

Southeastern Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Saturday, March 8, 2025
Greenville, South Carolina, USA
Bon Secours Wellness Arena

Texas Longhorns
Coach Vic Schaefer
Madison Booker
Rori Harmon

Postgame Press Conference

Texas 56, LSU 49

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Texas. We'll begin with an opening statement from Coach, then take questions.

VIC SCHAEFER: Well, just want to start by talking about my team and how proud I am of 'em, how tough they were tonight, the effort that it took to beat a great LSU team for the second time this season.

This league, as these two have found out, not being in it before, it is so difficult. The teams are so good. They're well-coached. There's so many great players.

This tournament is just one ranked team after another, one NCAA tournament team after another. For my kids to go out there and play like they did, I couldn't be prouder of 'em.

I know what it takes. I've obviously lived in this league before. To see them continue to show toughness, y'all. Like, this team is so tough. They're so competitive. Made plays when they had to make 'em defensively and offensively.

But I thought our competitive spirit again tonight was off the chart. It's what really separates this group and allows them to be as good as they are. You don't stumble into 31-2, or walk or stand around into that.

I can sit up here and be bubbly all day. I tell them I realize I'm not their world, but they are my world. I just love this group. They are so special.



I thought Booker was really good the first half tonight. She was good the whole game, 10-19. Got us off to a great start, 7-9, hit two big threes. We found her in the right spots, but she executed and had to make shots and she did.

Rori made three shots down the stretch. Might not be three bigger ones in a while. She's made some big ones in her career. Those three late were really big ones for us when we were trying to score. We missed some bunnies and some ones close to the rim. She made three really tough shots.

Again, that's what competitors do. That's what great players do. That's what All-Americans do. I don't think there's any question when you look at how Rori runs our team or how Madison Booker affects the game and our team, both these kids, I'm fortunate. When you can start your team with these two, you got a chance.

Thought our bigs were tough tonight. Not a great night scoring the ball, but they certainly commanded their attention and had their attention. I was proud of Taylor. Seven rebounds, three offensive. Kyla did a good job coming in.

Shay played 40 minutes. She just makes plays. She's our Energizer Bunny, makes hustle plays. Of course, we had some freshmen again. I got three freshmen, they're all playing big minutes for us.

It's a great win for us. Again, it's a toughness win. I told 'em in the locker room, You better bring that toughness hat tomorrow. Championship Sunday is all about toughness. It's about resilience. It's about being able to come in here and compete at the highest level.

I've obviously been in that game a lot and against that team a lot. So they're going to have the crowd. It's a home game for them. We've got a great contingent of Texas Longhorn fans here, which I appreciate. We'll have to come out tomorrow and really play well.



But proud of these two, proud of my team. We'll be here tomorrow at 3:00.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Rori, what was going on in the fourth quarter? How much did today mean to you?

RORI HARMON: Yeah, I'm just super grateful. Like, I think every time I wake up while being at this tournament. Unfortunately I do think how I did miss that tournament. It just gives me more fuel. I think that fourth quarter, being able to knock down those shots, it's just getting confidence from my teammates. Everything that happens on the court is because we truly believe in each other.

Just happy to be able to get to that next game.

Q. Madison, you were celebrating with the band afterwards. Walk me through that.

MADISON BOOKER: I mean, just grateful for the support we have. They always show up, show out. The cheerleaders, too. It's just a moment where, you know, just tell them we got one more game left, we just got to show out tomorrow. Like everybody together.

I just think it was more of a thankful moment for me to show to them, just to let them know that I see y'all, I hear y'all, and I want to thank them, too.

Q. Rori, I think there's more times in the last minute where y'all needed to inbound the ball, avoid a turnover. How much do you work on those inbound plays?

RORI HARMON: I'm not even going to lie. We don't really work on that. But thanks, Coach, for trusting us. That's really great of him to always trust us to just get the ball in.

But yeah, we don't necessarily work on those things, so... But I'm glad that we're able to get the ball in and knock our free throws down, so...

Q. Your coach just said that tomorrow's going to be basically a home game for South Carolina. Is that an extra challenge for you, intimidating at all?

RORI HARMON: It's not necessarily, like, intimidating, but we know it's coming. We just talked about it in the locker room. We just truly have to stay together. We don't need to focus on what's going outside of those lines.

We've been in that situation before earlier in the season. We're going to learn from that, just play our best

basketball, bring some toughness tomorrow.

MADISON BOOKER: Yeah, I mean, like Rori said, we've been in this situation before. Playing in South Carolina wasn't pretty. I think we look back at that game, after that game we kind of went on a run. Haven't been beaten yet. The lesson we learned from that game is patience, playing as a team, playing team defense, that nobody can do it by themselves.

I think we just continue from what we learned from that game and play tomorrow.

Q. With today being International Women's Day, what is it like to be competing on this stage?

RORI HARMON: So amazing. I mean, what has happened over the past few years with women's sports in general, I'm just so happy to be a part of it. That's something we play for every day. That's how passionate we are when we come on the court. It's bigger than us, bigger than basketball.

For us to be able to compete today like we did, show toughness, we're just showing everybody what that woman power that we have is. Basically, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Ladies, thank you. We'll continue with questions for Coach Schaefer.

Q. You're focused on your own team, but it wasn't too long ago you went to Lexington to play Kentucky there. What are your thoughts on Kenny Brooks' first season at Kentucky?

