

American Athletic Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Monday, March 7, 2022

Fort Worth, Texas, USA

Dickies Arena

Memphis Tigers

Coach Katrina Merriweather

Jamirah Shutes

Tyler Frierson

Postgame Press Conference



Memphis - 59, East Carolina - 48

MODERATOR: Welcome. We have Memphis Coach Katrina Merriweather, Senior Jamirah Shutes and Senior Tyler Frierson. We're going to go straight to our coach opening statement, and for those of you on Zoom, if you want to raise your hand, we'll call upon you here once we get past the opening statement.

COACH KATRINA MERRIWEATHER: I want to start with just being so incredibly proud of this group of young women and how hard they fought today. East Carolina's a very tough team to play, especially three times and then twice in one week, and I felt like they showed up. They were very competitive. We fought for every rebound, we defended, and those are the things that we've been emphasizing in the past week and it was really great to see that turn out for a victory for them.

Q. I was just kind of curious, the first time you played them, East Carolina was able to force you guys into a bunch of turnovers. But really, the past two times, it was much better just being able to handle that press and you guys seemed to be able to attach off the dribble wall today. What kind of adjustments did you make that you found were successful?

JAMIRAH SHUTES: In practice, we really like banged on taking care of the ball, staying composed and just trusting ourselves and our teammates.

TYLER FRIERSON: Yeah, I agree. I think I was practicing a lot going through like in the beginning of practice, middle of practice and end of practice, when we were tired and we had good, fresh legs and stuff. I think that helped a lot,

too.

COACH KATRINA MERRIWEATHER: They always get a ton of credit from me because no matter what plan we put together, if they don't buy into it, if they don't believe that it's going to work, then it won't work no matter how good it is. So we were able to handle this pressure much better because they believed in each other and they believed in the plan.

Q. How were you able to slow down Taniyah Thompson? She's one of the better scorers in the conference and you guys did a good job against her tonight. What was the key to do that?

COACH KATRINA MERRIWEATHER: Well, I'll start with Emani Jefferson. She did a phenomenal job defending her. In our opinion, Emani's the best thrown ball defender in the league and any time there's an assignment, she gets it, including the responsibility to score for us offensively, great presses and do a whole lot of other things. But past that, we talk about guarding her with our entire team, being in the gap, communicating, calling out screams and obviously just being really, really right there because she's a very, very talented player.

Co: sorry, I just couldn't hear her

Q. (No microphone.)

COACH KATRINA MERRIWEATHER: First feel all, when we get into March, you talking about how seedings don't matter. You work really hard during conference to get wherever you are, but everyone is 0-0 at that point. And we didn't look at this game like a 17 game or any of those numbers, so we knew that they were going to keep fighting. We knew that they were going to keep pushing the same way we would have had that been reversed. So we were just about being composed and, again, trying to slow down a little bit and seeing the floor a lot better and not allowing them to speed us up. So that 11-point lead was necessary because we knew that they were going to surge back a few times.

Q. Jamirah, if you would, 16 points, 7-14 shooting,

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what was the difference that made you the leading scorer in the game today?

JAMIRAH SHUTES: I just had to do my part, had to do my job. I had to come out ready to go full force and my coaches trusted me today, so I'm thankful.

Q. Tyler, same question for you. I was looking at the stat sheet, 9 points, 10 rebounds, five blocks and 22 minutes, pretty efficient. What was working for you to today on both ends?

TYLER FRIERSON: Just doing my part. I take pride in rebounding a lot, so me just going for the ball no matter where I am. If I do my job, my team wins, so I think I did that pretty good tonight at moments.

MODERATOR: Any other questions from the zoom side? Thank you all very much.

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