

Southeastern Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 2, 2023

Greenville, South Carolina, USA

Bon Secours Wellness Arena

Georgia Bulldogs

Coach Katie

Abrahamson-Henderson

Diamond Battles

Javyn Nicholson

Postgame Press Conference



Georgia 63, Auburn 47

THE MODERATOR: Joining Coach Abe are Diamond Battles and Javyn Nicholson. We will go straight to the student athletes.

Q. Diamond, you had a good night tonight. What worked?

DIAMOND BATTLES: I was excited for this moment. It was my first SEC and my last, so I knew I had to come out and perform and have fun at the same time, but I guess my defense and the team's energy is kinda what got me going.

Q. For both of you, knowing you are a lock in the NCAA tournament, how does that change your mindset coming in?

JAVYN NICHOLSON: My mindset hasn't changed. We want to make sure we come out with intensity and make sure we follow the game plan and keep that same hungry mindset.

The SEC Tournament is going to be what it is. We're going to come out and play hard, but we're looking forward to the NCAA tournament and pushing through that and doing the best we can through that.

Q. I know you just came off the South Carolina loss, but since January it seems like this team is really locking in and what's the mindset? How is your confidence as a team?

DIAMOND BATTLES: I think that we're coming together better as a team because our leadership is really well right now. I think that the leadership is so well that people are following and we're leading by example and we're talking and we have -- we give great energy in practice and confidence when people are down.

I think that transfers over to the game. I think the month of February was just a great month for us. We were locked in. We wanted it really bad, and it showed on the floor. Nothing came between us as a team, and I think that's the momentum we have right now: nothing coming between us and we're fighting through everything that comes our way.

Q. The mental preparation, you had a tough, physical game against South Carolina. We know they're good. You just played Auburn just a week ago. They're a physical game also. What about the mental preparation for tonight's game? What were you pleased with? What were you displeased with?

JAVYN NICHOLSON: Our mental preparation is pretty much the same. Coming off South Carolina we knew that we could play the best. Obviously South Carolina is No. 1, but coming off Auburn we knew we just had to make some small adjustments, just guard No. 5 and get out to the corners and not let them shoot as many 3's and boxing out.

So pretty much the same mentality. Just little tweaks we had to make defensively and just playing with heart, playing Georgia basketball. That's really what we do every game.

Q. Your defense looks elite. Where has the work been on that in the last month or two?

JAVYN NICHOLSON: Constant work. We're constantly, constantly working on it, drilling it, details. Our coaches are on us on every aspect, whether we're switching, making adjustments here or there, or just really guarding the ball, pressuring the ball. We want to make it extremely hard for people to score on us and get this one and done and box out and get the rebound.



So it's a huge emphasis in what we do, and I'm glad you think it's elite.

Q. Javyn, pretty close to a double-double. Can you talk about being a two-way player and where your mindset is on that?

JAVYN NICHOLSON: My mindset is to be consistent. I work on my game a lot. Me rebounding, being able to defend, is the area that I want to put more emphasis on. I know scoring the ball is just going to come to me. I let the game come to me. I know I'm going to get shots.

But just being there for my teammates when they miss and giving us energy in any way I can is really what I want to focus on and continue to get better at.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, ladies, you are free to go.

COACH ABRAHAMSON-HENDERSON: Make sure you tell everybody she said "elite!"

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Coach.

Q. You played this team just a week ago. How does that affect coming into this game and the playing?

COACH ABRAHAMSON-HENDERSON: For us it's familiarity. Our game plan and scouting report didn't have to be as intense because we knew how we had to guard Coulibaly. She's really good. She is high energy and the first game we played she had 20 points and I think 10 rebounds; today at least we held her to 13 and 9.

And then we did a really good job on Honesty Grayson. She had a lot of points on us last game so we did a good job on her, but the familiarity with the team really helped us prepare for the game.

Q. Y'all are real effective, of course, as has been alluded to, with your defense.

COACH ABRAHAMSON-HENDERSON: Yep.

Q. Also you do a great job in your press. Overall tonight things that you were pleased with and displeased with?

COACH ABRAHAMSON-HENDERSON: Yep, pleased with, just -- they only scored 47 points. Every game we have a goal, how many points we want to hold the other team down. Every timeout we talk about it. Like if we can get some single-digit quarters it would be great. We were close in the first and the third. I'm pleased with that.

Their third quarters are really good. They play really good in the third quarter, so we only allowed them to have 10 points.

