

Southeastern Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Friday, March 11, 2022

LSU Tigers

Tampa, Florida, USA

Amalie Arena

Coach Will Wade Brandon Murray Darius Days

Postgame Press Conference

LSU67-Arkansas 79

WILL WADE: I thought the end of the first half the game got away from us, and the second half we gave up 50 points. We got killed on the glass.

You know, we gave up 14 offensive rebounds on about 30 missed shots, so they got about half their -- half their shots back, which has been a problem for us most of the season.

Chris Lykes killed us in the second half. Toney hurt us in the first half. I thought Toney hit six threes all year coming into the year, and in SEC play he hit two tonight. He has really been a thorn in our side at.

At Arkansas he did the same thing.

Look, I mean, have to face the music. Arkansas is just better than us. Beat us three times this year. Just flat better than us.

Q. Darius, it seemed like y'all were kind of hanging with them. They went through a tough stretch in the first half, and then they kind of got away from you. In the beginning of the second half what did that -- what went into that in the beginning of the second half?

DARIUS DAYS: Basically they were just making shots, you know, getting second chance points. They was killing us on the offensive glass as well, and second chance points hurt us.

We just didn't execute.

Q. You guys obviously are a really good team. You've had a great year. What is it about Arkansas?



Obviously, those first two games could have gone either way, but what is it about Arkansas that you think makes it a tough match-up for you guys? Maybe Brandon and Darius next.

BRANDON MURRAY: They just played harder than us, honestly. It's not -- I don't think there's really a match-up difference. I don't think there's anything that's hard for us.

I think it's just a lot of the times we beat ourselves. So I think it's they just play a lot harder than us that time and they just got the best of us.

DARIUS DAYS: I'll piggyback off what B said. They play harder than us. Like I said before, we weren't executing. They were hitting tough shots down the stretch. We got it down to ten a couple times, and we just didn't overcome.

Q. I don't know how high Chris Lykes was on the scouting report. I'm sure it was below guys, like Notae and Williams and Toney, but what did you think of him, the little 5'7" guy? He went on that 6-0 run at the end of the half, and then I think Mwani hit a three to make a nine-point game. You are hanging in there, and then Lykes scores with seven straight points.

THE MODERATOR: Is that for both players?

Q. Whoever wants to take it.

THE MODERATOR: Let's go to Brandon.

Q. Brandon is good.

BRANDON MURRAY: I mean, we treat everybody the same way on the scouting report. We're not taking nobody lightly. We knew he could come out there and do what he had to do. Like I said, he was just hitting shots. It wasn't really nothing that we could sustain. It was just we was just doing our best. Just being a basketball player.

Q. You were in a similar situation where Arkansas was last year after you beat them in Nashville, and now you find yourself just sitting around waiting until the NCAA tournament selection show. What are you going to do

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between now and then to kind of galvanize and get ready for kind of the net set of postseason play?

DARIUS DAYS: A couple of guys want to go back and rest, so most of the guys want to take a day or two off and get back in the gym and we'll start practicing and getting ready for the NCAA tournament.

But like you said, they did the same thing last year. We're going to go on a run. We're more than likely going to be a five or six seed. We're excited. Coach is going to do the best of his ability to get us ready.

Q. I'll make this for Darius. You beat them on the boards really bad in Fayetteville. You had 22 offensive rebounds. Today they fought back and rebounded pretty well. Did you get a different sense of urgency from them? Why did you think there was a difference in the rebounding in Fayetteville and then today?

DARIUS DAYS: Like me and B said before, they were just playing harder than us. They wanted it more than us, obviously, so the difference on the glass. You know, the proof is in the pudding. It's not too much to say about that.

Q. Will, ya'll had been getting better offensive performance, but today Arkansas missed 13 shots in a row, but, yet, you only outscored them seven points in that stretch. Was that kind of a key to not separate a little bit?

WILL WADE: The key to the game was when Notae went out with two fouls in the first half and we couldn't stretch the lead like we needed to. That was the whole key to the game. When he is out, we have a chance.

Look, we can't play from behind by very much against Arkansas, because when you do that, you have to do what we did today, which was extend our defense.

When you extend their defense, the guards just drive right by you. You have to get your defense set with your heels on the three-point line and be able to keep it close where you can press and then get the defense set.

We had to extend out because we were down by so much, and then we just get driven. Just get driven, driven, driven. But we wouldn't have been down so much if we had executed better. We had some turnovers. We had three out of four possessions in that stretch where we turned the ball over.

We just did some things you can't do. You have to keep it within a working margin, and when it gets out of that working margin, it's hard for us to come back against them.

Q. Will, what happened on the technical? Did you feel like you earned that one, or maybe that was a quick whistle? How do you think that impacted the game?

WILL WADE: I asked him why there was 20 on the shot clock because there was 22 seconds left in the half. There was 20 on the shot clock. I found out afterwards it would go black if we got the rebound. It would be 20 if Arkansas had gotten the offensive rebound.

That's all I asked, why there was 20 seconds on the shot clock. I swear to God. That's all I did. I promise you. Now, whether you think that deserves a technical or not, that's for your interpretation.

Now, before that, eh, pretty good, but that last straw was, yes, I asked why there was 20 seconds on the shot clock. You can interpret that how you will.

