

Louisiana State University Basketball Media Conference

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Verge Ausberry

LSU Vice President and Director of Athletics

Wade Rousse

LSU President

Will Wade

LSU Men's Head Basketball Coach

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Thank you guys for being here. Looks like LSU men's basketball is back. Thank you for being here.

Before we get started, the format for today, LSU vice president and director of athletics Verge Ausberry will come up, make a few remarks at the podium, then he'll bring up LSU president Dr. Rousse. He'll make his remarks, and then Dr. Rousse will introduce our new basketball coach Will Wade.

At this point I'd like to bring up Verge Ausberry.

VERGE AUSBERRY: What a great day to be a Tiger. Good morning, and thank you all for joining us on this historic arena for yet another remarkable day in the history of LSU.

Thank you to Chairman Lee Mallett, board of supervisors, and others for taking the time out of your day today. Your continuous support of LSU athletics matters in so many ways, both big and small.

I want to especially thank President Rousse for your support in helping LSU bring Will Wade and his wife Lauren and daughter Caroline back to Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

President Rousse has been an incredible partner since I've been in this role, and we have been lockstep in every major decision. It makes the AD's job that much easier when there is alignment and support from the campus.

I do want to acknowledge Matt McMahon for his years at LSU. Matt was always a great ambassador for our department and a role model for our student-athletes. We



thank Matt, and we wish him and his family the very best.

There is only one coach we targeted, one coach who we spoke with, one coach who made sense at LSU, and we got him. I was fortunate to be at LSU when Will first arrived, and I witnessed firsthand what he meant to LSU basketball and to our community.

Yes, we won a lot, but it went so far beyond the victories. We helped galvanize the LSU community around men's basketball, and that had not happened for quite some time. He helped bring in new fans, new donors and new attention to LSU.

At LSU we just believe in winning. We believe in building an entire culture of winning. We believe that success feeds off success. On this special campus we think momentum builds with wins; our coaches feel it, our athletes feel it, and our fans feel it. Winning is a powerful medicine.

We have Kim Mulkey, we have Lane Kiffin, we have Jay Johnson, we have programs that are getting stronger all the time, and now we are bringing Will Wade home. What's that saying - strong hearts can't lose. That's what we have here across every building on campus, President Rousse.

I have no doubt that Coach Wade will once again have success in Baton Rouge. In this new era of college sports, he understands the ever changing dynamics of talent, recruitment and retainment, of players development and the game of basketball. It takes a big personality to coach in the SEC, and especially under the spotlight of LSU.

We want coaches who embrace the expectations and want them. Will is here for the challenge. It is now my honor and pleasure to introduce my partner and LSU's leader, President Rousse.

WADE ROUSSE: I want to start by dancing, but I'm going to save that because they tell me the media here so I'm not going to start off by dancing. But what an incredible day. What an incredible day to be a member, to be a member of this LSU family. Thank you all for being here. We've got students here, faculty here, alumni here, fans, supporters, and everyone who loves this great university. Again, we thank you.



Today is about energy. It's about belief. It is about what LSU can be when we align our ambition with the extraordinary strength of this amazing institution. Before I go any further, I want to thank our board of supervisors for their commitment to elevating every part of the LSU system, including our athletics programs.

I want to thank our chancellor of the flagship campus, Dr. Jim Dalton. He is in the trenches with me every day, working day and night, brainstorming as we navigate a new course for LSU. I want to thank our athletic director and vice president of athletics Verge Ausberry for his partnership and his steady hand throughout this process and every day as we work to rebuild and reorganize our athletic department in a way that will drive our incredible global brand to entirely new heights.

I want to offer a special thank you to board of supervisor chairman Lee Mallett for his support for LSU, our team, and for allowing this special moment to happen today. Thank you, my friend.

Let me also welcome Heath Schroyer. Heath and I worked side-by-side with one another at McNeese. He helped build momentum, raise expectation and strengthen an athletics department that ultimately helped to resurrect an entire regional university. Heath, I can tell you the scale here is much larger. The lights are a little brighter, but that means the rewards are even that much greater. Thank you, and we're grateful that he joined this team.

Now, so Coach Will Wade. I had the opportunity to really get to know Will and his family during the time we spent together at McNeese, his loyalty. I told myself I wasn't going to get emotional, Coach, so I'm going to hold it together. His loyalty, complete buy-in to the vision of strategically using athletics to rebuild a hurricane-damaged university was inspirational. His competitiveness, his intensity and his absolute refusal to think small was instrumental in any success we had and achieved at McNeese.

