

# Southeastern Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Wednesday, March 8, 2023

## Ole Miss Rebels

Nashville, Tennessee, USA

Bridgestone Arena

## Coach Win Case Jaemyn Brakefield

## Robert Allen

Postgame Press Conference

Ole Miss 67, South Carolina 61

THE MODERATOR: We'll ask Coach Case for some general thoughts on the game, then take questions for the two student-athletes.

Coach Case.

WIN CASE: Very good basketball game. We knew that South Carolina was going to be ready to play, and they were. Like to give them a lot of credit. Very talented team that plays very, very hard.

But just so excited for our team. We always talk about happy locker rooms. It's been obviously a very, very tough season for us, losing a lot of close games. But I'd just like to take my hat off to my team and say, Hey, I'm very, very proud of you guys, I love you guys, and let's keep moving forward.

THE MODERATOR: Let's take questions for either of the student-athletes.

**Q. Teams have made runs at you, and sometimes you have been unable to answer. How big was that for you to see James' shot with 14 seconds left?**

JAEMYN BRAKEFIELD: For sure it's something we drew up in the huddle. James is somebody we trust with the ball in his hands. We knew he was going to make the play from the huddle.

He works on that. He's a hard worker. We put all our trust in him, tell him to shoot the ball and he did.

ROBERT ALLEN: I can say countless practices, seeing



James make that shot. Just trusting in your teammates, having each other back. It was a "we" game, and he came in for us.

**Q. What has this been like for both of you guys the last few weeks with Coach Davis stepping away, all the rumors about who the next coach is going to be? How difficult was it to stay as focused and resilient as you have been? What does it say about you that you have played hard down the stretch?**

ROBERT ALLEN: Just to touch on the difficult part. Not even this last few weeks, just this whole season for me, just coming back from my knee injury, pushing through that, having to learn how to walk and do things again.

I feel like that's a big thing. And just keeping my head straight. I feel like in these last few weeks I can just tip my hat at Coach Case, just keeping the outside noise outside.

Everybody who was in the locker room, who is a part of our program, is what we focus on, and that's the positive energy. That's just what it feel like these last few weeks.

JAEMYN BRAKEFIELD: For sure. I'll just say it just shows the leadership we have throughout our team, just everybody staying down, from the freshmen to the seniors.

Everybody is following the game plan and listening to Coach Case. We're following right behind him. We love him. We're right behind him.

**Q. Talk about playing loose, obviously tonight you looked about as loose as I've seen you play all season long. Talk about playing with house money.**

JAEMYN BRAKEFIELD: I'd just say we came in here with a clean slate. We knew it was going to be a new season. The past was the past. We're just trying to come here 0-0 and just take each game at its own, and really just come here.

We're going to focus on tomorrow starting now. Really just knowing we played them to the wire in January, we just know we're going to piggyback off how we played them,



watch the film, follow the game plan.

ROBERT ALLEN: Just what Jaemyn said, following the game plan. You talk about playing loose, I feel like we're a really good defensive team. What Coach Case tells us all the time is let our defense be our offense. We go in there, rebound, get into the break. I feel like that's what you guys have seen a lot of, letting our defense be our offense.

And also just trusting each other, making sure everybody in the program has trust, down to the athletic trainers, coaches, even the managers.

**Q. Can you talk about Amaree's performance tonight.**

JAEMYN BRAKEFIELD: He's such a hard worker. We see each and every day in practice. We put all trust in him. He didn't play that much last game, so I know he came in here with a chip on his shoulder.

We need him. We're right behind him. He's our point guard. We give him all the confidence. He shows it each and every day in practice, and it carries over to the game.

THE MODERATOR: We'll excuse the student-athletes and continue with questions for Coach Case.

WIN CASE: Love y'all.

I failed to mention one more thing. Like Robert Allen said, this team is like really, really close. Something happened during the course of the game that really just touched my heart. That is TJ Caldwell, freshman, really, really good player, very competitive, wanted to be out on the floor. He comes to me when James White was sitting on the bench with about two minutes to go in the game. He says, Coach, I want to win. We need to keep James in the game.

I was getting ready to put TJ in. He said, No, I want to keep him in the game. Coach, I think he can help us win.

It's like he saw something that nobody else saw. He gave of himself and said it's all about the team, not about me. I think that's one of the main reasons why we won that game.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Coach.

**Q. I think it's Murrell missed a three, then James got the big rebound. You called a timeout. Was that play for James?**

WIN CASE: Yes. We knew again that James White is always wanting us to run something for him. He's probably

one of our best one-on-one players on the team. We drew that up. We thought if he didn't make the shot, he was going to get fouled and be determined to try to basically lift us up that way.

**Q. I want to ask you about Amaree. How proud are you of him and his play today?**

WIN CASE: Very, very proud. Very proud. The last game that we played, he didn't play in the second half. He just seemed out of it. So we met a day or so ago and just talked about every single thing and going forward what he needs to do for this team.

We know that he can put the ball in the basket. Y'all saw that tonight. Earlier in the year, he was just a man amongst boys. We knew if he's locked in, he's going to have a performance like that, and he did.

**Q. When there were reports today connecting Chris Beard with the job at Ole Miss, what are your thoughts on that report?**

WIN CASE: Yeah, I just want to defer all questions about the coaching search to Keith, our athletic director, and our administration. I want to leave it at that.

**Q. You got Tennessee tomorrow. Have you talked to your guys already about preparing for that kind of environment? This is Nashville, a couple hours away from Knoxville.**

WIN CASE: The last word I left with the team before I came over here to the media was, Guys. They got real quiet. I said, Tennessee. They started screaming and yelling.

They definitely will be ready to play, it will be a very competitive game, and we're looking forward to it.

**Q. What do you remember from that matchup with Tennessee back in December? What have you seen from them the past couple of weeks?**

WIN CASE: Vescovi. I'm going to say it again, Vescovi. I will not repeat myself, but Vescovi.

We got to stop everybody else, but we got to stop him. He makes them go. He definitely makes them go.

I'll tell you this, they're really, really good defensively, really talented offensively. But I really, really think our guys are going to be excited about playing Tennessee tomorrow.

**Q. Talk about playing with the house money, playing**

**as the underdog. This is March Madness. Talk about the mentality.**

WIN CASE: I'll tell you this, this is why I love Ole Miss so much, they continue to encourage us. Those tough losses all during the course of the year, they kept patting us on the back and saying, Guys, that tide is going to turn. That tide is going to turn. When you get to that SEC Tournament, you guys are going to be ready to play. That's exactly what happened right now.

**Q. Don't let them get hot.**

WIN CASE: Don't let them get hot. First thing out of my mouth (smiling).

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much.

WIN CASE: Thank you, guys.

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