

Southeastern Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Sunday, March 9, 2025

Greenville, South Carolina, USA

Bon Secours Wellness Arena

South Carolina Gamecocks

Coach Dawn Staley

Sania Feagin

Chloe Kitts

Postgame Press Conference

South Carolina 64, Texas 45

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by the SEC tournament champions South Carolina.

We'll start with questions for the student-athletes.

Q. The defense was really on point today, especially in the second quarter. How much did y'all concentrate on that? Was there something different than the other two times you played Texas?

CHLOE KITTS: We were all locked in. We all wanted to win. We all went out and gave it our best shot.

SANIA FEAGIN: We tried to match their intensity, go out there strong and hard.

Q. To have these kind of performances on both sides of the ball, what does this moment mean to you?

SANIA FEAGIN: It means a lot to me knowing I trust my process. Coach trusted me, as well. I went out there and did what I had to do.

Q. In the second quarter, the crowd got going. How does this environment compare to y'all's home gym?

CHLOE KITTS: I mean, it's amazing. It almost feels the same. All those fans came out and supported us.

SANIA FEAGIN: It's like a game away from home.

DAWN STALEY: I didn't think they were that loud



(smiling). SEC tournament, we want to keep this...

SANIA FEAGIN: They weren't loud enough, honestly.

Q. The way Chloe played this weekend, what did you see?

SANIA FEAGIN: I think Chloe is a dog. I mean, inside, outside, whatever you give her, you tell her to go, she's going to go and get that bucket.

Total props to her, MVP. Well-deserved.

CHLOE KITTS: Thanks.

SANIA FEAGIN: You're welcome.

Q. Sania, you've played a lot of basketball games with Bree Hall. Your take on her defensive performance?

SANIA FEAGIN: I think she did great. When she has an assignment, she studies it, she take her time to learn, what she need to do. She ask questions. She go out there and she do what she need to do.

THE MODERATOR: Ladies, thank you.

CHLOE KITTS: Thank you.

SANIA FEAGIN: Thank y'all.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions for Coach.

Q. The defense just seemed really locked in. Do you think that was the best defensive performance that y'all have had this year?

DAWN STALEY: Uhm... I think it was timely. I think it was what we needed today. I think we needed to play a lot better than the last time that we played them.

I do think we used our experience being here to our advantage. I know Feag has been here a lot, Chloe has been here a lot. Raven has been here a lot. Breezy has



been here a lot.

It's different. I know there are a lot of South Carolina fans in the building, but it's just different playing on this Sunday. If you haven't really experienced it, you need to experience it.

I know that come the next few years, Texas is going to be right back here. I'm not saying that they weren't prepared. It's just to win a national championship, you got to have been to a Final Four and experienced all the things that come with it. Then if you ever get a chance to go back, you just right some of the ship that needs to be righted. You get overall excited, so close to the goal, then something trips you up.

When you've gone through that process, it doesn't trip you up. I'm not saying that's what happened to Texas, y'all. I'm just giving you all my experience with being here and being at a Final Four.

Q. For Senior Night, I asked if you thought this was going to be the toughest SEC Championship. You said by far. Yet you guys won by 21, 18 and 19. Are you surprised that you came out on top by those wide margins? What does it say about your team?

DAWN STALEY: I mean, it didn't feel like that. It didn't. The stress levels were up for the three games. I mean, we're playing some of our best basketball. We didn't know how it would turn out.

I thought we put our habits out there on the floor for three games. It wasn't perfect basketball, but I think we were in it for longer stretches, the way that we needed to play in order for us to win. It produced some really quality wins against, like, stiff competition.

Q. You talked about the fact of using you guys' experience in this situation. When you think about Raven and Bree Hall, how much of it helps having them? They may not have the stats, but talk about their impact.

DAWN STALEY: We don't win this game without the contributions of Bree Hall and Raven Johnson. The defense, the attention to detail, and the execution of it, we don't.

We put those two in positions of basically quarterbacking our defense. If Breezy doesn't make it, Booker doesn't make her work hard, catches, then when she caught the ball, she doesn't play her the way we need her to play her or shade her the way we need her to shade her. If Raven wasn't in the position of having Booker see her and see

Breezy, we did a really good job at fronting the post players, then Raven was always around, executing to the highest level.

You have to have players that have experienced it. We came in here and we shot around, but we didn't go live. We just said, This is how we need to play.

Then you have someone like a Breezy Hall, we were going over some of their high-frequency sets at shootaround. It was a set that most teams run. I asked them if they wanted to go through it. They were like, No, give us the hard stuff, give us the hard sets.

She was locked into the game plan and wanted to know what she needed to do in order for her to help us win another championship.

Q. Sania was so consistent for you. When you think about her journey, what do you think of her consistency? How special is it to see a player have this kind of moment?

DAWN STALEY: It's kind of really cool to see someone go through their process. Probably the first three years of her college year, didn't quite look or feel or sound like what she was capable of.

I will say that I never let Feagin play less than their standard, less than her standard. That meant she sat a lot. That meant she played here and there, spotted here and there.

But this year it paid off. When she's locked in, she's communicative, she's skillful, she can stick to a game plan, she can defend. I mean, she's got great footwork. She's got a great touch. She is very efficient around the basket. That is her. You're seeing all of her skill set that we saw during the recruiting process that we didn't see on a consistent basis her first three years.

Q. You were a 2 seed in the most recent bracket. Do you feel like this weekend secures your status as a 1 seed? Do you think you should have a shot at the overall No. 1 seed?

DAWN STALEY: When you win this tournament, and you play the schedule that we played, I do think we're the No. 1 overall seed no matter what it ends up being. We, again, manufactured our schedule to put ourselves in this situation.

Again, I just hope the committee doesn't discount our entire résumé. There isn't anybody in the country that has played the schedule that we've played, that's won this, that had a



share of the regular season, then winning the tournament, having beaten the No. 1 team in the country. I think Oklahoma is 12, right? I don't know. They're a top team in the country. Vandy is a tournament team.

There's no one. There's no one. So I'm shocked that we weren't a No. 2 seed. I was very shocked. If beating us gives the people who beat us so much credit, you get so much credit for beating us, yet when we've had some of the toughest stretches in the country, and we came out of it unscathed, you can't discount that. You can't discredit that.

I'm going to speak out about it because I have to 'cause you got to hear the voice of the other side. If you don't think our body of work deserves it, then somebody needs to speak out on it. If it's not us, if it's not our conference, if it's not whoever, I'm going to go down fighting. I am going to go down fighting for what our team earned.

Q. Every opposing coach has been asked about the crowd, playing against you guys. Not to say the crowd isn't impactful. Do you think sometimes there's too much made of it?

DAWN STALEY: I'm going to be real. It is advantageous for us, okay? I will say this. I mean, everybody has an opportunity to buy a ticket. They do. If this was played, I don't know, in Mississippi, our fans are still coming. They're coming to wherever we are.

We built up an incredible fan base that travels. Our fans were in Paris last year when we opened the season. Our fans were in Vegas when we opened the season this year.

Wherever we are, they're going to travel. I think this location is great. If we're not here, another conference will be here, so...

I think we need to consider the fans, too. I mean, it's a great city. Like, it's a great city. There's so much to do. There's so much architecture. There's so many great restaurants. There's so many walking paths. There's so much to do.

I think about that, as well. I also think about there's a lot of people in the gym today. That's an indicator of where women's basketball is.

(Loss of power in interview room. End of press conference.)

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