He believes in building programs that expect to win. He believes in developing young men to become productive citizens of society. He understands organizational structure and chain of command. He believes that culture matters every single day.

When people talk about the alignment in college athletics, I have seen firsthand and what that looks like when Will Wade is a part of it. The record speaks for itself. In his first go-around here at LSU, Coach Wade won 105 games, captured an SEC regular season championship, took the Tigers to multiple NCAA Tournaments. Then at McNeese,

he turned that program into an immediate winner, back-to-back Southland regular season and tournament championships, two straight NCAA Tournament appearances, and he was named Southland Conference Coach of the Year in both of those years.

To say it mildly, Coach Wade has built teams that win at every level.

But today is not just about celebrating the past. It is about embracing the future. We have been restructuring this amazing university to position ourselves so that our objectives are very clear. We are going to change the way we educate Louisiana. You may have heard me say, we aim to be both elite and accessible. Those two things are not mutually exclusive, and we are putting the structure in place to accomplish both of those objectives.

Make no mistake about it: Our athletic department drives the brand recognition that illuminates the remarkable research and educational opportunities present throughout the entire LSU system. The ignition point for the entire process is athletics. It drives the brand.

At LSU, we do not gather to celebrate mediocrity. We do not aim to simply be competitive. We aim to be elite. We want to win in this league. We want to hang banners in this building. We want to compete in March at its highest level, and yes, at LSU, we want to win National Championships.

That, family, is the standard. That is the expectation. And that is why we are here today.

Coach, welcome home. Welcome back to Baton Rouge. Welcome back to the PMAC. Welcome back to the flagship university of the great state of Louisiana. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome to the podium, my friend, your coach, our general, Coach Will Wade!

WILL WADE: Appreciate the warm welcome. I was joking with Kent this morning, they gave me the jersey with 26. I was seeing if I could get one that said 22/26 because I was 22, two interim coaches, full-time head coach and then 26, so I didn't know if they were going to put that on the jersey, but we'll just take 26 for now.

Hey, look, very excited to be here. Great to see so many familiar faces. Great to have our students here, a lot of our alums, family, friends, supporters.

Look, this is deeply personal for me to be back here and to celebrate with all you guys here today. I can't even express in words what Dr. Rouse and just the administration, everybody has meant to me, and I couldn't



be more thrilled to be back with my wife and my daughter. My daughter is a little taller now.

They've been the foundation through the highs and lows, Caroline and Lauren, that we've been through, that keep me smiling, keep me grounded, remind me of what matters in life.

These two have sacrificed a lot for us to be here today. They sacrificed a ton. I love you guys, and thank you guys so much for being here.

There's too many people to thank for making this happen. There's just a ton of folks involved to make this happen. I want to, first off, thank our governor, Jeff Landry. I want to thank our wonderful LSU board, many of whom are here today, and our great chairman Lee Mallett. I want to thank Dr. Rouse, who I've worked with before. We're going to work well together again, get that alignment. We've got Heath Schroyer here; same chain of command, as Doc likes to say, and certainly our wonderful athletic administration and everybody involved in the athletic administration.

Their belief in me and the belief in me that this is the right time to come home will never be forgotten, and make no mistake, this is home. I wasn't born in Louisiana, but Louisiana is home for me and my family.

We're coming back to make history. We're going to make history one way or the other. We're coming back, like Dr. Rouse said, to try to hang a banner, win a National Championship, or I'm going to be the first coach fired from the same school twice. But one way or another, we're going to make history. It's going to be a fun ride one way or the other, ain't no doubt about that.

But we're very, very excited to be back. Look, these last four years you're not getting the same coach you had four years ago. These last four years have humbled and changed me. You're getting a better coach, a better leader this time around. I've got the same urgency. I've got the same fight, same feisty guy that you've always known, but we're going to be better.

I want everybody to know with LSU basketball, our time is now with LSU basketball. I didn't come here to reflect and talk about the past and any of that stuff. I came here to win, and we're going to win immediately.

LSU and Louisiana deserves a winner, and that's what we're going to deliver and we're going to deliver that in short order. Listen, everybody has this notion like LSU basketball is not meant to be average, mediocre or pretty good. You can throw that stuff out. That's not who we are.

