

Southeastern Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Wednesday, March 4, 2026
Greenville, South Carolina, USA
Bon Secours Wellness Arena

Florida Gators

Coach Kelly Rae Finley

Me'Arah O'Neal

Liv McGill

Postgame Press Conference

Florida-86, Mississippi State-68

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Florida Coach Kelly Rae Finley and Me'Arah O'Neal and Liv McGill. We'll start with an opening statement from Coach.

KELLY RAE FINLEY: First of all, thank you guys for all being here today. We appreciate your support. There was a great crowd and great atmosphere for a 1:30 tip-off, first round of the SEC Tournament. Hats off to the SEC for making that happen.

Really proud of our team's effort. Wanted to finish a little bit better down the stretch right there, but that's not to take away start-to-finish focus and resiliency that's required to win games in the SEC. It's a really talented Mississippi State team that we knew was going to come out firing on all cylinders. We really set the tone with our defense, which then led to our offense. I think these two led the way for us.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for student-athletes.

Q. Liv, Me'Arah has been playing well during SEC competition and over the past seven, eight games been lighting it up from outside. What have you seen in her development from the start of the season to now that's enabling her to drain four three-pointers and set the family record for most points in an SEC tournament game?

LIV MCGILL: She has grown overall, and I've said it in the beginning, before we even started playing, that she's going to be a big key to our team, a big key to our success, and



she's shown that night in and night out. I'm very proud of her, and this is just the beginning. I'm glad to have her on my left side and have my back, because I know she's ride or die and always has my back no matter what.

Q. Me'Arah, for you, Coach talked about the defense in the early going. Given the fact that you are back in the paint on defense, how did you see things happening on the defensive end of the floor for the team, and how effective was it?

ME'ARAH O'NEAL: I mean, we've been working a lot at it, and we've gotten way better from the beginning of the season. So if we just keep going and keep putting our best effort, I think we can be the best defensive team in this tournament.

Q. Can you talk a little bit about your three-point shot and how you've developed it over the course of the season?

ME'ARAH O'NEAL: I mean, I think I've been saying this a lot. I think my three-pointer gets me going. I started out playing basketball shooting threes, so it's kind of neat. It's kind of -- I don't know the word -- common nature for me, so yeah.

Q. Liv, obviously you're excited about this win. You've got to turn the page and play Oklahoma tomorrow. You played them close during the regular season. What sort of adjustments, without giving away the game plan, do you think you guys need to make in order to come out on top tomorrow?

LIV MCGILL: I have no idea. I'm trying to enjoy this win right now, and then when we get back to the hotel, I'll flip the page and focus on Oklahoma.

Q. I think you have won two of your last three, getting a SEC Tournament win has got to feel pretty good just momentum-wise. Do you all feel like you have momentum and feel confident going into tomorrow's game?



LIV MCGILL: Yes, 100%.

ME'ARAH O'NEAL: Yeah, 110%.

Q. Liv, you played I think 35 minutes today, and a lot has been made about having to play on consecutive days. Does that enter your mind at all? How do you kind of pace yourself?

LIV MCGILL: I prepared for it in the offseason, and so for moments like this, I know my coach has my back and my teammates have my back. I train very hard, so when I step on the court, the game comes easy. Usually our practices are harder than games, so it's second nature to me.

I just push through. Our coach always tells us have the edge. And that's what I try to do. Whether I'm tired, whether I'm not tired, that's just always in the back of my mind.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

LIV MCGILL: Shout-out to my mom, too.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Coach.

Q. The same Oklahoma question to you. Obviously enjoying this win, but what do you need to do differently against Oklahoma to come up with a win tomorrow?

KELLY RAE FINLEY: Oklahoma is a high-powered scoring offensive team. I felt like we made some young errors late in the game. Experience would allow us to make those adjustments, but Raegan Beers is a force inside.

Obviously they've got high-powered scoring guards. Payton Verhulst and Sahara Williams bring a lot of experience to the floor and a lot of toughness, so we will absolutely have to match their toughness tomorrow.

Q. When you have Liv and Me'Arah playing the way they did today, you have to feel confident about what you can do on the offensive end. What does it take to sort of get both of them playing on the same page and playing at this level consistently?

KELLY RAE FINLEY: They're young, but I couldn't be more proud of them. Liv, 22 points, 10 assists, 7 rebounds. Me'Arah, really active on the defensive end of the floor, things that don't show up in a stat sheet.

But I would also throw in there Laila Reynolds brings a toughness our team that is unmatched. There's been

games -- I said to her at the end of the game, There's games where you get in foul trouble, and we might not have been able to go back to you.

Today that was not the case. She's a competitor. She's a consummate Gator and the consummate team player.

I thought our bench did an exceptionally good job today especially late in the second quarter. We had to go outside of our rotation due to foul trouble, and they excelled at holding that lead for us.

Like Liv said, it's a testament to how we train, what we do, how we prepare. They're the most productive sophomore duo in the country for a reason, and they're really just getting started. They're really dynamic in pick-and-roll offense. Their understanding and their IQ of the game and just how they prepare and their relationship together really sets them apart.

Q. Do you think your team at all is coming into this tournament this week in Greeneville with kind of the mindset of, hey, if we want to get into the NCAAs, we got to string a couple together here? Do they have that motivation?

KELLY RAE FINLEY: Absolutely, absolutely. I'll just go out and say it, I think we're an NCAA Tournament team. We don't beg and ask for much in our program. We earn everything that we get. That's how we go about our business.

We faltered early in the season. We had some nagging injuries on and off that really held us back in the nonconference, but that's not an excuse.

We play in the SEC. We compete for the University of Florida, and excellence and winning championships is the expectation, and we understand that. But if given an opportunity to be the last four in, I think we show why the SEC is the best conference in women's basketball right now.

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