

# American Athletic Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Tuesday, March 8, 2022

Fort Worth, Texas, USA

Dickies Arena

**Houston Cougars**

**Ronald Hughey**

**Tiara Young**

**Laila Blair**

Postgame Press Conference

Houston 65, Tulane 57

RONALD HUGHEY: First of all, hats off to Lisa Stockton and the Tulane team. Really good team. Had a really good run. And don't want to take anything away from them. But we came in with the same game plan that we had when we played them at home and lost a close game I think by two or three points and then the same thing at their place when we lost by three or four points.

The difference today was we had a little bit more sense of urgency and I think you all saw that at the start of the game, a little bit more mentality, a little bit more will. A little bit more heart. And we wasn't going to be denied, especially these two up here setting the tone.

Again, hats off to our team, our bench, our energy, our culture. I think everybody saw that on display tonight just because I mean, it was energy and fight and you could never see that we were down or looking to let it get away this time. We just stayed in the fight and continued to keep going.

**Q. Coach, congratulations on advancing. You got off to obviously a great start, jumped on them pretty early. What does this say about your team and specifically the performance of the two players to your left that you were able to kind of hold off their charges down the stretch here when they threatened to come back here?**

RONALD HUGHEY: Yeah. The start it was tremendous for us. I think it was pent-up energy because again, even when we got up just for breakfast they were already talking about the game and anxious to get to it. So we talked



about just staying in our scouts and doing everything necessary to be successful. Don't worry about winning the game, just take care of the things that take care of winning. I think that's why you saw that focused start that we come out with.

Then down the stretch we wanted to make sure we were sure with the basketball. When they put different lineups we wanted to be able to counter that. When they took Heide out and put a guard in there. Tatyana Hill can guard anybody on the floor, so we wasn't afraid of that matchup. We just wanted to make sure we stayed correct on all the ball screen stuff whether we were switching, sliding through, any kind of ball screen call. And we wanted to finish, finish strong and be aggressive down the stretch and not back off at all.

**Q. I guess for the student-athletes, as Coach alluded to, this is the team that you faced twice and didn't beat previously. What was it about today that allowed you to carry this one over the finish line?**

TIARA YOUNG: I would say our mindset. Like he said, we came at breakfast talking about the game, ready for the game and our mindset was that we wasn't ready to go home.

LAILA BLAIR: Just what Tiara said, we came in here with one goal in mind and we're taking that one game at a time. We know that we're a tough team, that we can come out and play our best any time we want and it's just us executing it every time. So it was the mindset for sure

**Q. Just speak to the execution. It just seemed like a different focus that you guys kind of know with everything on the line that you have going to finish that game out and going to the next game?**

RONALD HUGHEY: I know, Da'Yon, you were happy to see the zone. Da'Yon has been great for us all year and he was like, Coach Hughey, if we can get into more zones, man, I think it could help you. So I know he was excited about that.

But, yeah, the mindset like Tiara and Laila mentioned is,



you know, again they have goals. This team has goals. And we know the season didn't go exactly the way we wanted it to but again, it's not over. It's not over by a long shot. And they're carrying that mentality on their sleeves. At every timeout I didn't have to repeat myself on stuff. I didn't have to get people up and say, let's go, let's go, and things like that. They were saying that themselves and you saw the look in their eyes.

So again, that culture that we're building, we're picking each other up and having confidence and taking care of each other and those things. It's just starting to exude through everybody's skin. So again at the end of the day, I think that culture of what we're building is continuing to grow and you can be able to see it?

**Q. Coach, this team started out with one thought on the mind as far as unfinished business. Today was a step in that direction. What was talked about after the conference regular season coming into the tournament and finishing unfinished business?**

RONALD HUGHEY: We still have that mindset of unfinished business, but we adopted our old one as well of everything matters. Because again, I think our last four games we were 3-1. We usually have a great February. And I think we lost two games this February when last year we went undefeated in February. So we wanted to come in this mindset of just everything matters. Every single thing matters. Every sprint, every clap, every diving on the floor for every ball, every rebound, just every single thing matters. And I think that mindset carried over with each and every one of them, and that unfinished business is still in the back of their minds and we're still riding with that also.

But I think when you talk about today, it was everything matters because again, this team outrebounded us twice, especially on the offensive end and I mean, like Moon Ursin I think had 8 offensive rebounds the last game and we held her to zero this game. That shows that everything matters.

**Q. Coach, before we let you go just look ahead to tomorrow's game against South Florida, a team you faced a week ago and one that you'd probably like to I don't know maybe forget or use as certainly motivation to try to get this next one?**

RONALD HUGHEY: Yes. They're all motivation for us. That's the thing that I love. And I'll let these two speak on it because, again, they know how I feel already about the South Florida matchup. So I'll let both of them be able to talk about it as well.

LAILA BLAIR: Man, I really can't even put it into words. But what I can say, you're going to see it tomorrow when we step on the floor. It's business. It's business. Like I said, win-it-all mentality and we came here with one goal in mind and the job is not finished.

TIARA YOUNG: Yeah. Basically, picking up off of what she said, we're just taking it one game at a time. We still have the same mindset, focus, locked in. And we're just going to let it be and see what tomorrow brings.

RONALD HUGHEY: Thank you. Go Cougs.

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