

# Southeastern Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 2, 2023  
Greenville, South Carolina, USA  
Bon Secours Wellness Arena

**Kentucky Wildcats**  
**Coach Kyra Elzy**  
**Jada Walker**

**Maddie Scherr**  
Postgame Press Conference



MADDIE SCHERR: I think it's coming in with the mindset that this is a new start for us. You know, forgetting the past and having a short memory. I think there is no doubt in our minds that we can beat every team in the SEC, and that's how we're going to go into it against every single team.

JADA WALKER: And it's March once again, so magical things happen.

**Q. In your eyes, what makes Kentucky basketball so incredible in March?**

MADDIE SCHERR: Built different.

JADA WALKER: Definitely built different. Our grittiness, our toughness on defense, then just not wanting to lose. Just playing all the way through. I feel like we're the most dangerous team in the league because we have nothing to lose right now. Going straight to the top.

**Q. Maddie, good second half for you. What was the difference?**

MADDIE SCHERR: The refuse-to-lose mindset. We have been saying we're not going to lose this game. These games are a second chance for us to come out and play better and play even harder. And like Jada said, we got nothing to lose.

**Q. Eniya Russell had 10 points in the fourth quarter and saw you all celebrating with her. Can you just speak to her growth as a player?**

MADDIE SCHERR: I know she had 10 points in the quarter, but she did some amazing things on defense, and I think that's why we were so excited for her. She got stops and blocks. I think that also led into her having those 10 points in the fourth quarter.

JADA WALKER: Yeah, definitely. I loved her energy today and the amount of confidence she came in having today, because I know she can hoop. I've seen her, watched her play for a lot of years while I was growing up.

So I knew she was capable of what she did today and even

Kentucky 71, Alabama 58

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Kentucky. Coach Kyra Elzy is joined by Jada Walker and Maddie Scherr. We will go to questions for the student athletes.

**Q. Jada, I think it was a career high tonight 24 points. Can you speak to your performance out there a little bit?**

JADA WALKER: I really feel like I came out with a lot of confidence today, especially with my shot. I haven't been shooting too well the past two games, so seeing shots go in and defensively getting steals and helping my team get shots was good for me today.

**Q. Felt like the second half of the fourth quarter there was no way y'all were going to lose. Can you describe the energy in the arena? And after they're chanting MVP for you, what was the energy like?**

JADA WALKER: It was good. We just locked in on defense. We were not losing to this team again. That was our mindset going into this game, we could beat this team.

I don't really look at the crowd too much on which. I try to focus on the game, but after the game we all celebrated and had fun. We know the next mission is Tennessee, so getting ready for that.

**Q. As players on the team obviously we've seen the energy shift, but from y'all's perspective what do you think has been the difference out there?**



more.

**Q. Can you describe the momentum that you had today coming off of yesterday?**

MADDIE SCHERR: Yeah, I think we're just really gathering together. Energy comes from each other and within, and we're really just depending on each other and encouraging each other. Like Jada said, we're dangerous right now because we got nothing to lose, and a group of girls who are there for each other and who want to play together and win together.

**Q. We know that Alabama came into Lexington and you guys came up short in the regular season. Was that any type of motivating factor coming into this game? Kind of like they got us on our home court, we want to get them again?**

MADDIE SCHERR: Absolutely.

JADA WALKER: Definitely I felt like we could show better than we did that game, and we definitely did today and we came out with the win.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, ladies. Questions for Coach.

**Q. What makes Kentucky basketball like this in March?**

COACH ELZY: You know, Maddie said it right: Built different. That has been our mantra all year. We battled through adversity, not always coming out on the side that we wanted to come out on. But I kept seeing us progress. We were doing things better. You know, just having the right mindset and togetherness.

We are truly family and we battle together through the good and the bad.

**Q. Coach, talk about this team. You've coached many teams in the past, but what is it about this one? Fighting through adversity and you think about last year's team; great team overcame some great things. But look at this year's team and what comes to mind and makes them special?**

COACH ELZY: Toughness. You have to have a mental toughness to battle through what we battled through. We came to this tournament with two wins. Two wins. A lot of people could have thrown in the towel. This team never did. They continued to practice, continued to believe in this staff, each other, and what this program is built around.

I'm so happy for them to have success, because the foundation is built and we know that we can win, and it's good to show people that we can.

**Q. Can you talk a little bit about your decision to stick with Eniya going into the fourth quarter and leaving Robyn on the bench? You did win the third quarter.**

COACH ELZY: Yes, we did win the third quarter. Let's keep winning the third. I thought Eniya had the right mindset and she came up to me and she said, Coach, I'm good.

And I said, all right, get back on defense, and she sat down and defended today. I was joking with her in the back. We talk about making 50/50 plays, getting on the floor, and making hustle plays. I looked down and I can't see that far anyway, but I was like, is that Eniya Russell on the floor? I got so excited I said, I don't know who you are but I like her. Have her come back to us.

She made some big plays. She is unbelievably talented and she has it and she stepped up big when we needed her.

**Q. What didn't connect this season that's connecting now?**

COACH ELZY: Well, it was going to be a progression. We had ten new players, so it was a lot of growing pains that was very painful. So it's good to be able to smile and celebrate with them, but if you look at our roster we have six freshmen that have never played collegiate basketball. They don't know what's happening, and it's probably taken them to now just to understand.

Then we have four transfers. They have played college basketball but they have never played at Kentucky. And then we had five returners all in a different role. So we had 15 people all in a different role than they've ever been, so it was a work in progress. It's better late than never.

**Q. Coach, you guys got Tennessee next. It's a very recent memory of you all playing them. What are your thoughts going into that game?**

COACH ELZY: You know, I thought we dug ourselves too big of a hole to start the game. We came out a little flat. We made a run, cut it to 8 or 10, but then we -- our ability to get back in transition defense we lacked that. We turned them over 21 times but gave them easy scoring opportunities. It's good to have a second chance. We're going to celebrate this one and prepare for the next one, obviously.

**Q. Coach, what was your message to the team, end of the third quarter, final taking the lead back to get them in that mind-set that energy to go off in the fourth?**

COACH ELZY: We've been talking about "touch someone, talk to someone," and we were in the huddle, and I saw them touching and talking to each other. They were really connected and locked in. We talked about we needed three stops in a row, even if the ball is not going in the net, let's get three stops in a row. They were talking.

I thought players made big plays when we had 'em, but we hung our hat on the defensive end, and I think that transitioned us for a transition offense.

Real quick, I want to give my staff a shout out, Amber, Butts, Coach Jen. Let me tell y'all, they work unbelievably hard to make sure they pour into our players, getting us ready for scouts. Coach Amber had this scout and wouldn't be able to do what we do without them so I want to give them a big shout out.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.

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