

Southeastern Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Sunday, March 9, 2025

Greenville, South Carolina, USA

Bon Secours Wellness Arena

Texas Longhorns

Coach Vic Schaefer

Taylor Jones

Rori Harmon

Postgame Press Conference

South Carolina 64, Texas 45

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

VIC SCHAEFER: Yeah, so just congratulations to South Carolina. Proud of my kids. Proud of my team. Thought they fought. We had a bad second quarter. I think it's fair to say the game was lost in the second quarter for us. We didn't shoot it well. We were 3-12. Probably had a few too many turnovers that quarter.

We gave them a 21-point quarter without scoring. I told my team, it's like college baseball, if all you can score is two runs every night, you're not going to win in college baseball. Doesn't matter how good your pitching is, we can't score six points in a quarter.

I thought from that moment on, much like what happened at their place the first game, we were down 19 at half, played 'em dead even, I think, the second half, after that point we competed.

The ball was sticking on offense. I couldn't get them to flip the floor. Seemed like it was just sticking in our hands. Didn't have any continuity offensively. Again, everything they got, they had 22 paint points at halftime of their 33, everything they were getting offensively was off the bounce. They were really attacking the paint. I think we had eight points in the paint at halftime.

I thought we did a much better job the second half of attacking. We got to the free-throw line 14 times. I don't



think we got there the first half. I may be wrong. No, I'm right. We got out-rebounded, too. We had too many turnovers. 18 turnovers is too many.

But again, I thought there was times where we played really hard. There's no fighting these kids. Again, when you're playing South Carolina on their home floor in front of their fans, it's a road game. You've got to be able to respond when they make a run. We just weren't able to respond in that second quarter.

If I'm not mistaken, I think took two timeouts in that quarter, right? So I could feel I was in the avalanche, but I could never stop it. Just trying to get our kids to understand kind of what we were trying to do offensively, where we were trying to get 'em.

I thought the second half we were much more aggressive, got to our spots. Rori got to her spots quite a bit. Was able to help us. Taylor went 4-8, eight rebounds, 14 points, did a really good job. Book had 10 and 10, a double-double, three steals, played her heart out.

Again, I'm proud of my group. One quarter, one game certainly doesn't define our season, who we are or what we put together. I don't think anybody's going to evaluate us on one quarter. This team is 31-3. They have earned their way. They have been through the gauntlet and survived it and come out on the positive side of it.

I told 'em, I think this game and the Elite Eight game are probably the two hardest games to win in college basketball. It's not the Final Four, it's not your semifinal or the championship game to me. It's that Elite Eight game.

In this game, playing South Carolina here in South Carolina, in Greenville, it's a tough game to win 'cause they're already good. So it's a very difficult game to be in. I've been in it six times. Five of 'em have been against them. It's a challenge.

I thought my team today fought, competed. We just had a bad quarter. So again, what this team's accomplished this season, I don't think anybody can question. I don't think



you can evaluate us on one bad quarter. I think you evaluate the total body of work, how many top 10s we've beaten throughout the course of the season, all that stuff.

I'm disappointed, but I am not disappointed in my team. You want to blame somebody, you can blame me. But I am not disappointed in these young ladies. They did all they could do today. We had a bad quarter. Other than that, they competed their tail off. I'm awfully, awfully proud of 'em, so...

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. What lessons can y'all learn from this game and take into the NCAA tournament?

TAYLOR JONES: I think looking at the stat sheet, one of our coaches talked about controlling the controllables. They got nine points off of our turnovers and nine points off of offensive rebounds.

Being able to control what we can control, which is our effort on defense, controlling the ball, not turning it over, I think those are two big lessons that we struggled with tonight.

Just really, I think, leaning into the pain tonight of how this feels, knowing that we still have a lot of season left ahead of us. Just learning and keeping our heads up and knowing what Coach Schaefer said, that this doesn't define our season. Hopefully we see 'em again.

Q. Rori, is the confidence of this team shaken at all or do you go into the tournament believing you are a No. 1 overall seed and considered a favorite?

RORI HARMON: Yeah, I'm just super proud of my teammates for playing super hard. Obviously, like, we're still mad. We wanted to win the game. One of the first things I said in the locker room is, like, this is just one game. We have a tournament ahead of us where we just need to learn from our mistakes, like they have been saying. Understand that this one is win or go home. We just need to come ready and play for each other, like we've been doing all season. Not to hang our heads for a second because we're doing really well, 31-3.

Like they said, this game doesn't define us as a team. But it did show everyone that we're going to compete and fight till the end, so...

