

# American Athletic Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Tuesday, March 8, 2022

Fort Worth, Texas, USA

Dickies Arena

## Memphis Tigers Katrina Merriweather Jamirah Shutes

Postgame Press Conference

South Florida 63, Memphis 53

**Q. Coach Fernandez went with a bit more in the first half. It was a deeper rotation the second half. He kind of stuck with the veteran group the, savvy group kind of. What did you see in that transition from, you know, the first half to the second half?**

KATRINA MERRIWEATHER: Well again, I think he's a really good coach. I think that he used that first half to kind of hold us still a little bit, and we were rotating our same kids in. So he brought in his first five, top 6 or 7 rested. And so they really got after it in the second half. And I do think the fatigue played a little bit of a factor in the pace of the game and the way we were able to keep up as the game went on.

**Q. Well, the third quarter was nerve wracking and the fourth quarter started off pretty well and the last few minutes they got some big shots from the perimeter especially. What was your team thinking on the defensive side, and what do you think was the big hit there at that point?**

KATRINA MERRIWEATHER: Again, I think we had a couple of turnovers and I think that played a factor in them getting some easy buckets. Like I said before, when you have a good team with good players and that ball starts to go in the basket a little bit and their confidence starts to grow, it becomes a little bit tougher to defend them. And to me that's about the extent of it. I do feel we did a good job over the course of the game following the plan, the way we guarded all the screens and that sort of thing.

You know, they're good. They're good. And I think that we played very well and I think that we're a good team also.



And so that's why it was able to be a lot of fun for three quarters.

**Q. Coach, I'll ask you if you reflect on your first year here in Memphis, and also the three new coaches in this conference all won their tournament, at least one game in this tournament so far. What does that say about the future of your program and in then the bigger picture of the conference?**

KATRINA MERRIWEATHER: I think everyone is doing their best to take steps forward and a lot of the time you can look back and you've got players that are trying to fight for some respect. And I think that was the most important factor for our team and we were picked 11th and this team was very disappointed for that. All-conference awards rolled out, and we have nobody on that team where Emani Jefferson is one of the best defenders in the league, as well as Tyler Frierson having a presence, and right here to my left is undoubtedly one of the top 15 players in the league.

So I think that was part of our motivation, but we try to keep it as pure as possible and just wake up every day and work as hard as we can. And I would imagine that's the same thing that the other coaches do that took over programs, we're just trying to wake up every day trying to be good people, working really hard and making some kind of stamp and impact in these young people's lives.

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