

Southeastern Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Wednesday, March 5, 2025

Greenville, South Carolina, USA

Bon Secours Wellness Arena

Mississippi State Bulldogs

Coach Sam Purcell

Eniya Russell

Jerkaila Jordan

Postgame Press Conference

Mississippi State 75, Missouri 55

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Mississippi State. We'll start with an opening statement from Coach Purcell.

SAM PURCELL: Yeah, first and foremost, thank you to the SEC. This is a tournament that I absolutely enjoy, although this is my first year with Eniya, and I'm on my third year with this one. We experienced a lot, but we are starting to question if I'm bringing enough clothes or what's going on because we were out of here after the first day. So to experience a win and be able to stay the night. Again, just the community, what everybody is doing to make this a special tournament, thank you.

Then also a big shout-out to my team. Somebody asked me earlier did anything surprise me. It wasn't a surprise because if you look at our season, we've had multiple 30-point quarters, we've had highs, lows. The most important thing is make sure you're playing your best basketball come March. I really believe that.

Very proud of them. Also just want to thank Robin real quick. Obviously that was a tough game emotionally because of who Robin is, from Missouri, what she stands for, who she's been for me in this league, a woman of character and class, welcoming me in.

As much as I'm excited to win this one, obviously we'll miss her a lot and wish her nothing but the best of luck.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Jerkaila, I don't know if you've been part of a 30-0



run before, talk about how it felt out on the floor, what led into that.

JERKAILA JORDAN: Honestly, just coming out of the locker room still together as one. I think we got it on the defensive end. We were locked in. I think the stops led to the 30-0 run.

I'm proud of this team, how tough they were. We dug ourselves a hole, we got out of it and we stayed locked in.

Q. What did Coach Purcell tell you in the locker room at halftime?

SAM PURCELL: Can we turn off the cameras? (Smiling). Words of encouragement, wasn't it?

JERKAILA JORDAN: It was more like actions of encouragement.

He's just a coach that wants the best for us. He's a very passionate guy. He came into the locker room with a lot of passion. I think we felt it. He can't get on the court for us, all we can do is bring that passion on the court.

Q. Did it feel like the offense and seeing the shots go in fueled defensively or was it a balance of both in that run?

ENIYA RUSSELL: I feel like on the defensive end, when we picked it up on the defensive end, it translated to offense. You get those steals. It fuels us a lot. We was scrambling, communicating. We was getting on the defensive end and it translated to offense. So definitely our defense helps our offense.

JERKAILA JORDAN: For sure.

SAM PURCELL: I'll second that. I want to give both of these a shout-outs. For those of you who aren't local, I call them Batman and Batman. What they're able to bring our team both offensively and defensively makes them two of the best players to me still in the country. They're going to have great pro careers after this. I challenged them both, don't let it be just when your number's called. Be players



that you can let your defense can create offense. Mostly find a way to get offensive boards.

Eniya Russell with three offensive rebounds and Jerk with three. I thought came up with some huge second-chance points from there to also make those huge runs.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, ladies. You can go back to the locker room.

Questions for Coach Purcell.

Q. First half looked like Missouri got a lot of open shots. Obviously it changed the second half. What was that specific adjustment like?

SAM PURCELL: Again, got a lot of respect for them. I keep telling people, the SEC is the toughest league in the country. There was nothing that surprised me. When you look at Missouri's season, whether they played us, which they won at the buzzer, Texas, seven-point game, Ole Miss who has a chance to host, came down to the buzzer.

They have a lot of great players and a system that spaces you out. Within that space, there were certain things we wanted to do, doubling and not rotating. We rotated. I told 'em at half, I don't know what y'all were doing in the hotel, maybe we slept too long or whatever, but you better hurry and wake up because if you don't pick this up, we're going home. I've been here way too long to go home.

Their determination to find ways in the second half, I thought it was really huge.

Q. Is there any major concern on Destiney right now?

SAM PURCELL: Yeah, right before I walked down, I didn't hear anything. Yeah, definitely that's a major concern. That's a kid that doesn't shed tears. She's from Philly. She's Philly tough. For her to be taken off, let's all say a prayer so we can get her back tomorrow because she's a huge part, right?

Obviously the first time we played Missouri, we didn't have her. She was sick. She had the flu. You can see tonight, she gives us a great lift.

Denim has been unbelievable for us all year, and I know she'll bounce back tomorrow. When you can have two point guards like that who both can start, it makes our team a lot better.

Q. Did you see it more of a defensive effort mentally fueling the offense? Where was that balance?

SAM PURCELL: Yeah, definitely defense. We needed to get open in the open court. Again, I have lot of respect for Missouri and their coaching staff. They do a great job playing scouting report defense.

Making us shoot, Powe again. I put my paycheck on Debreasha Powe for wide-open threes. Tonight wasn't her night. If we're going to win this game, we need to find a way to get stops, open court, to see the ball go in. I think that started happening. Then we found Destiney, then it was a momentum that you couldn't stop the train.

Thanks, everybody. Appreciate y'all.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, coach.

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