Q. Offensively, was this an off night for you guys or was South Carolina doing something out there?

RORI HARMON: I mean, yeah, it could have been better.

Like Coach was saying, our execution might have been very stagnant here and there. We did get some good shots here and there, of course.

You look at what they got their points from. They have 40 paint points versus our 18. That's a lot more, so... I would say our offensive execution was a little stagnant.

I think it's a lot of little things throughout the game. It was just very small details. We didn't make as many winning plays this game. They made more.

That's exactly what we need to look at on film so we can learn and move on to this tournament.

Q. How tough of a hole was that to dig out of after the second quarter?

TAYLOR JONES: I think coming into halftime, we just needed to know that there isn't a 20-point play. We just had to try and chip away at the lead, just learn from the mistakes that we had made.

We went on a little stretch, a little run, to come out on the third quarter. Unfortunately, it wasn't our night. South Carolina played a great game. Congrats to them.

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

Q. The atmosphere, what did you think of it? How did it affect your team tonight?

VIC SCHAEFER: So, if I'm not mistaken, are y'all my three that drove 16 hours?

Q. Yes.

VIC SCHAEFER: I want you to know when it comes time to get a job, you put me on your résumé. That's really unique. I'm proud that you guys are here. I'm proud that you take enough pride in your job that you would do that, 'cause you don't have to do that. I think people need to know that. So thank you for being here.

Again, it's a road game. It is what it is. It's the Southeastern Conference. It's where they've chosen to have our tournament.

Again, I've been in this game a lot. It's a road game. You're already playing a top-four team in the country. Then to play them basically on their home floor, it makes it that much more difficult.

Let's say we were playing in San Antonio, how do you think



it would be? Probably a little different, right? Atmosphere, people would go hollering for us.

But it is what it is. You have to be ready for that and you have to handle it. Other than the second quarter, I thought we handled it fine. Again, we've been on the road a lot this year, more than most of my teams I've ever had.

The atmosphere was obviously pro South Carolina. Because of our second quarter, we kind of gave 'em a little bit to cheer about. But once we got in at halftime and made some adjustments, I thought we were much better in the second half.

Q. Are you concerned about this team not being able to score points if Maddie is not having a Madison night or you can't get the ball into the paint? Are you concerned about your offensive struggles?

VIC SCHAEFER: I think you just mentioned two things that we've been pretty good about handling and doing. In that second quarter, we just really struggled with it.

Again, you have to flip the floor, you have to have ball movement, then attack the paint. That first half, we'd run one side of the floor. When we couldn't get what we wanted, the ball was literally dead in our hands.

Think about how many shot clock violations or close to it that we had. Several. Now, the added piece to that is I thought I had a couple players that weren't focused. When you're playing a game, we have a shot clock every day in practice, and we have it every game, right? When you're not into what you're doing, and you don't know the shot clock, that's a sign that, to me, you're not into what we're doing, you're not focused. I thought we had that happen a couple different times.

I just thought the ball stuck in the first half. We just didn't have very good ball movement. Especially that second quarter. I'm not concerned about this team. They've been great. We've scored a lot of points certain nights. I think I've told y'all, this is one of the better shooting teams I've ever had and ever coached, so...

I'm not worried about 'em. We've had some kids that didn't shoot it well the last two nights. I am not worried about them at all. They'll come back, bounce back, shoot it better than the next night. I have no question in my mind.

Q. You've mentioned the atmosphere a few times. Would you like to see the league change where this game is played?

VIC SCHAEFER: I think, again, when you're talking about

the student-athlete experience, we used to play it once every three, four, five years in Nashville. I don't think now it even gets there anymore. I've only been back in the league one year.

Obviously, Greenville loves having us and does a great job. I think you have to look beyond that when you start seeing it. Again, obviously, they're a really good team. It's not enough dealing with 'em when you play 'em at home or you play 'em on a neutral floor. When you have to play 'em here, two hours from campus, it's a distinct advantage. If we're worried about or talking about a college athlete, student-athlete experience, again, we all love being here, it's a great experience, but they're having a better experience right now than I am. Not saying that's the reason we got beat at all.

I've been in the league where it's been all over. I think we were in Tampa one year, we've been in Nashville, we've been somewhere else. I've seen it all. We were in Little Rock when I was at Arkansas. No, at Mississippi State.

We've tried it everywhere. I think the reason we keep coming back here is Greenville just does a tremendous job. This arena does a tremendous job. Until you can find another place that does the job that Greenville does, I think that's why we keep coming back here.

