

Southeastern Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Friday, March 6, 2026

Greenville, South Carolina, USA

Bon Secours Wellness Arena

Ole Miss Rebels

Coach Yolett

McPhee-McCuin

Cotie McMahon

Latasha Lattimore

Postgame Press Conference

Ole Miss 89, Vanderbilt 78

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Coach Yo and student-athletes Cotie McMahon and Latasha Lattimore. We'll begin with a quick opening statement from Coach and take questions from the student-athletes. We'll then dismiss the athletes back to the locker room and take questions for Coach.

YOLETT MCPHEE-MCCUIN: Just really happy for our team. I thought we came out and executed the game plan from the jump. We -- my team knows that they're a good team. But sometimes they shock themselves. And we're going to use how -- the end of the game and the runs that they have, we'll use that to put ourselves -- to handle it better in the future if that happens.

So if there's some type of correction, it would be that. But I'm not gonna let anything take away from the fact that, you know, we just beat the No. 5 team in the country, and one of our starters are out. So that was a complete game from our team, and we set the tone from when the ball went up. Probably until the fourth quarter, where we kind of unravelled.

But super proud of these two and the rest of the team.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Obviously, you guys didn't necessarily end the season how you wanted to end it, per se, but you come into the SEC tournament, get a big win against



Vanderbilt. Talk about stepping up to the challenge and hearing some of the outside noise and really just kind of getting past that.

COTIE MCMAHON: I feel like the season is a lot of ups and downs, a lot of learning that you can do from wins and losses. But right now, our focus is what's in front of us. Obviously, we didn't end it how we wanted to. But like I said, it's about what's in front of us.

Then what we can learn from those losses, I feel like that will help us go or make a run that we need to in either this tournament or next.

LATASHA LATTIMORE: I would definitely say just blocking out the noise. Just not letting it get to us at all. And then like what Cotie said, learning from the losses. The one thing that we really did learn is we need to play defense as a team.

And then that's from the jump. Not second half. Not the third quarter. Like we need to come out and play defense as much as we can. If that's pressuring the ball from the first possession, we're going to do that.

The one thing that we learned from the four losses was as a team, play defense, and the rest will come to us.

Q. This question is for the both of you. As a team, how are you guys able to contain Mikayla Blakes? She went off in the fourth quarter. In the first half she was held to one point. As a team, how are you able to contain her?

COTIE MCMAHON: Dictating and disrupting.

LATASHA LATTIMORE: Amen.

THE MODERATOR: Ladies, you can be dismissed.

We'll take questions for Coach Yo.

Q. Coach, can you talk a little bit about the mindset coming into this game? You spoke on it and what you



said earlier. Going into the game, No. 5 seed, really big team, you're playing against SEC Player of the Year, what was the mindset? What were you telling your girls coming into the game?

YOLETT McPHEE-McCUIN: Honestly, people don't talk about it a lot, but we beat them early in the year. So my players already had confidence. And because they've seen -- we've seen it happen. That's first.

And then second, we completely put that in the back of our minds because we felt like they were playing for something, but so were we.

Right now, we're doing really well with the underdog mentality. Before we ended up playing those four games in eight days, we were on a roll. I feel like had that not happened, and the ice storm didn't happen, we would have been playing -- we would be hunted. That's how we -- we were going like this. And so now we had a lot of challenges and whatnot.

We stumbled as we learned through the way, and it put us back in the underdog mentality when people started talking about Vandy as if we didn't have a game to play.

So we just use that as a team to give us a little bit of edge. But we also have a lot of supreme confidence from the Auburn game, just how we came out. I think the team really loved how that felt, and we're just going to try to stay true to that for this tournament, of course, but also for the NCAA.

Q. Coach, this is more of a two-part question. The first part is do you think that the first time you played Vanderbilt, because it was at a neutral site in Birmingham, do you think it helped you prepare for the game, knowing it was at a neutral site? The second part is getting a win like this against Vanderbilt, how does it prepare you for the rest of the SEC tournament?

YOLETT McPHEE-McCUIN: Yeah, I thought the neutral site, it feels like we're in Birmingham right now, the whole setup and whatnot. I thought it was good for both teams to get that preview.

Again, people not giving us credit, we didn't even play them at home. We kind of did -- this game, I think a team like Vanderbilt, we shocked them so much. I think we were up, like, 20 at halftime the first time.

This time, it was kind of crazy. Like everyone was shocked. Even our team. And so, but yes, it did help us.

A win like this, it just gives this team confidence because as I've stated, Sira will be back for the NCAA Tournament. She's the head of our snake when it comes to the defensive pressure. I love the fact that Tianna and KP and the other people are stepping up and buying into what we want to do defensively.