That's not who we are. This program is meant to be great. This program is meant to compete at the highest levels of college basketball night in and night out. As we say down here, it just means more.

That highly competitive winning program, I know what that program looks like. I've seen it. I lived it, and I know how to build it the right way. We're going to be rooted in aggression. We're going to be rooted in toughness. We're going to be rooted in discipline. We're going to recruit competitors that want to play that way. We're going to recruit competitors that understand what it means to put those three letters across your chest every day.

You won't find anybody that's more proud to wear that LSU and state of Louisiana than this guy right here, and we're going to find 15 players that are willing to lay it on the line for us every night.

Our first time here we had some top-10 offenses, we had some top 10 -- well, one top-10 defense. We're more offensive oriented. But we were a little bit all over the place. But now I know the formula and we're going to come back and we're going to have a top-10 offense and a top-10 defense at the same time, which will allow us to compete at the level that we want to compete at.

Defensively we're going to be disruptive. We're going to play aggressive defensively and be disruptive. Offensively we're going to be relentless, attacking the paint, attacking the rim, then we're going to have the details and discipline with our special teams.

We're going to build a winning program, and we're going to build this thing quick. This is not something that's going to take long. We're going to get in that portal when it opens next Monday, and we're going to put together a winner because everybody in here deserves a winner.

To all our students, to all our fans, I remember this building when it was rocking. That Tennessee game the year we won the SEC, I don't know if I've ever heard anything so loud in my life. The energy and the pride and how hard it is to play here when LSU basketball is right is unmatched anywhere in the country, and we're going to give you a team that you can be proud of and that we can pack the PMAC every night.

We're going to be a team that plays extremely hard, that competes on every possession. Our team is going to represent Louisiana the way it should be represented, with toughness, grit, and a lot of swagger because that's what we have down here. We don't do anything halfway in this state. We don't do anything halfway in this state. We're going to go all in and we're going to get this basketball

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program right where it needs to be.

Look, I know we've taken some -- I know people have been talking about us a little bit. I understand, I'm not for everybody and we understand also that LSU isn't for everybody. But one thing we both understand is I'm for LSU and LSU is for me, and make no mistake about that.

This isn't about me. I'm just the caretaker of the program. This is about LSU and building something special and something that lasts that's a sense of pride for our school, our state, our fans and all of our people. So we have a lot of work to do, but I promise you we're going to get this program back to the NCAA Tournament and back to the top of the SEC in short order, and I'm honored to be your coach and represent this state and this great school. It's the honor of a lifetime to be back. You never get second chances in life, but we get one here and we're going to make this better than the first time.

With that, I appreciate everybody. It's great to be home. For the first time of many times, boot up!

Q. Did you ever think this was possible, and what did you learn from that first go-around that you want to employ here this second time around?

WILL WADE: Did I think this was possible? I mean, I guess you never count anything out in life. But when we left here, we never thought we'd be back. No, I wouldn't say I thought it was possible.

Look, Kent would probably know, this is probably the first time in college basketball this has ever happened, but hey, we like to do a lot of firsts down here, so it's appropriate.

But look, the first time -- I have a familiarity with the SEC. The first year it took some getting used to. The SEC has gotten even better. We've done some studies on it the last couple days to make sure that we're prepared and understand what we need to compete.

But part of it when you're at a school like LSU, you're in Louisiana, a lot of it's getting to know the people, getting to know the overall structure, and that's where we're just way ahead. It took us probably 18 months to learn everything the first time, and now we're just going to -- we're hitting the ground running. Here's the keys to the Ferrari, drive it fast. We're going straight down the road.

We won't have the learning curve that we had that first time.

Q. Standing here today, how much is that based on the fact that you have trust in the two years you were

with Dr. Rousse and Heath?

WILL WADE: A lot of it. Look, we had incredible alignment. The way I look at this is what we had at McNeese, we did it on a regional scale. We can take that same formula with more resources and more and more support just because of the financial aspect of it all and we can take that formula that made McNeese a regional power and won a first-round NCAA Tournament game, and we can take that and move that to LSU and we can make us a national force.

I have deep belief in that, and that's the reason why I'm here. This isn't about nostalgia. This is about this was a great fit. This was the best university for me to coach at. I believe I'm the best coach for this university and men's basketball, and we're going to go test that theory, and we're going to prove ourselves right.

