

Southeastern Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 2, 2023

Greenville, South Carolina, USA

Bon Secours Wellness Arena

Alabama Crimson Tide
Coach Kristy Curry
Aaliyah Nye

Sarah Ashlee Barker
Postgame Press Conference



Kentucky 71, Alabama 58

THE MODERATOR: Joining Coach Curry is Aaliyah Nye and Sarah Ashlee Barker. We will start off with an opening comment from Coach and then take questions for the student athletes.

COACH CURRY: Credit to Kentucky. I thought they did a phenomenal job of really defensively being disruptive. We turned it over 19 times. When we did get to the free throw line we were 1 for 10, and that's uncharacteristic for us.

It's the time of year where players have to step up and make plays, and I certainly thought their kids stepped up and had a lot of momentum from yesterday. They have had a lot of adversity this year so it's a credit to that staff and those kids for putting themselves into position on two back-to-back days to bring a tremendous effort.

We had way too many looks at the rim. You have to finish shots, you can't turn the ball over, and you gotta make free throws. Credit to Kentucky, and we will sit back and continue to try and see what happens to us on Selection Sunday and get better.

We will go back to work on Saturday.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student athletes.

Q. Knowing you're coming off some losses here does that change your confidence going into the game at all?

SARAH ASHLEE BARKER: Honestly, no. I think every

game is a new opportunity, and I think you have to stay together and, you know, have confidence that we are a good basketball team.

We've had some slippage the last couple of games and honestly that's been on us as players. It's the little things. It's the boxing out. It's the diving on the ground for loose balls, having teams out hustle us, things that we know we can control.

I think that's a positive thing is we can control it, but, you know, we've lost four straight so we gotta get to it.

Q. When did you guys feel like the game flipped? You guys seem to have been in control most of the first half early into the second. When did it feel like that momentum started to slip away?

AALIYAH NYE: I would say when we continuously turned the ball over. I think it was in the middle of the third quarter. I think their momentum got to them because they made us turn the ball over and they were scoring off of our turnovers.

I think we just tried to fight back but they were, like Kristy said, the tougher team today.

Q. Knowing you are going to be in the NCAA tournament likely, does that change today at all?

AALIYAH NYE: I always want to win, no matter what. If we know we are making it to the tournament or not, we always go into every game wanting to win.

SARAH ASHLEE BARKER: I agree.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, ladies. Free to go. Questions for coach?

Q. Kristy, I think maybe what you guys got from Brittany tonight is not what you normally get. What did they do so well against her? Why did you feel like she did not find that rhythm tonight?

COACH CURRY: I don't have an answer. I thought we



came out a couple of -- you know, got a couple of looks at the rim, wide open, couple of set plays. You gotta finish those.

It's the time of year where players step up and make plays, and for whatever reason she wasn't able to tonight. I tried to encourage her at every dead ball huddle. I thought she allowed them to dictate her path and miss free throws. That's a little uncharacteristic.

Tried to keep encouraging her and try to put her in a position to be successful, and I thought we did that. Just gotta finish plays.

Q. Kentucky had this incredible story last year of upsetting teams. What makes this team so hard to play against in March, I guess?

COACH CURRY: I'm not sure because we didn't, but I know we had some success at Kentucky a few weeks ago. Tried to, you know, draw from some of that, but at the end of the day, I mean, guys, listen, we got beat tonight. You got to credit Kentucky and Kyra, and I think a lot of times coaches come up here and talk about what we didn't do.

I'm not going to criticize my kids. I'm just going to credit Kentucky. We have some things we didn't do well tonight, and credit Kentucky. They dictated and allowed -- we just didn't respond.

I know a lot of that can be on me. Honestly, we've worked so hard the past week I don't even have an answer for you. At this time of year you've got to step up and make plays, and you can defend and rebound and control that.

We have some older kids that haven't done that lately, and we have to ask ourselves why individually, look in the mirror a little bit, I think.

Q. To follow up, what about this Kentucky team is different from what they were a couple weeks ago?

COACH CURRY: I think when you make shots, you know, it cures a lot. Thought Jada Walker was phenomenal on both sides of the ball tonight. She was better than anybody in a white jersey, and sometimes this time of year when you have a kid like that that steps up and makes big plays, she just infused the entire team with confidence.

I think you have to credit her for her play tonight.

Q. Not about tonight, but I'm doing a piece about transfers. Can you speak to transfers and what they brought this year, Sarah being a good example?

COACH CURRY: Sarah and Aaliyah both. I think it's the day and time where, especially in the SEC, it's very difficult, you know, to not be a part of that portal because of the experience factor, and the experienced teams in this league are very successful.

The decisions that we made to go to the portal number one are based off character and fit. I can tell you that Aaliyah, Loyal, JeAnna, Ryan, and Sarah are amazing people. So I think you have to go to the portal and you have to find the right fit with your chemistry, and we spent a lot of time on that.

I know it didn't translate to a win tonight, but I think when you go to the portal people matter. I'm really proud of the people that came and have transferred. We will continue to exploit that, as will all teams in the SEC.

I think it's really important when you make a decision that it's the right fit not only on our end but their end as well.

THE MODERATOR: Anything else?

COACH CURRY: Thank you all for covering women's basketball. I do want to thank the City of Greenville. It was amazing. Everything around our experience has been phenomenal, so thank you for all that went into making it a really good tournament experience.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.

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