

# Southeastern Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Saturday, March 12, 2022

## Arkansas Razorbacks

Tampa, Florida, USA

Amalie Arena

**Eric Musselman**  
**Stanley Umude**

**Au'diese Toney**

Postgame Press Conference



Arkansas 64-Texas A&M 82

ERIC MUSSELMAN: Got totally outplayed, outreacted, loose balls. Texas A&M outplayed us, and deserved to win today.

**Q. This for both players, maybe Stanley can take it first. You guys have played so well, gosh, for about two months now. Even when you have lost, they've been really good -- you played pretty well.**

What do you think was the difference today? Do you just credit A&M, or what happened to you especially in the first half when you fell behind?

STANLEY UMUDE: We don't want to take anything away from them. They played good, but I think they're more together than us today, and they just played harder.

AU'DIESE TONEY: To piggyback on what Stanley was saying, it was just a tougher team, and we just got too relaxed, too comfortable. They just made us pay for it.

**Q. Guys, obviously, a disappointing result today, but tomorrow you are going to learn your destination for the NCAA tournament. Are there lessons to be learned from this game to carry into that, or is this one that you just flush and turn the page on and move on?**

THE MODERATOR: Is that for both players?

**Q. Maybe for Stanley.**

STANLEY UMUDE: Yeah, I mean, we got to get better from it. Obviously we've got to make sure whoever we play in the tournament, we can't come out like that because

we'll be going home early if we do so. I think we just got to make sure that we all got the right mindset going into our next game.

**Q. Again, obviously that was a disappointing game, but you both have played a lot of college basketball, and you're going to get to finally go to the NCAA tournament. You're going to find out tomorrow.**

How much does that help when you get over a tough loss because the next day you're going to get some real news, some exciting news, especially for a couple of older guys? Both players.

AU'DIESE TONEY: It feels exciting. I've never been to the tournament, so looking forward to being able to play in the tournament with my guys. It's a blessing.

STANLEY UMUDE: Yeah, same with me. I never have been to the tournament. It's always been something I have wanted to do in college basketball, but right now that loss hurts. Maybe when we see our name up there, I'll feel a little better.

**Q. You guys have been a comeback team during this long stretch, overcome a lot of deficits. Stanley, I think you hit three free-throws to pull in the five. You guys got within three, but it seemed like whenever you guys would put yourself in position to overtake them, they would come out and get six or seven point run.**

What did you think about how they were able to answer when you guys were coming back on them? For both guys.

STANLEY UMUDE: Like I said, I think they were just more together than us through the whole game. We didn't have a lead, I don't think, at all the whole game, so they just did a good job of managing their lead, and we couldn't get over that hump.

AU'DIESE TONEY: Just the little details that coach -- the little details that adds up a lot. We didn't do the little details, and they made us pay for it at the end on offense, and it was hard to come back from that when the team is



shooting well like Texas A&M was today.

**Q. I know you guys weren't here last year remember, but Arkansas got beat in the semis, tough loss, and then went on a great -- went to the Elite 8 for the first time since 1995.**

Is that something you guys can take and say, hey, you know, a lot of good teams are getting upset in the conference tournaments. That doesn't mean they can't have a good NCAA tournament. How do you all feel about that? Maybe Stanley and then Au'Diese can take over.

STANLEY UMUDE: You know, we came here to win the tournament, and we came up short. It's tough, but it is a blessing to know at least know that we have more games or at least one more guaranteed game. So we are just going to try to regroup and keep going from here.

AU'DIESE TONEY: It was heartbroken. We wanted it. Play another day. We came up short. Now we have to go back home and regroup and get our right because now it's survival. So you never know, we have to make this push in this tournament.

**Q. Coach, J.D. and Jaylin just combined for nine points today. I'm curious what you attribute some of their struggles to and if there was anything in particular you saw from A&M when they were defending them?**

ERIC MUSSELMAN: J.D., obviously, the foul trouble was problematic. It wasn't just offense. I can't remember J.D.'s defense like that since we've been together. So it was both sides of the basketball to be honest with you. It wasn't just -- it wasn't just offense.

**Q. Eric, you guys have played so well even in losses through the last 20, 21 games, whatever it's been. What do you think happened today? And was it maybe just time for you guys to have an off game maybe?**

ERIC MUSSELMAN: Yeah, I certainly think that that's why these things happen. But having said that, we didn't play very well at all. Not happy about it at all. Got a lot of things we got to work on and get better.

When you come to a tournament, you know, I've tried to talk to the players about, number one, understanding and respecting how hard it is to get to a championship in any of these conference tournaments. There can be no distractions whatsoever. So getting ready for this next tournament, your mind has got to be right. And if it's not, you're going to play one game and come home. Any team.

Today that was not what Arkansas has been over the two months. It was -- we didn't guard the three-point line early in the game. Technique-wise the way that we're supposed to. They went 8 of 15 from three. That's not a percentage that you can ever win with especially with our lack of three-point shooting because we know we're not a great three-point shooting team. We haven't been all season long. When we don't guard the three, this type of thing happens.

**Q. Coach, what did A&M do defensively that you think gave your offense fits today?**

ERIC MUSSELMAN: Well, one, we started the game off throwing the ball. That had nothing to do with their defense. We literally threw the ball four feet from a post-up play, but give A&M credit because we're not the only -- they just did it to Auburn yesterday, and they did it to Florida and had a very large lead on both teams. Give them credit. They're playing really well right now.

Our league is a bigger league. They're the outlier right now by playing four guards, and they're able to do that because 23 has got such great toughness and can guard, so credit them because, again, they beat the number one seed in the tournament yesterday, and they did the same thing to us and for most of the game against Florida.

You know, so they're playing really well. Like I said, they're an outlier in how they play. Our bigger line-up couldn't rebound their smaller line-up. We went small, and that didn't work. But, again, you can't turn the ball over 15 times and shoot the ball 3 of 18. The 3 of 18, quite frankly, is -- Auburn took 20 threes yesterday in the first half, so you got to get to the foul line a little bit against their defense, and 18 free-throws is not enough at all.

**Q. Coach, similar situation last year getting out of the semis, and I remember like you are now frustrated just with the loss. Is there anything you may have told this team last year that you used to tell this team this year as we get ready for the NCAA tournament?**

ERIC MUSSELMAN: No. Right now I'm worried about this game, the holes. We don't have anybody to prepare for right now. So the NCAA tournament, we'll worry about that tomorrow at 7:00 at night. I'll do our post-game reports and get film to guys individually. There will be a lot of it because we have to get better. That's not how we want to play.

So I'm not brushing this under and crumbling up the stat sheet and saying, well, tomorrow we get to see who we're playing against, and we'll get ready for the NCAA tournament tonight. No. We have to dissect this game.

And then like I said, when we know who our opponent is, we'll get ready to play them.

**Q. Eric, you guys cut it to three one time, cut it to five. It looked like maybe you guys were going to do what you have done in so many games and get control of it or get the lead anyway, but they answered. What do you think was the key to that? I guess how much of that impressed you that they were able to do that?**

ERIC MUSSELMAN: Some of it was self-inflicted, Bob. Stan had hit two threes, and he was one pass removed from a swing for another wide-open three. He was wide open, and we took an ill-advised shot. Then we went down and did not defend the way that we're capable of, so they made some -- they countered. Every time we punched, they countered. You have to give them an immense amount of credit, but we also have to look and see how we didn't guard like we're capable of and didn't share the ball like we should be capable of.

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