you're never going to do that three times in a row. She get us 11 rebounds, five assists. Erynn is +18 in limited minutes. They talked about the five offensive rebounds Maryam gave us with foul trouble. We shot it well from the foul line.

So all those things go hand-in-hand.

**Q. You said earlier this week you knew Robin would make some adjustments. What did you see from them to build that 11-point lead?**

COACH NEIGHBORS: Zone defense, making us get out of the zone. They made nice changes in how they were defending us. Evan Johnston is one of their GAs over there and he knows every play call. I stood up to yell a

couple and Evan is down there yelling our plays out, so we had to trick a few names.

Yeah, they did. They made great adjustments. Like she was talking about in here how they set that pin down using Hansen. That was new, and took us a minute. They got 12 or 14 points off that before we were able to adjust.

You don't hold a team like that down, but when I look down and they are at 64 going into the fourth, I started doing math. Like how many points are we going to have to score here to catch them, and ironically it was 29. That was the number I thought. It finished out that way.

**Q. Coach, all year you've talked about Langerman and those Langerman plays, so how cool was it to see her be that one that really got that offensive spark?**

COACH NEIGHBORS: That's not a Langerman. A Langerman is coming in on the offensive rebound and tipping them around or getting one on the floor.

But there was a point in time -- and they caught it on the "SEC Insider". They caught me saying it to her. I saw that the other night. I said, Rylee, you are our second-leading three-point shooter percentage-wise. Don't turn another one down the rest of the year.

Anybody that knows Rylee, knows she listens. You don't do what Rylee has done in her life and not listen. Just glad to see it go in for her. It's the other plays, those tip balls, the plays that don't show up on here, one for two, four rebounds, three points, two steals, two turnovers, plus 15.

There is no analytic that said that was -- if you watched the game you wouldn't say, I think that kid was +15, but she moves the ball, she defends, she guards multiple positions, she fixes a lot of stuff.

When we recruited her -- that's how we found her. We were going to see another kid, and we kept seeing this kid with the headband. Who is this kid with the headband? And we started talking to her and the second you start talking to her you know what she has going for her, and she has been there for us many games, obviously today.

**Q. Erynn got into foul trouble. Talk about that.**

COACH NEIGHBORS: She is plus 18 in 15 minutes. That blows my mind. She was in the first of the game and she was in at the end of the game. That's a little bit of the product of that. That was freshman Erynn. Erynn used to get into foul trouble as a freshman; she reverted back to that just for a minute.

I thought we were able to hang around enough to be able to know we could have her in the fourth quarter when we were going to need her the most. I think it's a testament to what the other players have done to help each other out. Like when Makayla went down, when Sam went down. Sam played half the fourth quarter with one contact in, too, by the way, so I don't know how that works. They're just tough. They've got some toughness, and Erynn exudes that. Erynn was not thinking about herself; she was thinking about her teammates the entire time, even when she wasn't playing.

When Erynn shows you that, that has a permeating affect on the rest of our team. That shows Erynn's impact even though she might not be filing the stat sheet.

**Q. You talked about Makayla going down, then Chrissy banged her wrist and Samara looked like she was cramping. Talk about the will of this team -- knowing the significance of this game -- that helped them propel to this win.**

COACH NEIGHBORS: It goes back to how they've been raised and brought up. We have tried to keep going everything their parents have started. That goes back to how they've been brought up, and how their youth coaches have coached them and how their grass roots programs have coached them.

We just try to keep it going. You need to recruit tough kids in the SEC. That is one thing I've learned about now being in this league six years. I'm willing to pass on some kids' skill, talent and rankings if there is not a toughness box checked, because you cannot survive 16 games and come to this tournament and not have some level of toughness.

Whatever your definition of toughness is, you have to have a little bit of that to play in this league. So you've got to recruit kids that have exhibited -- they've got that already before we get 'em, and then make sure we keep rewarding those kids that are tough.

**Q. Looking down the overall stat line, it's petty even on almost everything and all the way down to lead time, but the one that jumps out is total rebounds 35-25. Talk about the team winning the battle on the glass.**

COACH NEIGHBORS: That's not our thing, normally. We normally don't want to turn it over, and we want to get to the foul line more than people do to offset being a poorer rebounding team. But when we add that element as well, especially the defense, holding them to five, offensive, so they didn't get second chances was really, really key. I thought we got some tough ones. Saylor's nine were all

tough, every single one of those were tough. And Sam -- when you get your guard down in there getting those 50-50 ones or those balls that are tipped around a little bit. She had nine against them up at their place. Look at Sam's stat line, four assists, five rebounds, 19 points, drew 7 fouls.

Every single person that played contributed today, that's for sure, and the people that didn't contributed to the bench talk that we've been talking about that was the difference.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, everybody.

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