

Southeastern Conference Women's Basketball TipOff Media Days

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Mississippi State Bulldogs

Coach Sam Purcell

Women's Media Day Press Conference



my team last year who took down a really good Cal team in the first round, who, by the way, was ranked in the top 25 for eight weeks. We were never placed in the top 25 all year.

Again, it's credit to this league.

Now, when you look at some of the top-25 pre-season poll teams this year, you have five out of ten who are in the country from the SEC. Boy, I love it.

Now, with the amount of high school All-Americans, top transfers in the country, and the addition of new head coaches in the SEC with proven winning experience, you better have a serious drive to bring it every night and compete, or you will get embarrassed.

Our program understands the challenges with a new set of players, and we are excited about our opportunity.

The drive they have in the community and on the court and classroom is going to make for an exciting season. Why not us? Let's dance.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, coach. If you have a question...

Q. In your first year, seven new players. Last year, 11 new players. With the college landscape world, NIL, the transfer portal, how do you feel you've been able to succeed with having basically a new roster year in and year out?

SAM PURCELL: Yeah, great question.

First and foremost, it's simple. In our profession it's about relationships. No matter what the turnover may be, you have to connect to the players that you have. When you can connect, you can make special moments. That's what I'm most proud of going into my fourth year here at Mississippi State is those moments we were able to connect, but also at the same time make history.

Q. You had another international transfer this offseason. What can people expect to see from Favour

THE MODERATOR: We welcome to the stage Sam Purcell, head coach at Mississippi State.

SAM PURCELL: Thank you. First and foremost, thank you, everyone, for being here. It's an honor to be here again in my fourth year here at Mississippi State. I first want to acknowledge the new format this year with the men and women's basketball media on the same day. It's great to see some familiar faces and look forward to meeting some new media members here today.

With that being said, let's talk about this year's team and our team identity word for the year: drive. To understand the energy our program has right now for that word, let's understand where we've been before we talk about where we're going.

First and foremost, our Mississippi State women's basketball fans. 10 straight top-25 finishes in attendance, one of only 11 programs in the nation to be in the top 25 for 10 straight years. When you put on that uniform at Mississippi State, it means something.

We have a fan base who spends their hard-working money to watch us play, and we don't take that lightly. Our fans drive from all over to watch us play. We can't thank you enough.

Second, we are a proven program in this league. Three straight top-20 win seasons in three years. Three post-season tournaments. Multiple NCAA tournament wins. A top-10 recruiting class last year that finishes second best in program history.

That drive will not stop.

Third, is competition. I stand before you today in the best league in women's basketball. Last year we had a record 10 teams make the NCAA tournament. I'm very proud of



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this season?

SAM PURCELL: I call it the ooh-wee effect. The young lady is special. Talk about her journey. From Africa, all right? Went a unique path. Two years already, she's actually a college transfer. They have a program where they're allowed to attend college in Japan. We were able to have a young lady who lived in Africa, went to school and college in Japan, then now here in Starkville, Mississippi, who I can't wait for all the media and our fans to meet this young lady.

There's a joy about her when she walks in the room, a smile. Outside of her joy and a smile, there's an energy that our fan base, and most importantly, our opponents are going to learn quickly it's high motor, high energy. She is special. Her name is Favour, but most importantly she's a favor to me, and we're blessed to have her this year.

Q. I want to ask you about two of your transfers, Kharyssa Richardson and Saniyah King. What are you hoping the two of them bring to the program?

SAM PURCELL: I hope they bring a lot. I know they're going to bring a lot. First of all, let's talk about Saniyah King. Sophomore, dawg, okay? From Howard. Great coaching, with MEAC, Freshman of the Year. Now the best thing in life is opportunity. Boy, does she have an opportunity to dance in the SEC on the big stage.

She's going to do it. The reason I know she's going to do it is what she did in the weight room this summer. One of the first in the conditioning test, one of my strongest players. This year I have a board of directors from a leadership standpoint. Her entire team voted for her. When you start off like that, success is going to follow.

We're going to put a lot on her shoulders as the point guard and leader. She's embraced our relationship, how she needs to be an extension of me. I can't wait for that opportunity.

Kharyssa Richardson, this one's easy. A lot of people in college athletics, when a kid goes in the portal, you're pulling up film unless you played them. I played her. Her whole entire SEC career.

She obviously started off at Auburn, then went to Ole Miss. She comes from great coaching, great winning programs. The biggest thing for her, just like Saniyah, is opportunity. Her opportunity looks a little bit different from Saniyah, who was Freshman of the Year. Her opportunity, she had great players in front of her.

For me, she's going to have a large role. For those fans

who are well-knowledged in women's basketball, I give her a comparison of my Myisha Hines-Allen, who plays in the WNBA, an absolute dawg. We're thankful that she's a Mississippi State Bulldog.

Q. You've had a lot of roster turnover each year, but you've also had the continuity with Jerkaila Jordan. How much have you leaned on that experience and then again this year with players like Destinye and Chandler?

SAM PURCELL: I think that's a double-edged sword. I'm going to take my side because obviously I'm leading it, living it.

Right now I'm coaching, okay? You can have returned experience. You know what return experience sometimes does for you? You get blah, stagnant. You just think what happened last year is going to happen again.

I absolutely love the challenge that is ahead of me, getting an entire new roster that you know what, every day we show up in practice, it means something, right? We know we have to get better. We know we have to fail, but most importantly we know we have to get to know each other.

Those are the best teams that I've been fortunate to be part of because they have to have a dawg mentality. That's the group I have right now. They're dawgs.

We know our backs are against the wall. Especially, five out of the top-10 teams in the country are from the SEC. Nobody's talking about us. Nobody is considering us. They did it last year, do it again. When you do that, all you do is fuel fire for my team. Most importantly you give us a chip. That's the best thing a head coach can ask for.

Q. One of the challenges with a new roster is having that underdog mentality. You were picked to finish 10th in the SEC. What do you tell your girls?

SAM PURCELL: I tell them this right here: bring it. I love it, right? The best thing about life is reality. This is what people are saying, right?

If you all get to know my young women, boy do I have some beautiful stories this year. I've got a lot of transfers that, you know what, they had that one game that was special. Now you're going to have plenty of games. I've got young ladies that haven't danced on the big stage that are dying to compete in the toughest league in the country.

Most importantly, which I'm most excited about, is I have a group of young women that want to get to March. We share those stories. We're up front and honest on the front



end. Here are our weaknesses, but let's turn them into strengths.

Like I answered the other question, you couldn't ask for a better situation as a head coach because that's only making us stronger. We have to fail fast and learn quick. We're doing that.

When you have that kind of mentality, our focus is trying to go 1-0. Let's beat Davidson. If we go 1-0, who is the next opponent? When you do that, you can have a successful season.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for your time this morning.

SAM PURCELL: Thank you, everybody.

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