Our press, we're going to take it on and off and it wears you out, but it also wears us out a little bit, too. But 5 was getting loose, Coulibaly was getting loose and she was getting open, and so we had to take it off, because once she gets the ball she is so aggressive and she can make a lot of things happen for them. We were getting in foul trouble when she was touching it out of the press, so we pulled that off.

What I was pleased with is really offense and sharing the ball and Lish Lewis' 12 assists. I mean, that's just good basketball. That's kind of old school basketball, the assist thing. Like make the extra pass, one more pass to get somebody else an open shot, that's good basketball.

If we can get more than four people or four people in double figures, that's good basketball.

Q. Y'all look like a well-oiled machine and have the last month or so. Can you talk about that -- I'm giving lots of compliments today I guess. Talk about your evolution over the season, what has gotten you here and particularly on the defensive side?

COACH ABRAHAMSON-HENDERSON: We probably had eight different cultures in terms of how -- four freshmen and they were coached differently, so that's four, and then the former players that were still here, and bringing in the UCF players, and then we had three different transfers.

So it took a while. I mean, to be honest, it was 12 new players and the three UCF players and then the coaches, right? So it took a while to get the culture in and get them to understand it.

Some days it was not fun for Javyn and some days it was not fun pushing the threshold of defense all the time and learning the rules of our defense, how we coach and how we play. But this is the time of year in February we are in good shape because we do press. Instead of running, running, running you're pressing, pressing, pressing and you stay in really good shape. So it took us a while to get it all together.

I love it that you said elite defense. That's amazing that you think that. We work on it every single day, defense, every day.

Q. Coach, quick turnaround. Y'all have played South Carolina and you've played LSU and played them very,

very well. Quick turnaround. Gotta get ready. Your preparation? Will you have enough time?

COACH ABRAHAMSON-HENDERSON: Yeah, always. I think I have some of the best coaches in the country. We have an elite preparation on everything we do. We're really detailed on our scouting reports and how we're going to guard people. We work on that.

I think our players know that LSU is a really, really good team. I think Auburn plays a lot like them to be honest in terms of they crash the boards and they want to get offensive rebounds. We did a good job on these guys tonight. We only allowed 7 offensive rebounds. LSU are beasts on the board and we gotta get back in transition because they're phenomenal in transition, so we gotta get back.

I think the preparation for us is making sure we are keen on detail and what we do.

Q. I'm doing a piece on transfer. You are a transfer yourself this year to this team. But speak to the transfers on this team and the impact they have had.

COACH ABRAHAMSON-HENDERSON: Yeah, I mean, okay, Brittney, big impact for us because she came with us from UCF and she is just a scoring machine and a transition monster. She can run in transition.

Diamond obviously is -- it's so funny that we're at Georgia. I've called her a dog for eight years and she is still a dog and now she is a real dog. Diamond does everything for our team and she is an elite senior. She is a fifth year senior. I wish I could have everybody for five years. She is playing like a real senior, and playing really, really well.

Audrey Warren is an X-factor for us. I don't think people understand how much Audrey does for us. She played in two Elite Eights at Texas, so she has got a lot of experience for us, and Audrey does a lot of the little things out on the floor that you may not see. Takes charge, she is talking, she is a great defender.

I know Diamond loves her out there because then Diamond can take a break every once in a while. Obviously Lish has been great for us because she is a phenomenal passer and a great point guard.

Who else transferred? De'Mauri is going to be good for us. She is only a sophomore but playing behind Diamond and Lish right now.

And we have freshmen, and all of our freshmen are red-shirted, and they are going to be really, really good.

And they get to practice behind Diamond and Javyn Malury and they have to learn from the best, so they are going to be really good. And they will actually be fifth year seniors because the COVID policy will be done, and they are going to be fifth year seniors going into their senior year, because they will have a whole year of experience.

Q. Coach, the game last time Reese pretty much had her season averages against y'all. Can you go into the game thinking we're going to try to limit her to 12 and 8 or something like that? Are you trying to neutralize their offense in general?

COACH ABRAHAMSON-HENDERSON: You've gotta neutralize her a little bit, because she gets everybody going. She is like Diamond, she gets everybody going once big things happen. So we gotta limit her a little bit. The biggest thing we gotta do is box her out. I think that's the one thing we have to key on with her is box her out.

She cannot get loose and get offensive rebounds and put-backs. That's where -- I think she is the best, offensive rebounding. The good thing about us is we played today, got the jitters out. The worst thing is they have been preparing for us and preparing for us and preparing for us so we gotta lock in and control the tempo. We can't take quick, crazy shots because they're good in transition. We will try to control their tempo as best we can, and we definitely have to box out.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.

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