Q. Some fans have questioned LSU's commitment to men's basketball over the years, how much do they care about it. Where do you feel LSU's commitment is to this program, getting you a roster, this talk of a new facility, so forth?

WILL WADE: I mean, I think I wouldn't be standing here if we weren't committed. Like I said, we came back to win. We've got tremendous administration. We've got tremendous people. We're going to win, and we've got the resources that we need to compete in the SEC. At the end of the day, that's all we can ask. Then it's on me to get the job done. It's on me to make it happen.

But I'm very comfortable after our conversations with everybody that we've got the resources that we're going to need to compete in the SEC, and I'm excited to make it happen.

Q. Since you're talking resources, did you have a conversation with anyone within the administration about roster budget, what you would need, and what do you think it takes to be able to succeed and win championships roster/budget wise?

WILL WADE: Look, we've had some conversations. I'm not going to share that. But this is LSU; Verge, Heath, everybody, Dr. Rousse, everybody. Look, Coach, go build a roster that will help us compete. We've never put a number on it. We've put a roster that's going to help us win and help us compete, and whatever that number is -- look, the first year it is going to be a little bit higher. We're going to have to go get a bunch of new players, and the new players and the good players cost. They ain't cheap.

Look, the first year it will be high. But once you get them in

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and you can retain them and -- retaining guys is a lot easier than going to get them. So the first year, yeah, there may be some sticker shock. But we've got a good plan. There hasn't been a number put to it. It's not like this is what you're going to spend. It's spend until you feel like you have a good enough team to compete in the SEC. At the end of the day, that's what we're going to do. We're going to put together a roster that everybody in this arena and everybody who's watching and every person across this state will be very, very excited about and that can compete in the top part of the SEC.

Q. Will, you've won everywhere you've been. You've had a winning record every year. This is the only place it didn't end the way you wanted it to. Over the years --

WILL WADE: There will be some arguments on that right now.

Q. Have you thought about over the years maybe in the back of your mind, I'd love to just go back there and finish where I started, get it right? I know you live in the present all the time, but do you think about that?

WILL WADE: Yeah. I mean, look, you don't like to leave something -- I thought we were just getting rolling. Look, the last couple years here, we had some restrictions on us which made it a little bit tougher, but we were still winning. We were still winning. I'm not saying -- we rightfully had restrictions on us. I'm not saying we didn't.

But it made it tough to win, but we were still winning at a pretty good clip, and we were probably functioning at 60 percent of our program of how we needed to function. So there's always part -- we had a great recruiting class. We had a kid who was drafted in a one-and-done, signed with us. You always wonder what might have been, what could have been, and could we have really kicked it back up and kept it going.

But I look at it like this: I think we've got a fresh start now. We've got a new start. I think that we've got everything in place to win that maybe wouldn't have been in place had I stayed. So I was fortunate, two of the best years of my life were at McNeese, to make the impact on the community and we've got a lot of folks from southwest Louisiana, we've got our entire delegation from southwest Louisiana here today, our state senators and state reps and everybody. I wouldn't have been able to make that impact, and I think being able to do that has helped me grow and helped me be better. I'm excited to be back and finish what we started.

I do feel like there's some unfinished business here. I feel like we were just on the cusp of really breaking through,

and now we're going to start at a quicker point. It's not going to take us five years to get to that point. We're going to start at a much earlier point, and I feel like that it'll be a fun ride. Always is. We don't lack for action.

Q. Will, you mentioned you've spent the last several days reteaching yourself or relearning about how you want to win in this conference. I'm curious if there's maybe a couple big bullet points, a couple must-haves for you guys to be able to win in this conference going forward?

WILL WADE: Well, the first thing you've got to have is you've got to have good players. Look, it's the horse, it's not the jockey. So you've got to have the right players. We've got to get really good athletes. We understand when we're looking at transfer kids, we understand specifically what translates to the SEC from the portal and what translates at each position from the portal. So we know what we've got to go get, and we're going to go recruit those guys and get those guys.

But look, SEC is a tough neighborhood. There's no question about that. It's a tough neighborhood. But we're going to build a team that's ready to go into that tough neighborhood and you've got to have some toughness to you, got to have some grit, so that's what we're going to go look for in the portal and look for in recruiting.

Q. When did the process of leaving NC State and coming to LSU start? And is there any regrets on how that process of leaving to come here, any regrets on how that happened?

WILL WADE: You know, look, we have a familiarity with everybody. I worked with verge before. I worked with Dr. Rouse before. I've worked with Heath before. There wasn't some formal interview process. We all know each other. We've all known each other for a long time.

