

Southeastern Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Saturday, March 13, 2021

Nashville, Tennessee, USA

LSU Tigers

Javonte Smart

Postgame Press Conference

LSU 78, Arkansas 71

THE MODERATOR: We have Javonte Smart here.

Q. Last minute the lead is slipping away. Talk about your drive to get to the bucket. Took it upon yourself to close it out.

JAVONTE SMART: Yeah, I just felt like I needed to lead the team to get this victory. Whatever I felt like I had to do, I needed to do in that particular time. I just wanted to get to the championship game tomorrow, play against 'Bama. I think we owe them, we need some respect. This is the way to get it, by winning games.

The last stretch of the game I think we all just wanted to win, just be ready for tomorrow.

Q. You're a Baton Rouge boy, been around this program for three years. What does it mean to be the point guard of this team, lead this team to an SEC championship for the first time in almost 30 years?

JAVONTE SMART: It means a lot. This is what I came to LSU for. This is what I came to do. I like winning. I love winning. I think just the winning culture. I'm honored to be a part of this.

We got many more games to go. This is one of the steps, winning this game. It was a big win for us to get under our belt. Bringing the ship back home would mean a lot to all of us. I think that's the biggest thing, just bringing it back home, showing them we really good.

Q. How important was it for you to have the ball in your hands the final minutes, trying to close that out at the end?

JAVONTE SMART: That's what point guards do. I think my team, my coaching staff put the ball in my hand for me to make plays for others. Just to carry us to the lead.



Before the game, coach always tells me, Lead us to the win, whatever that is, rebounding, assist, playing D, whatever I got to do to give us that victory, I'll do it.

With me having the ball in my hand, knocking down the free throws, that's a big step. I'm looking forward to tomorrow doing the same thing.

Q. I think coach always talks about y'all just wait and see, Gaines is explosive on offense. Today his defense and sticky hands really showed as well. Is that an underrated aspect of his game?

JAVONTE SMART: No, he's a play-maker on offense and defense. He's a point guard that block shots. Not too many point guards block shots. He guards the ball real well.

He's not a freshman no more. The shots he's taking you have to take. We trust him, we want him to knock them in. He's not a freshman no more, like I said. We believe in him. He stepped up big tonight.

Q. What worked well for you today in the defense to help slow down their offense in the second half?

JAVONTE SMART: We tried to throw a couple defenses at them, man, zone, our press. I think the man really struck. I think that was one of the best defensive halves we've played. We just got to control the boards and stuff.

But I think the man-to-man defense we played tonight was very good. I think everybody on the team bought into guarding somebody. I think that's a big step for us.

Q. The thing I noticed in these two games is they're letting you play a little bit. Physical out there. Is that something you guys are getting comfortable with doing, being more physical?

JAVONTE SMART: Yeah, some of the guys watched the games, the previous games, before we played. We saw how they was calling fouls, calling charges. Coach told us they going to let us play. We got to play through contact even, go up strong. They not going to give us anything.



We just got to go in there and earn it. That's what we've been doing, trying to earn every bucket we put up.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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