Q. Maybe it was retroactive.

WILL WADE: May have been retroactive. May have been. Listen, I think Joe Lindsey is a hell of an official. He should be in the Final Four. He is the one who teed me up. I think he is a great official.

He is one of the top officials in this league. Probably work the championship game. I think he is a great, great official, and I would take him on my games any time, but it's the way it worked today.

Q. Y'all did a pretty good job on Jaylin Williams and also Umude in the first half, and I think Notae only had five points. Did you feel pretty comfortable at that point with holding those three down?

WILL WADE: I thought we should have been up at half. The last three or -- we didn't score for the last four minutes of the first half. We didn't make a basket. We didn't make a basket for the first four minutes of the second half.

We went, like, eight minutes without hitting a basket. We hit a couple of free-throws, but when our offense gets that stagnant, our defense can't hold that long.

Q. It was a 19-0 run.

WILL WADE: There you have it.

Q. Did you feel like there was any fatigue left over from playing yesterday? Any kind of hangover or anything like that?

WILL WADE: Not really. We had to play some guys some

major minutes, but I didn't sense that. I thought Arkansas was really fresh. I thought they were ready to go. They had six days off. I thought they were ready to go, but I didn't really sense that.

Q. Players obviously get excited, but the Toney dunk at the end, did that bother you? I think Eric might have been trying to say something to you about it.

WILL WADE: You can't let it bother you when they whip our ass three times. It is what it is. Look, we turned -- it is what it is. I don't let that stuff bother me.

Q. Lykes, you know, he has kind of been up and down. He has had games where he didn't do much, and he has had some games where he scored a lot. What did you expect from him, and just what did you think of his --

WILL WADE: He is a good player. I have known him since he was in high school. He visited us when I was at VCU, so I have known him a long, long time. When I was a coach at VCU.

His grandmother actually lives in Richmond, Virginia. I have followed him. I know he is a dynamic scorer. Very, very good player. He was on the scout. Look, he really hurt us.

Q. Will, Eric Musselman was asked about the technical foul, and he said he probably gets more than you, but did you feel -- he said it was only two free-throws, so do you feel it was a big factor in the run for Arkansas?

WILL WADE: Yeah, I thought it was a momentum play. Like I said, usually if I want to spur our team on, I intentionally -- like at Alabama. You were there at Alabama. They didn't even want to tee me up, and I ran out at half court and got in front of the guy to make sure I got my technical.

I wasn't trying to pick one up. I wasn't trying to pick that one up, so...

Q. Who gets more, you or Muss?

WILL WADE: I don't know. What do I have this year? Three or four? Four or five? Ask Bob. He probably has the stat.

Q. He got ejected against -- (Off microphone)

WILL WADE: Oh, well, that's two. (Laughing) You've got to take mine off. I got one. We were up about 30 on Louisiana Monroe, weren't we? I got one when we were

up 30 on Monroe. That's hard to do.

Q. (Off microphone)

WILL WADE: I can't even remember what it was. I was on the other end. I was right, though.

Q. I wonder your thoughts on this conference kind of talking to Darius about selection Sunday and how much --

WILL WADE: Listen, the league is tremendous. Hopefully after today A&M will get in. I think they should have been in before today, but what they've done to lose eight straight and come back and win, what, seven of eight here down the stretch. We played them twice, and we were very fortunate to beat them both times.

I think Arkansas split with them, if I'm not mistaken, and lost at A&M. Damn, Diarra had a shot on the basket at Arkansas. I believe that Arkansas game went into overtime. A&M is a tremendous team. They're tough out. They're playing their best basketball.

They get in, that would give us seven, right? We got six of us pretty solidly in. Look at the seedings. I mean, Kentucky, if they win the thing, they'll be a one seed. They're at worst a two.

Auburn is probably a two after today.

Tennessee is probably going to be a three.

Arkansas is probably going to be a four, right? We'll be a five or a six.

Alabama will be a five or a six.

It's not just that we're -- to tell you how good the league is. All the top six teams so to speak are all going to be in the top half of the bracket.

Not one of us is even on the bubble. We're all on the top half of the bracket, and then you got A&M who is really, really good.

I think Florida is very good.

You look at -- A&M made that run after today, but it took overtime to beat Florida, and I think Florida is very good.

I think -- we've got some really, really good teams in the league, and I think we're going to have three or four teams that make the Sweet 16.

I think we're built to advance out of these things, and I think our team is certainly capable and hopefully one of those that can do it.

But Arkansas, Auburn, Kentucky, Tennessee, they're all -- Alabama. I mean, Alabama is -- I know their résumé is all over the place, but look at their top-end wins are as good of wins as anybody has in the country.

I'm very hopeful A&M will get in. To get seven in out of 14, that's half your league that gets in, which is absolutely phenomenal.

Then you'll have another two or three in the NIT. You'll have nine or ten teams in postseason play, so A&M deserves to get in.

They deserve to get in. Not just because they beat Auburn today. They deserve to get in before today. I'm hopeful that they'll get in.

And the league is good. Everybody has good players. Everybody is a good coach, and the league is really, really tough. How about that?

Go SEC.

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