Really, what's today, Monday? It really pretty much kicked into gear on Wednesday of last week. That was pretty much when the first contact was made, and that was when the process started.

But because of everybody's familiarity with each other, it moved pretty quick.

Q. You talked a lot about when you were at McNeese about how you were kind of humbled and then you had the long bus rides and that. How much did you change as a coach, and did you find your love of basketball again? McNeese could be a Quad 1 next year; are you going to go play there?

WILL WADE: Bill must have planted you for that second question. Bill and I will discuss that. We'll discuss that.

But look, when you go back and you go from -- look, our players are treated tremendously here. We charter everywhere, we fly everywhere. You eat every meal like it's the last meal. It's great.

Then you go from there to eating the free breakfast at the hotel at McNeese, it's a big -- you're staying at the LaQuinta and making your own waffle with the state of Texas on it up there. It's a different deal for sure.

But look, I'll say this, and I've said this. I've actually talked to some other folks. There's a lot of coaches that can go from mid major to high major. There's a lot of good mid major coaches that can go up to high major. Very few coaches can go from high major back down to mid major and want to -- this is a good life. Once you get that good life, it's tough.

McNeese, look, we were resourced at the top of the league. We were great compared to some of other competitors.

But I think it puts everything in perspective for you. It makes you understand why you got into coaching. There's some positives to it, too. You get to spend a ton of time on the bus, you spend a lot more time around the players. You get to build a lot better relationships with the players. You're sitting in a commercial airports all over the country and in our non-conference. There's some positive to that, as well, but it was certainly a wonderful experience, a very, very rewarding experience. Look, there's no bigger McNeese basketball fan than this guy sitting up here right now.

I was thrilled that we've kept it going, and keep it moving, and I'll get back to you on the game.

Q. With the portal opening in a week, do you plan to have a staff in place before the portal opens? And if you would maybe walk us through your timeline of hiring a staff, evaluating the current roster, evaluating portal, if you would.

WILL WADE: Yeah, we're going to have -- look, staffs have gotten so big now. We're not going to have the biggest staff in the world. I don't want to have 100 people running around and walking on top of each other.

But we're going to have our shell recruiting staff in place here in the next -- hopefully by the first of next week I would think we'll have two to three assistants and we'll leave a couple spots open and work through that as we

move forward.

But we'll have two or three folks in here. We'll run a tight recruiting -- look, the recruiting -- I'm not a guy -- I've done this at other places. In college it's a little different than the NBA. I'm the head coach and the general manager. There's no -- you don't have to have all this other stuff. The decisions on the roster are ultimately going to come down to me. I'll get input from everybody else, but it's going to be me. That's my job as a head coach. They're not paying me all that money to have other people make decisions on things.

I think that I'm going to have a heavy hand in what we're doing and deciding who we take and what we do. But we'll have two or three assistants in here to help me, and then six weeks after that we'll pick up the rest of the guys. But we're not in any rush on that.

One thing verge talked about, look, everyone wants to be at LSU. My phone -- I had 182 text messages the other day just on staff stuff, people wanting to join the staff. Look, this is an unbelievable brand and a place that everybody wants to be. We'll have no shortage of putting together the right staff.

Q. The phrase "just different" has been thrown around a lot when it comes to LSU athletics, and obviously with your return. What is it about LSU, the city of Baton Rouge or the state of Louisiana that makes it different?

WILL WADE: I think the No. 1 thing is the people. We've got the best people in the world, in the state, at LSU. We have incredible people.

I think unless you're from down here or unless you've been down here, it's hard for other people to understand. It's hard for other people to grasp the culture and the folks down here. That's what draws you back every time. That's what draws you back every time. So I think we've got incredible people and incredible alignment at our university right now.

Q. The current roster, have you met with them, plan to meet with them?

WILL WADE: Yeah, I've met with -- I've had some one-on-one meetings with five or six of the guys. Look, we had a lot of seniors last year, so there's quite a few guys who can't come back. But I've met with five or six of the guys that are in town. We've spoken, and look, we want anybody at LSU that wants to be at LSU. If you want to be here, we want you here.

I've talked to all of them about Skylar Mays. We inherited him the first time we were here from Coach Jones, and Skylar turned out -- he was a freshman, going into his sophomore year. He turned out to be a tremendous, tremendous player for us, got drafted and played in the NBA. We want folks that, like I said, are excited about LSU.