I think we'll be a tough out wherever we go, whoever we play in March Madness.

Q. We just heard your players talking about dictating and disrupting, and that was the end of the answer. I was hoping you could elaborate a little more in terms of the messaging from the coaching staff. You're wearing the defense shirt. I know it starts with defense for you guys. It probably felt good for you to hear that as the answer.

YOLETT McPHEE-McCUIN: Dictate and disrupt is our defensive philosophy. Even when we recruit, it's a pattern. Everyone knows Ole Miss basketball, our defensive philosophy is dictate and disrupt.

Five, six years ago, Charlton Young, the associate head coach of Miami on the men's side, sat me -- he's a mentor of mine, and he sat me down and said: You have no defensive system. I'm going to go ahead and teach you what we had from Florida State.

He spent a summer with me. Ever since then, I've been doing that same defense. And then I said, okay, we gotta have a name to it. So it's dictate and disrupt. We want to dictate teams and get the shots that we want them to take, and then we want to disrupt them from anything that they want to do.

Our team really believes in that. But one of the things that's good when you lose, you don't really lose, you learn. Sometimes you need adversity to see where your character is, to step back, and to figure out how to be your best self.

When we had the injury with Sira and Jayla, we didn't have that early in the year. We had that at the most important time, which is right before we ended up coming to March. It was a really great challenge for myself and my staff to kind of figure out how to coach this team because it was a new team.

And then Jayla came back, and Sira now is warming up and practicing and stuff and looking great. But we're learning how to coach the team that we have. So I'm really proud of my staff, for me. I don't know if you know the story, but I went 0-16 in my second year so I know how to fail forward.

So I never look at a loss as it's the end of the world because I know what it feels like, and I have also -- I also know how to go from 0-16 to Sweet 16. So I'm always going to be looking at it half glass full because of my experiences and what I've been through.

Luckily, I have an administration that has supported me through that. And now we're back in the semifinals.

Q. Coach, this is now the fourth time in five seasons that you've advanced to SEC tournament semifinals. What is your message to the team? Honestly, I'm reminded of your press conference after the Tennessee game in the regular season where you challenged -- I'm an Ole Miss student. I'm a sophomore. You challenged the fan base and university to come out and support. What is your message to the team now that you've achieved this incredible feat four times in five years and you have a legitimate chance to make a run at the SEC championship and the NCAA Tournament as well?

YOLETT McPHEE-McCUIN: That's a great question. My message will be, we belong. Ole Miss is not blue blood, but we always find a way to be in the mix. I'm just not talking about us. I'm talking about football. I'm talking about golf. I'm talking about rifle. I'm talking about softball. I'm talking about track. We always find a way.

Even when people don't want us to be in the mix, I think our administration has just done a great job of finding coaches that believe in, buy in, lock in, and are all in in the mission. And what we do every single day, it's not a school that matches -- it's not a school -- it's not a place for everyone, but it's a place for people who roll up their sleeves and work.

So I'm just going to tell them in the morning that they belong because what I don't want is them to walk on that court tomorrow and feel like -- and have, like, what's that syndrome called? Imposter syndrome. No, we earned this. We played a good team. Let's not discredit this win we just had, okay?

Everybody was singing Vandy's praises before we played them because they earned it. They got Coach of the Year, Player of the Year, and Freshman of the Year. We beat them. We came in and earned this opportunity, and I want them to feel like they belong against whomever we play tomorrow.

Q. Coach, the start you guys had to the game, how important is that for your confidence as a team, not only for this game, but moving forward in the

tournament, where you could play Texas or Alabama and make it to the finals? How important is the start you had for the team's confidence?

YOLETT McPHEE-McCUIN: It's key. It's how we start. I remember our last loss, Texas A&M, they jumped on us. It was like 23-10 or something like that. Then we beat them every other quarter, but we couldn't recover.

So we know how important our start is, and we also thought about when we played Vandy the first time, we had a really good start. Moving forward, that's what I'm saying. Every game, whether it's a win or loss, we've been taking lessons throughout the whole thing.

The ultimate goal, I'd love to win the SEC championship. I believe it's harder to win an SEC championship than an NCAA championship when you look at the teams who we have to play night in and night out, right?

So I would love that, but I would also love for us to go to Phoenix and play in the Final Four. So whatever we can learn along the way, whether it's through a loss or win, we plan on doing that so that we can put our best foot forward at the NCAA Tournament.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you very much for your time.

YOLETT McPHEE-McCUIN: Thank you.

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