

Southeastern Conference Women's Basketball TipOff Media Days

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Birmingham, Alabama, USA

Ole Miss Rebels

Yolett McPhee-McCuin

Women's Media Day Press Conference

Q. How does one move from 0 & 16 to winning, and how many changes did you have to make not only with personnel on your team but around the team?

YOLETT McPHEE-McCUIN: Well, that's a great question. I said before, that year was definitely a character-building year for me personally about what my standards were going to be and how I wanted to be as a coach.

But I think any program that is having success is not doing it without winners and really talented people. I'm not just talking about players. I'm talking about staff. Then, obviously, administration, I think it's a group effort.

Ole Miss has really been intentional about making sure that we got whatever we need to be successful, and we got out and worked really hard and recruited and brought in some talent. That's how you win.

Q. I was hoping you could speak a little bit about Shakira Austin, not only losing her, obviously, but just what she brought to the WNBA this past year as well as also the gold medal she won with Team USA?

YOLETT McPHEE-McCUIN: I'm, obviously, a Shakira Austin fan. I thought that she had an incredible rookie campaign. I'm not surprised. I remember having conversations with a lot of GMs and head coaches in the W and just saying that I didn't think that they've seen our best basketball just because of the coverages that she got every night in the SEC.

Whereas in the W, they have three-second rules and a lot of high-level players.

So you were able to see her stretch her game and have a lot of one-on-one matchups. Defensively she's always been pretty strong. Honestly, I don't think that you have seen her best. I think she's going to continue to expand



her game under Coach Thibault and the Mystics and with the leadership that they have.

I think the best is yet to come. Everything that she's receiving is not a surprise to anyone that has been around and had a chance to watch her play.

I do think she's the fuel of the WNBA. I don't know when, but the W is in good hands with people like herself, Rhyne Howard and the other -- I think NaLyssa Smith and the other rookies that they had.

As far as our season is concerned and what she's done for the program, she's totally impacted us and brought notoriety along with the rest of the team and players that contributed last year. We're excited about moving forward and using that as a springboard to continue to reconstruct and build.

Q. I want to ask this question: I know last year we talked about the fact that you have this mindset of the standard is the standard.

YOLETT McPHEE-McCUIN: Yeah.

Q. When looking at the players that you have coming back and more specifically looking at the impact of a player like Madison Scott, can you talk a little bit about what her impact will be going into this season?

YOLETT McPHEE-McCUIN: Well, this is Madison's third year, and so we've talked about leadership immediately at the end of her sophomore campaign.

Maddie is anxious and ready to step into that role, but that role looks different, so it's kind of cool as a head coach to watch her navigate and figure it out.

Luckily for her, she has people like Myah Taylor, who is incredibly experienced, has Final Four experience, next to her. Angel Baker has two years of NCAA tournament experience before us and was Sixth Woman of the Year, and then her running mate, Snudda Collins, that has gone through the journey.

We have a good group that is around Maddie, and she doesn't have to feel like the weight is on her shoulders.



Our team is going to be completely diverse and versatile and just focus on playing advantage basketball. That's going to fit with how much development she's had in the offseason.

Q. What does it say about the progress of your program that a player as accomplished as Myah would make an unusual move from one rival to another? As you said, she's seen high highs with the Final Four and everything she accomplished there.

YOLETT McPHEE-McCUIN: Yeah, I think Myah was just looking for a fresh start. She had gone through a lot of change at Mississippi State. This was just an opportunity for her to kind of tell her own story.

I feel like her whole path before now coming to Ole Miss has been filled with a bunch of change and whatnot. So this is an opportunity for Myah to tell her story in the way that she would like to do it.

I think it's a testament of our program. She for three years has been able to watch us up close and personal. She lives 40 minutes away, and she was able to see the growth that we made every year and wanted to be a part of continuing in helping us do that while writing her own story.

Thank you.

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