

Southeastern Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Wednesday, March 5, 2025

Greenville, South Carolina, USA

Bon Secours Wellness Arena

Florida Gators

Kelly Rae Finley

Jeriah Warren

Ra Shaya Kyle

Postgame Press Conference



day. Free throws, I'm just be up there, stay calm, be focused, just hit my free throws like I'm down.

Q. It seemed the ball was going through you a lot tonight. What was going through your head, especially going into the second half, such a tight game? What was your mindset in terms of your attack method?

RA SHAYA KYLE: Just keep going at 'em. My teammates trusted me enough to keep giving me the ball. I trusted them find if I was getting doubled or whatever. I would just say my mindset was to just keep going at them the whole time. They was giving me confidence, my coaches was giving me confidence the whole time. Yeah, just keep going at 'em.

Q. Jeriah, what would you say clicked for you in the second half?

JERIAH WARREN: I think our connection was really well. We were making eye contact. We understood we needed D stops to win the game and we did just that.

Q. Looking at you warming up, the energy seemed like it was there. Was there an added level of energy in this game because of the loss earlier this season? How excited were you to get a chance to go at 'em again?

RA SHAYA KYLE: That, but also that's just how we are on a daily. We're really, like, close-knit on and off the court. I would say that's just how we are on a daily. It was nothing new. You just seen it more today.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, ladies. We'll continue with questions for Coach Finley.

KELLY RAE FINLEY: It is Shay's birthday tomorrow (smiling).

Q. Can you talk about the very end where Liv gets the and-one opportunity. She's in pain. Talk about how much of a competitor she is, how she lives for those

Florida 60, Auburn 50

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Florida.

We'll start with an opening statement from Coach Finley.

KELLY RAE FINLEY: First of all, thank you for everybody that tuned in. It's a late night. Think we're going on about 11:00. Thank you Gator Nation and everybody that was able to stay up to watch us play.

I was really pleased with our second half defense. I thought that might have been some of our better second half defense all season. The challenge at halftime was are we going to be able to sustain that, communicate on the other end of the floor. I thought we did that exceptionally well.

Some people had very good individual performances, but most importantly we're our best when we play together as a team. You can just see the chemistry on the court continuing to improve, even though it is in March.

As a coach, that's something that we're very, very proud of. Our improvement from January to February, now into March... I thought that was a full-team effort for 40 minutes.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Ra Shaya, what did you have cooking, eight for eight?

RA SHAYA KYLE: That's just something we work on every



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moments.

KELLY RAE FINLEY: That's exactly who she is. I wouldn't expect anything less. Like she said to the ref right there at the end, No, I'm okay, I just need my teammates for a second. Them giving her those positive affirmations of course helps.

She's a team player, a competitor. She sets the tone for us, for sure.

Q. Any potential updates or signs on Liv's status for tomorrow?

KELLY RAE FINLEY: Not yet. I'm sure we'll update you guys ASAP.

Q. That was a pretty symbolic statement of the team's effort in terms of how physical it was. What does it say about this team and where they're at at this point in the season?

KELLY RAE FINLEY: Yeah, I think Laila said to me the other day, Facts are facts, Kelly. We talk a lot about that in our program. The fact is that we've improved statistically in just about every category from January to February. We're now in March.

I think hats off to Auburn. When we played at their place, they beat us on both ends of the floor. We really were not pleased with our effort. We didn't think we played our best game.

At that point in the season, we hadn't earned the opportunity to win that game. We weren't physical enough. We didn't make secondary cuts well enough. We didn't do some of the fundamental things well enough against a team that's defensively as strong as Auburn is.

I think that it shows the level of improvement that we made in order to go in and do that tonight. Then 21 for 23 from the free-throw line is huge. That takes incredible confidence and focus.

I thought everybody played well, but I would like to shout-out Laila Reynolds, I thought she had a heck of a defensive game guarding DeYona Gaston the whole night at 6'1". To hold her for 6 for 20. DeYona is an exceptionally good basketball player. But Laila Reynolds played a heck of a defensive game tonight.

Q. Tomorrow it's only going to get tougher. What's the mindset going into day two?

KELLY RAE FINLEY: I think that we were the only team in

the country that had the opportunity to finish our regular season with three top-15 teams. That prepares us well.

I feel like we competed well against Alabama at our place last time out. But, man, they're a really talented basketball team. They're very experienced, maybe one of the more experienced teams in the league. Fifth- and sixth-year seniors. Coach Kristy does a great job with her team.

We expect a really tough, physical battle tomorrow night.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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