

Southeastern Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 5, 2026
Greenville, South Carolina, USA
Bon Secours Wellness Arena

Ole Miss Rebels

Coach Yolett

McPhee-McCuin

Christeen Iwuala

Postgame Press Conference

Ole Miss 73, Auburn 57

THE MODERATOR: Ole Miss head Coach Yolett McPhee-McCuin along with Christeen Iwuala. Coach, you can offer a quick opening comment and then we'll take questions for Christeen.

YOLETT MCPHEE-MCCUIN: Again, grateful to be here in this tournament. We have really enjoyed coming to Greenville. Just really cool stuff. I feel like it grows, the city grows, every time we come.

Grateful that we were able to come out with no injuries tonight. Well, some scratches and stuff, but no injuries. Looking forward to our next opponent.

THE MODERATOR: Christeen tonight, 8 of 8 from the field. That's a career-best shooting night for her on her way to 18 points and nine rebounds for the San Antonio junior. Questions for Christeen.

Q. You held Auburn to only six points in the first quarter. Just curious, what was the momentum that you had from the jump and then obviously snapping a four-game losing streak is huge. What will that do heading into tomorrow momentum-wise?

CHRISTEEN IWUALA: Yeah, I feel like just the emphasis that we had, we kind of lost the dictate and disrupt portion of ourselves, and I think Coach Yo did a good job of reminding us who we are and establishing that from the jump.

I feel like it was good through the first half, but continuing



to keep that going throughout the second half.

THE MODERATOR: I was going to ask Coach this, but did you like how -- your minutes are really balanced. You look at that, nobody played more than, say, 24 minutes. That's going to pay off, I assume, going forward?

CHRISTEEN IWUALA: That feels really good, feeling as fatigued as usually throughout the in-season and everything. I feel like it's good that we've been loading our minutes like that.

Q. If I remember correctly, I think you had 18 points last time you faced Vanderbilt. What kind of worked for you? Obviously second time around is not always going to be the same, but what will be the keys for you going into that rematch?

CHRISTEEN IWUALA: Kind of the same thing we had. The mentality that we had to just continue to be our identity, dictating and disrupting throughout all four quarters. I feel like in the first half of Vandy it was a similar story where we did good in the first half, and then the second half we slipped a little bit and just continuing to refocus and continuing to just dictate and disrespect every possession.

THE MODERATOR: Christeen, thank you very much. Questions for Coach. You feel like it's a best-case scenario looking at how your minutes look on that box score?

YOLETT MCPHEE-MCCUIN: I was intentional. At the end I had to put them back in just because Auburn was playing so hard, and that's what we expect, right? I've seen crazy things happen, so I had to put them back in, and I didn't want to.

But nevertheless, yes, I've been in this. This is my eighth year in this tournament, and I've for the most part got out the first round, and I know what it feels like to advance and get to the semis too.

When you have the game under control, you have to rest



them and hope that the other group can hold the line so you don't have to put them back. If you do, you know, we played some zone so that we could just -- because Auburn started to just put their head down and drive, so we went ahead to our zone so that we can kind of manage the drives and put ourselves in the position where we're not playing someone for over 24 minutes.

Q. You mentioned that four-game losing streak coming into the SEC tournament. What was your mentality coming into this game with that losing streak and not being -- not falling victim to kind of maybe a dark horse or a team that was in the first round and you getting that first round bye?

YOLETT McPHEE-McCUIN: Who mentioned the four-game losing streak, because I hadn't thought about it. We lost -- we lost to Texas A&M. I don't even remember who we lost to. This is a new season. That's -- you know what I'm saying? That's my mindset. I could care less what happened yesterday. I'm on today. Today we won, and we went 1-0. You know?

Fans care about stuff like that. People that are outside care about stuff like that. I don't care about that. You know what I care about? This is our fifth 20-plus win season. This will be our fifth NCAA tournament in a row, and we have a chance to continue to go 1-0 and see what happens. That's what I care about. I hadn't even thought about it.

Q. Talk about the big, big edge you had on the boards. That had to be huge for you. 40 to 23 rebounding edge.

YOLETT McPHEE-McCUIN: Usually when we play a team like Auburn that is very phenomenal at driving the ball, we usually try to pack it in. This game, it wasn't about trying to, like, beat Auburn per se. It was about making sure our mentality is the way we needed to be, which is Ole Miss women's basketball. We dictate and disrupt.

So the first time we held them to 45 points, and I think we had, like, 52 rebounds, but tonight it wasn't about how much we beat them about by. It was about us being aggressive and having the mentality and setting a tone for my players.

It was more me saying, this is how we're going to play moving forward than, you know, trying to win the game per se, because we -- or make it look a certain type of way. You get what I'm saying? Like, at the end of the day we want to just go 1-0, and I liked how we came out, and everybody in the arena felt it, especially in that first half.

Q. Going off of what you said about it being a new season, I imagine that sort of that mentality is, okay, yes, you beat Vanderbilt once, but it's a new game sort of like that, I guess. It's not your first SEC tournament and it's not the first time it's a quick scout. What are the essentials that you need your team to have regardless of how Vandy plays tomorrow?

YOLETT McPHEE-McCUIN: Yeah, exactly. For us we have to really just be ourselves, you know. I asked the team before I came out here. I said, tell me about Vandy, and they were able to -- it wasn't that far back. It's not like we played them early in the season, you know. We played them when we were in Birmingham, when we were displaced for those 12 days, so that was recent.

They were able to tell me the scout, which was really good. Tonight I asked them to just watch the game so that they can be refreshed, but as far as we're concerned, we want to dictate and disrupt.

Cotie, I loved the type of game she had tonight. 13 points, 6 assists, that means people are making the shots when she passes it to them, and she's being intentional about creating for others.

Any time we get -- I like us to be in the 20s from assists, but we were at 16. I was really happy about that, because, you know, Cotie has established herself just like how Mikayla Blakes has, and so there's going to be a lot of attention on her. I just loved how she just trusts her teammates, and it was almost seamless.

She got hit in the eye pretty bad, but other than that, I didn't even see her break a sweat. She was really just so under control and intentional about everything she did. If she does that -- she'll come out with more fire, I'm sure, but if she does that, we'll be in good shape, because this whole time that we've been going through our games, our team has just been developing confidence and learning about themselves, and I think that's how you beat a team like Vanderbilt.

THE MODERATOR: Any other players you want to recognize from what you saw on the court?

YOLETT McPHEE-McCUIN: I mean, I was happy to see Lauren. She's from the State. 8 points, 4 rebounds. She came out and played really hard. I was just really pleased with our team.

It looks like we had a let-down in the third and fourth, but we're just building that stamina, because we hadn't been dictating and disrupting. You know, we hadn't been getting up after it, but I felt like we were today.

So the goal is to continue to build this, and if it works tomorrow and we get to play another game, we're going to continue to do it. If not, we're going to continue to do it so we prepare ourselves for when we get outside of the SEC for March Madness.

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