VIC SCHAEFER: I think he's certainly done a great job there. Again, he knows how to build a team. When you start with Georgia Amooore, that's a great place to start. You have to give her credit for coming with him. Then he's got some really good pieces around her, so...

He had a great year, finished in the top four in the league, right? That's hard to do in this league. Kenny's a great coach. I don't know him real well. Gotten to know him a little bit. Obviously we shared some special messages with each other when I was there 'cause it was breast cancer awareness night that night.

A lot of respect. I've watched his teams from afar. Again, you finish in the top four in this league, you've done something.

Q. You're obviously very familiar with South Carolina. In these next 15 hours, what do you do from a coaching standpoint to prepare? Anything else you



can tweak between now and then?

VIC SCHAEFER: Yeah, you know, this is my sixth-in-a-row final, if I'm not mistaken. Five of 'em have been against South Carolina. I've done it every way, sideways, up and down. It doesn't matter. I talked to my team tonight. Daylight Savings Time, you lose an hour tonight - of course.

10 years ago I'd be, Toughen up, we have to get up, have shootaround, be in here whatever time they give us. After 40 years, I'm changed. I guess, my former players will say I got soft. That's okay. I'm more concerned about 'em getting rest tonight, getting their bodies recovery.

I don't know if we'll take our shootaround or not tomorrow. My kids know I'm big on shootarounds. If we play a 1:00 game and we're on the road, we're going to take that 7:00 shootaround. If we're at home, we're going to take that 8:00 shootaround.

I think older, wiser. You got to evaluate your team. I have some kids playing a lot of minutes. Booker, Maddie went 38, almost 39. Rori went 37. Shay went 40. She's The Bionic Woman. She's never tired.

Just needing to be real careful with them. We'll figure it out tonight. I've really left it up to them, to be honest with you. We'll see how it goes.

Again, if you don't have your physical body tomorrow, your frame and your well-being tomorrow, you got no chance against South Carolina. Again, I've learned that over the course of time.

Doesn't matter. What are we, should open the press conference for giving God the glory for 31-2. We played 33 games. I'm pretty sure we can execute just about everything that we got. That's a play card. That's a lot, but I feel good about everything. I don't think we need a shootaround to practice any of that.

I think we'll figure it out in the morning.

Q. Is there any key to success when it comes to playing South Carolina in this venue in a championship game?

VIC SCHAEFER: For sure, I mean, it's a home game obviously. There will be a great crowd tomorrow. It will be a great environment for college basketball. There will be a lot of people hollering for them.

We've got a great Longhorn contingent here. I'm proud of our fans that have traveled. But I think more than that,

that's certainly a part of it, but you're playing a great team. I mean, they've been No. 1 this year, been No. 1 last year, No. 1 the year before. They're obviously a really good team.

We know what happened the first time. We knew what it took the second time to compete and win that game. I do believe that our kids understand that.

Again, we're way different than we were back that first time we played in Columbia. It's a great opportunity. It's how I look at it. It is what it is. We need to embrace it and want to be in that arena. I mean, that to me is the whole thing. You got to want to be in that arena.

Look, you come to Texas to play the best. So tomorrow we're going to play one of the best teams in the country. We're going to need to keep continuing to do what we do and play the way we play. We'll see what happens.

Q. I wanted to get your thoughts on the coin toss and ramifications of that in the tournament.

VIC SCHAEFER: Y'all, I'm okay with it now. I've known Commissioner Sankey for a long, long time, back to our Southland days. We've had a pretty good couple of chuckles about it.

They've had to do it in, like, seven or eight other sports, or they're having to do it. It's part of it. When you have 16 teams, we split with each other, I mean, it is what it is.

It's part of our tiebreaker system that we have. He and I had a good visit about it two nights ago. He gave me a commemorative coin that does have Texas on the coin and South Carolina on the other side.

I told him, I asked him, Is this the real one or a commemorative one? I only saw one side of the other one. We had a good laugh about it.

Again, it's just part of it, so... You know what, I hope I'm in that position again. I'll take it every day and twice on Sunday, so...

Q. Jordan only played a couple minutes in the first half. You let her play a lot in the second half. What was she showing you to get that play time?

VIC SCHAEFER: For a young kid, for a freshman, she plays with a lot of poise. Made two big free throws for us. Had two assists. No turnovers. Defends.

She's uncommon as a freshman because she understands defensive concepts, help-side defense. I thought she took



a charge tonight. It went the other way. But she understands that. I knew that when I recruited her. I could see that as part of her game as a high school kid.

I'm obviously really comfortable with all three of those kids. Justice Carlton, she had eight rebounds tonight. Those are big rebounds for us. We out-rebounded them 11. That's, again, something that we really want to focus on night in, night out. We'll have to be really good tomorrow at it because South Carolina does a great job on the boards.

Yeah, all three of those freshmen, I have to say, I'm getting more and more comfortable with Justice. Jordan Lee, I've been comfortable with her since we signed her. She's got a real basketball IQ, she understands help-side defense, she's really good on the ball. She took an on-ball charge tonight, which was really good. I'm proud of her.

Really appreciate everybody being here, appreciate your coverage of our great game and this great tournament. Hope we play well for you tomorrow. Praise the Lord and hook 'em Horns.

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