Again, South Carolina is good on their own without putting 'em in an arena that's two hours from home, but you're still in their state with a pro crowd.

Again, we've got to find a way to be in that moment and compete. Again, it's one quarter tonight, in my mind.

Q. You were 16 of 54. How much of your shooting was impacted by what you call a home crowd for South Carolina?

VIC SCHAEFER: I think you have to give South Carolina a lot of credit for their defense. I think they're really good defensively. They're quick, they're athletic, they're long. They have a good plan on how to guard you.

I think you have to give Coach and her staff and her players credit because that's who's out there playing. Doesn't matter where you're playing. That's who's out there playing.

I think you have to give them a ton of credit for how hard they play. We take great pride in how hard we play defensively. When I watched them, they play really hard defensively. I've experienced that playing them.

I'm not shy at all about giving them credit for how hard they



play, especially on the defensive end. They make it very, very difficult on you. They make it difficult on the catch. They make it difficult on the shot. They make it difficult on the post-up.

They play through all defensive possessions. I think we had 12 offensive rebounds, but three were a dead ball. So only nine live ball. That limits our second-chance points to seven.

Q. We saw Taylor and Kyla playing together on the court for the first time this season. What went into that lineup decision? Will we be seeing more of that in the future?

VIC SCHAEFER: Yeah, it wasn't long. It's not the first time, but it's the second time. I think neither time didn't last very long.

Again, was just trying to get the ball inside and maybe get on the offensive boards a little bit. Again, we didn't leave it in there too long. We were struggling with some other kids and felt like we needed to take a look at a different group of lineup. So that's what we did, so...

That's all there is to it.

Q. Do you believe this loss should impact at all the committee's view of you as a possibly No. 1 overall seed?

VIC SCHAEFER: Yeah, I just think you're talking about one quarter. We beat them at home. They beat us at their place. We lost another, in my mind, on the road again. How many do we have in top-10 wins? 10?

Q. (No microphone.)

VIC SCHAEFER: I don't think that's right. We had nine going into LSU.

Nonetheless, I think our body of work and our net, it speaks for itself. I think with what we've been able to do, again, I'm not in there, at this point for me it's just tell me what time the bus needs to load, where from, and I'll make sure my team's on it.

I certainly think we have established ourselves as one of the top two teams in the cup when it comes to seeding. I know Dawn will think they should be over us because they've beaten us twice. Again, if we played this week in San Antonio, next week in San Antonio, wherever, who knows how that would turn out. We know how it turned out today. It's one quarter. One quarter hurt us today.

We'll learn from that. I think, again, we've earned our way and we'll trust the committee to make that decision. Whatever they make, we'll roll with it.

Q. Jody Conradt traveled with you and the team. What does that mean to you and your staff and your players?

VIC SCHAEFER: Well, I have so much respect and admiration for her. Between her and Chris Plonsky and Kathy Harston, when I walk out of that tunnel to come out to the floor to play in this game and I see those three, for those of you that don't know, what those three have done for women's college basketball, you can't put a value to it. It is off the chart. They have given their life to women's college basketball.

Y'all want to talk about everybody, what they're doing now today, the coaches today, all that. Let me know when the coaches today have been in it 40 years, when their life has been nothing but giving to this game, making sure this game grows.

When I walk out of the tunnel, I see CP and Coach sitting there, there is a feeling that comes over me of pride, gratefulness, honor, to be entrusted with the program at the University of Texas.

Trust me, I would not have taken this job had I not known that they were good with it because it means that much to them and it means that much to me. They mean that much to me.

I've been around, done it a long time. I know exactly how much blood, sweat and tears those three have poured into this game. Not just at Texas, but the game itself.

In my mind, I owe it, my players owe it, we in women's college basketball owe it to people like them who have been lifers.

There's others. But you asked me about those three, and I'll answer it to those three. We owe it to give it our very best each and every day. We owe it to give our student-athletes the best because that's what they've done in their career. CP and Kathy still do it. They're not retired like Coach.

I love having Coach around. I love seeing her. I love talking to her. I love our visits. That was my vision when I took the job. I envisioned having coffee with her the morning after a game, going back over how it went, what she thought.

A lot of people, they're intimidated by being around or

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

taking over programs that have been coached by coaches like that. I'm not one of 'em. I'm very comfortable in who I am and what I'm doing.

Again, I wear the responsibility of continuing the tradition of the University of Texas and women's basketball. I don't take it lightly.

THE MODERATOR: Appreciate your time, Coach.

VIC SCHAEFER: Praise the Lord and hook 'em Horns.

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