We've had those conversations. Those conversations will continue. We're going to support the guys whatever they want to do. If they want to stay here at LSU we're going to support them and find a role for them, and if they want to go somewhere else, that's certainly -- we're going to support them in that, as well.

We have had those conversations. We've met -- I didn't really do a team meeting. We've met more one-on-one, in one-on-one settings over the weekend. We'll kind of continue those discussions and see where those fall.

Q. What do you think will be different this time around than the last time when you were here?

WILL WADE: Yeah, I think this time, like I said, I just have more familiarity this time with everything that's going on. There's not as much of a learning curve this time around. We should be able to hit the ground running and move a little bit quicker.

Q. Is there any regret in how you left NC State and what's your opinion on the rear exception of how you left being a little bit of a villain in college basketball?

WILL WADE: Well, I long ago quit worrying about my perception. That part doesn't bother me too much.

Here's what I'm going to say. I'd like to focus more on what's going on at LSU. NC State was great to me. I think some of the things have been mischaracterized on how I left, but I'm not going to get into -- I learned long ago I'm not going to get into a back and forth on all of that. The people who need to know, know. Look, everybody has to -- when there's a situation like this, everybody has to cover. Let's put it that way.

I'm at peace with how I left. I'm at peace with what we did. Look, they're pretty mad for a coach they didn't think was very good. That's the way it goes.

But look, I wish NC State nothing but the best. I've built some great relationships there. I had a very good relationship with Boo Corrigan, the AD, and I understand they've hired Justin Gainey, a former player, and I hope they do great and wish them nothing but success.

Q. How exciting is it that it's a fresh start? Your last day, you won a lot of games with some things swirling that were unresolved. Now that's all behind you; you're moving forward. How excited are you that it's a fresh start in that regard?

WILL WADE: Yeah, that's what I was referring to earlier. We were running the program our last three years ever since that came out, and like I said, in total -- they were right. We were running the program at about 60 percent. We were still going to the NCAA Tournament in a tough league and not operating at our full capacity. We didn't have our full capacity of assistants. There was a lot of stuff that we were not operating at full capacity those last three years and we were still going to the NCAA Tournament and competing at the top of the SEC.

But it would have been a very, very hard reset with the situation and kind of where we -- kind of where we were. So I think this gives us a -- there's definitely a break-off point, and now this gives us a new launching pad and a new starting point, and I think the runway is certainly more clear this time, and we're really, really excited about the opportunity that we have.

Q. Is any part of this whole equation for you, you feel like you'd like to do something for LSU, that you owe something to LSU from last time to now?

WILL WADE: I mean, I feel -- I've never -- it's a great question. Saved the best for last.

I've never -- yeah, there is a part of me that feels that way. I've never connected with a fan base and with people like I have with LSU and Louisiana. I feel like we left the book open a little bit. We left some chapters out there, and we left some chapters unfinished.

To have the opportunity to come back and finish that off and to bring pride and joy to people that I care about and people that mean a lot to me, yeah, I feel a heavy burden towards that. That's a big reason I came back.

Look, you can look at the records, and this is -- I'm going to say something that I've only told to my wife and some close personal friends because they've all asked the same question, are you thinking, what in the world are we doing.

But you can win a lot of places. You can win a lot of places, and we can win a lot of games a lot of places. We can take our program and move it a bunch of places, and we'll be able to win games.

But there's nothing like the meaning of winning with your friends and meaning when you feel like you're playing for a

bigger power, for lack of a better term, and you have more purpose to you. You have a bigger purpose.

A lot of my best friends are sitting in this room right now. A lot of my best friends are down here in Louisiana. I feel like we have a greater purpose with this program than anywhere I've ever been. At the end of the day, that's why I came back.

I came back to give back to LSU and to hopefully put some joy and to put some fun back into basketball where we're not just a stopgap between football and -- spring football and football and baseball, and to make sure we build a program that's excellent, just like everything else. Coach Johnson has got an excellent program. Coach Mulkey has got an excellent program. Coach Kiffin is going to have a great program. Coach Clark has won a National Championship. My daughter still watches every LSU gymnastics meet. Every single one of them she watches. Coach Torina is a good friend. Just to build a program that's worthy of the investment and worthy of all the folks here.

I'm excited to be back and excited to represent LSU and Louisiana again.

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