

American Athletic Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Tuesday, March 7, 2023

Fort Worth, Texas, USA

Dickies Arena

Houston Cougars
Ronald Hughey

Tiara Young

Tatyana Hill

Postgame Press Conference

Houston 52, SMU 33

RONALD HUGHEY: First of all, I want to say hats off to Toyelle, the head coach over at SMU. She always has her team prepared to play. They're dealing with some injuries right now and some things like that, but I know they'll be back up at the top of the AAC probably next year or years to come. She does a great job and a fabulous person.

Today we just had a tremendous focus of coming out and seizing the opportunity that was in front of us. I got so many calls about our team being the most resilient team in the country just because nobody has played more close games than we have. Nobody has played more overtime games than we have. So adversity is nothing to us. So we wanted to be able to come out and take care of business and have everything in our hands.

I can't say enough about when we get in those low moments we've got a Tiara Young that can be able to go and get a basket and make a play. Tatyana Hill for what she did on the boards and just staying consistent with guarding their post players. You talk about Emery and Savannah and all those post players that they have that can score the basketball, she does a tremendous job down there. Just hats off to these two and our team for just persevering and doing what we need to do to take the next step.

Q. Ronald, SMU had 24 turnovers and eight assists, obviously a very impressive defensive effort from y'all. How did you go about doing that, and I guess what was kind of the game plan coming in defensively?

RONALD HUGHEY: The game plan was to be ourselves.



We wanted to have a disciplined commitment to what we do. We wanted to compete on every single possession.

We're always going to be in our particular, in our press, and we're always going to be up the line, on the line, in the half court. So we want to make it hard for every single pass to go through.

The thing that these ladies did was buy into that from day one, and that's why we're able to be successful in doing what we do.

I think we're No. 1 or No. 2 in the country right now, turnovers, forced margin, all those things. You have to deal with that the whole time. We want to put you in short shot clock when you get the ball over half court after you get an opportunity to against the press if you do beat it. And then we don't want you to be able to pass it either way and go into your ball screen stuff just try to create some offense for yourself. And I think we did a great job of following the game plan to be able to do that.

Q. Tiara and Tiara, did you know before the game that South Florida had lost, and if so, did that change y'all's mindset for SMU?

TIARA YOUNG: I would say our mindset from the moment coming to the trip, we were locked in and ready for the tournament. We always say "unfinished business." So we feel like we had unfinished business based off last year. So we wanted to just come in and do what we do and focus on us. So I feel like we was pretty locked in.

TATYANA HILL: Yeah, I think we was locked in for the most part. We came here just focusing on that one game versus SMU first and let the other stuff come to us.

Q. Ron, you mentioned in terms of the adversity that you guys have faced this year with a lot of close games. One, do you feel like that has prepared you for it's one loss, go home-type deal right now? And in terms of you getting a lot of breaks go your way. With USF losing, do you let your girls think about what the possibilities could be if you win two more games?

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RONALD HUGHEY: Yeah, you know, the first part of your question, yeah, the adversity we've had during the year has always prepared us for where we are right now. We did a lot of reading with our power of a positive team to get through all those moments, and that thing helped us a lot. It helped us embrace the opportunity, and when we didn't go out there and play as well or we played well and lost those last-moment games, it still helped us.

Regardless of what happened at South Florida, we were ready to play and being able to take care of our own business.

Yeah, it definitely prepared us, and we're definitely looking forward to having an opportunity to take care of our own business. That's the thing that we wanted all year. Because the AAC is a tough league. It's just a really, really tough league and a lot of people don't give us enough credit.

But again, you notice when we play out of conference we beat a lot of other teams because we have a really tough league.

Regardless, like Wichita State, a team that I think was picked next to last or 10th or 9th or something like that. Again, it's a tough league, no matter who we play. We want to have the opportunity to move forward, that's in our hands, and not have it up to anything else. I think that's the thing we're most proud of.

Q. Tiara, what are your thoughts on Tatyana crashing the boards today, getting those 13 rebounds?

TIARA YOUNG: Man, that's my dog. I tell her before every game, I need a double-double today. Just knowing that she's capable of doing it, I just try to motivate her and encourage her before every game so she can know that I'm proud of her and I see all the dirty work that she does.

Q. Coach, if you would take a look ahead to the game against Wichita State. Anything you can take away from the game a week ago that you can have ready for tomorrow?

RONALD HUGHEY: Yeah, we just played them our last game Senior Night and had a chance to get a victory. But again, it's a new season. We've just got to go back and watch the film and get prepared. I'm quite sure they have some different wrinkles and things that they did today that they didn't do in our game. So just go back and get ourselves prepared and watch the film and get ready to play.

We can look at a few things from our last game, but I think

right now, the game today will tell us all we need to know when we get a chance to break it and chop it down and look forward to tomorrow's game, but we'll be prepared.

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