

Southeastern Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 6, 2025

Greenville, South Carolina, USA

Bon Secours Wellness Arena

Mississippi State Bulldogs

Coach Sam Purcell

Jerkaila Jordan

Postgame Press Conference



Ole Miss 85, Mississippi State 73

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

SAM PURCELL: Yeah, first and foremost, obviously disappointed. We came here to be here for several days, in a league that's going to have a deep run here come March Madness when you see what the SEC is going to produce and do.

But this game, it came down to us way too slow. For Ole Miss to shoot 28 free throws, they had seven and-ones. We couldn't get a flow going for us on offense. Became way too much stoppage. We kept fighting. You have to tip your hat to them. Madison Scott is a heck of a player, 7 for 9, finds a way to step up and make big baskets.

We have an NCAA tournament team that can make a deep run. That's the message I told to my young women. We're going to funnel that energy, clean some things up, get some kids healthy and let's try to do something special here in about two weeks.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Jerkaila.

Q. Mentally, could you walk through what that is like when you can't get momentum going?

JERKAILA JORDAN: I think the most important thing mentally we was trying to just stay mentally locked in, stay together as a team. Let the refs control our emotions, just keep our emotions under check. We did that as best we could tonight.

Q. What is the next step for this team as you look

towards the NCAA tournament?

JERKAILA JORDAN: Just like Coach Sam says, we're going to go back, watch film, see what we did wrong. Learn our lesson. We're going to go into the post-season NCAA, make a big run. Just learn from this.

Q. Really balanced scoring for you tonight. How important is that balanced production?

JERKAILA JORDAN: It's important. But I think the most important was just getting the stops. We gave up a lot of and-ones. Just focusing on offense. Offense relies open our defense very heavily. That's our main priority right now.

Q. Yesterday with the tournament win, you both kind of talked about the emotions, how good that feels. How are you using that in the NCAA tournament?

JERKAILA JORDAN: I mean, this is the furthest I've got in this tournament. I'm proud to be with this guy. I stick behind him 10 toes. Like you said, NCAA. Literally win or go home, survive and advance. We're just going to go in there strong.

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

Q. What do you feel like you learned about your team? What is the next step as you look towards the tournament?

SAM PURCELL: I told them the SEC tournament is the hardest tournament, especially with how much talent top to bottom it is. Especially, like I said, Missouri. Missouri is a team that played Texas, the number one team in the country to seven. Played this team, Ole Miss, that we just lost to by two at the buzzer. Anytime you play in this tournament and you have no rest and you play back to back, I told them, that's not what we're going to see in two weeks. You get two opponents and a day's rest in between.



For us to stay up, especially someone like Destiney who turned her ankle last night right at the end, for her to fight through all kind of rehab and give us 16 minutes, I couldn't be more proud of the preparation and the fight to come in here and make a deep run.

It's like what Jerk just said. You have to have the reality, there's a lot of things we didn't execute and do well. I challenged my team with spring break coming up. What are you willing to sacrifice to make one last special run? Can we get in the gym, gets shot up, free throws. Every basket matters, every possession matters in a game that you turned it over 21 times. We go 5 for 14 from the three-point line. You miss six throws free throw. We have to make sure we stay in the gym and get stops. We scored enough points, but didn't get enough stops tonight.

Q. Do you think that was more of a mental effort or fatigue?

SAM PURCELL: I think it's a hard way the whistle blows, right? Obviously both teams are driving the ball very hard. We drive a dribble-drive offense where we get downhill drives. They got 28 free throws. Tough night. Whistle didn't go our way. Obviously I tried to go zone a little bit there. They hit some big threes. We felt our best way to win the rebounding war, we won by three, we needed to play more man.

Again, Madison Scott, I can't say enough good things about that young lady. She always comes up with a big shot. Had some great layups that she finished over some length that were daggers just when you were about to tie it up or get it close, she just kept that separation.

Games like this, players have got to make plays. You got to come up with those big 50/50 balls. They made more of 'em today.

Q. Despite the loss tonight, the last few games as a whole, what about the team specifically gives you confidence going into the tournament now?

SAM PURCELL: Yeah, in my three years here, man, what a journey. An unbelievable journey. You go down to Cayman Islands, we played back-to-back games, Utah, where you come out punching, then a South Florida with less rest. We found a way to get a win.

You go Belmont, shot at the buzzer, overtime. Then we went throughout the SEC where it was win, loss, win, loss. Our journey has been unique. But it's also been a great one because it's shown adversity, it's shown toughness.

When we've been punched, a lot of teams get two, three

losses. My young women have always had a mindset to bounce back and find a way to get the next one. I couldn't be a more proud coach with as many non-returning players for us to come together, put an NCAA tournament product on the floor.

Like I said, let's get in here and play our best basketball when our name's called.

Q. Ole Miss freshman Sira Thienou, she stands out as one of their best players. What did you think of her performance?

SAM PURCELL: Yeah, she's special. Long, lanky. Just poised. I think that's the biggest thing. I never seen her get emotional. I've obviously watched a lot of film. She stays the course.

She's able to play off some upperclassmen. She's able to hide there. What's scary is when you're able to hide, she's got explosive abilities to come up with 50/50 plays. She drives the ball extremely well going left, right? Because Madison Scott and some of the other kids are able to take that star role, she's in a perfect situation where she's able to be a great complementary player. That's what you saw tonight.

Q. Looking at the Ole Miss rivalry as a whole, in-state matchup, what have you learned in your time here at Mississippi State from coaching an intense rivalry?

SAM PURCELL: No, this game matters. Our players, we wanted this bad. We understand the rivalry, right?

It's a proud moment, too, because you got two teams from the state of Mississippi. When you look at the history of our programs, we haven't been one of those traditional teams that have made the NCAA tournament.

For Yo to have an NCAA tournament team and me to have an NCAA tournament team I think speaks volumes for the state. That's what I'm proud of. You're going to have two programs that when we go against each other, both teams are going to play in March and try to do special things, most importantly special things for women's basketball.

That's been my focus. We possibly can see each other down the line. We're going to bring out the best of each other. That's why hopefully both of us, we'll try to do special things when our name's called.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

