

Southeastern Conference Women's Basketball TipOff Media Days

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Birmingham, Alabama, USA

LSU Tigers

Coach Kim Mulkey

Women's Media Day Press Conference



fair to say this could be the toughest women's basketball conference in the history of the sport this year?

KIM MULKEY: Well, the history of the sport or the history of the SEC, that's comparing apples to oranges. But adding Texas and Oklahoma, how good they are, is only making us better. It brings a lot more attention to our league, obviously.

THE MODERATOR: We welcome Kim Mulkey from LSU. We'll go straight to questions.

Q. Last year your transition offense was a big part of your team. Do you expect that to be a big part of your offense this season?

KIM MULKEY: I hope so. I think we are pretty stacked at the guard spot. We've got a lot of experience at the guard spot. We've brought in newcomers that are quick. You can only run if those posts get up and down the floor as well.

Yeah, we're going to push the ball. Nobody wants to come watch you walk the ball up the floor.

Q. You added Jersey Wolfenbarger. What has her role evolved into the team as?

KIM MULKEY: Jersey, I recruited Jersey out of high school when she was in Fort Smith in high school. I was very familiar with her game.

Obviously her size is a big part of my attraction to take her as a transfer. I think she had probably last week the best practice that she's had since she's been at LSU. She keeps practicing like that, her role will be you're going to be a part of the rotation.

She's been away from the game for a year. She didn't play at all last year. She's got to get back in the flow of understanding what we're trying to do offensively and defensively and relax and become comfortable instead of thinking too much.

But she's doing fine.

Q. With the addition of Oklahoma and Texas, not to mention everyone coming back within the league, is it

Q. We had your players in a minute ago. Can you say a word about the two young ladies you brought.

KIM MULKEY: Aneesah Morrow, she was a transfer last year. Had an unbelievable year. Look for her to be one of our leaders and captains this year.

She can take you off the dribble, shoot the three ball. She and Angel Reese were just dominant on the glass for us last year, and I expect her to be the same way.

Flau'jae, what more can people say about her? She's just a joy to coach. When you look at Flau'jae Johnson, the word 'joy' jumps out at you. She's happy, pleasant, plays hard. She brings attention to our team because of her basketball skills but also because of her rapping.

Those two young ladies, I think you guys voted 'em two of the top three, if I remember. I may be wrong. I don't pay much attention to that. But I don't know in the history of basketball if I've ever seen three Preseason MVPs. But that's an honor for both of them.

Q. What do you do to get better every summer?

KIM MULKEY: Team or me?

Q. As a coach.

KIM MULKEY: Well, you got to stay hungry. You got to stay in the know. You surround yourself with young people so that you can relate to this generation, but not shy away or go away from what you believe are the fundamentals of coaching collegiate athletics.



I'm probably one of the few that's been able to adapt and adjust that's my age. It's not difficult. It's very comfortable for me to be able to coach this generation of players with all the new things that are taking place in college athletics.

I enjoy it. As long as my health is good and I'm putting a product on the floor that's competitive, might be here a while. Might outlast some of y'all (smiling).

Q. We know Angel Reese, Caitlin Clark, how popular the game was with them at the top. There's all these other young stars. How healthy do you think the women's game is? How many other stars do you think are going to emerge?

KIM MULKEY: We certainly are proud of Angel Reese. She's one of us. She brought so much attention to not only LSU and winning the national championship but women's basketball. Good or bad, whether you like her, don't like her, whether you're an LSU fan or not, brought eyes to the television. Certainly Caitlin Clark did that for her team.

I think through the history of women's basketball, you have different decades that that happens. You have young players or players that people can relate to and bring new fans. Those young ladies brought new fans to the game both at the college level and I think at the pro level.

Someone else will evolve. When that will be, might be this year, may be five more years. It happens. That's just the evolution of sports.

Coaches do the same thing. There will be coaches that retire, the next generation of coaches people will relate to.

Q. You talked about having strong guards for transition play. Getting a transfer in Shayeann Day-Wilson, what is your expectations for her?

KIM MULKEY: For her to be a point guard only. Some of the forwards we have are interchangeable. They can play multiple positions on the perimeter. I think once she becomes comfortable in understanding everything that's required of her as a point guard, she will shine. She can shoot the three ball. She's quick as lightning. Her last year in college. She has collegiate experience.

We sure are excited she's on our team.

Q. Has Aalyah Del Rosario started practicing? Have any other injuries cropped up on y'all?

KIM MULKEY: Well, yes, Aalyah is back out on the floor practicing with contact now, which is good. Obviously having the cleaning up of the ankle set her back some as

far as conditioning is concerned. But she's still the same height. She hasn't shrunk any. I'll take that big height any day.

Injuries, yes. Sa'Myah Smith, we lost her early last year. She was in the starting five and almost averaged a double-double when she went out. She's back practicing every day.

You might have a groin here, sprained ankle here. That's every day in the pre-season because that's how hard we go.

Everybody's out there right now today. That doesn't mean tomorrow. It could change. But today everybody's out there fighting for playing time.

Q. You were talking about the popularity of the game. There's a spike in attention, historic ratings. Obviously with that comes an uglier side, more hate towards players publicly. That's something that Angel dealt with at LSU. Do you have any thoughts on the moment the league is at with how much popularity there is but also everything that's come with it?

KIM MULKEY: When you say 'league' you're talking about the SEC? WNBA?

Q. (No microphone.)

KIM MULKEY: Society just loves to sit behind those computers and anonymously write what they write. When you are in the spotlight as much as Angel is and was, any athlete is or was, everybody just sits down and decides what they want to write.

Whether it's the truth doesn't matter. Truth matters none anymore in this world. I don't have social media. I don't see that unless it's brought to my attention.

I deal with the truth. I deal with realness. I deal with trying to be a better basketball coach. Being a better basketball coach is not just teaching 'em X's and O's. It's helping them manage things that they have to deal with as student-athletes now.

Obviously I can't help them in that area, but I make sure that we have people on staff that can. I make sure that there are people within our program that can help them deal with all the things that come with being a popular or visible person.

Does that help you a little bit?

Q. You were in the Big 12. Have Oklahoma and Texas



coming onboard. What might they need to learn to be part of the SEC? Is there much variation and difference between those two leagues?

KIM MULKEY: Well, basketball is basketball. Vic was in the SEC, so it's not foreign to him. I don't know that Jenny has ever been in the SEC.

All they need to know is they have outstanding teams, and they're as good as anybody in the SEC and as good as anybody in the country.

We welcome 'em because it brings more popularity to the SEC, better games to the SEC. Honestly, me personally, leaving the Big 12, I thought I'd never have to go to Austin, Texas, or Norman, Oklahoma again, and I have to (smiling).

Q. There seems to be a strong consensus to stay with the 16 games. Are you of that same opinion, that 16 is best?

KIM MULKEY: Well, we've had that discussion it seems like forever every time we have our meetings in the summer or in May.

I kind of tune it out, quite honestly, 'cause Mike is the math wizard, so he can try to sell it to everybody because he's figured it all out.

At the end of the day, what I would love to have, and I don't think that you can ever have it because you have 16 teams or 15 opponents, we're playing people twice now. Some of us in the league are playing people twice. I'm not for that.

To answer your question, it's above my pay scale. I just do what the administrators decide. What I have found, honestly, it doesn't really matter what we think as women's basketball coaches. That decision's going to be made at another level.

We can tell 'em what we like. They're going to take it to the administrators at each school, and that decision is going to be made.

But yes, we've had that discussion. I can't even tell you what everybody thought. It's a tough league. It's a tough league.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, coach.

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