

American Athletic Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Saturday, March 9, 2024

Fort Worth, Texas, USA

Dickies Arena

SMU Mustangs

Toyelle Wilson

Amirah Abdur-Rahim

Postgame Press Conference



Tulane - 68, SMU - 62

THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and get started with an opening statement from Coach and then take questions for the student-athletes.

TOYELLE WILSON: I thought it was a tale of two halves. Had a great first half and I think they responded and had a big third quarter. They hit threes. We weren't hitting a lot of shots. But credit to them, Tulane, hitting shots and being able to pull it out.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

Q. Did any part of your season and your team's performance in the past few games allude to tonight's performance?

TOYELLE WILSON: No. I just think they hit some shots. We had a couple little mishaps in the third quarter with some exchanges, some switches, some screens. But, no, I thought the girls were locked in, had a good couple practices, knew what we wanted to do, knew they were going to run some zone and man. I think really that third quarter, I think they were 8-14 in the second half, so they came down and hit shots. Credit to them.

Q. What was the highlight of your team's season?

TOYELLE WILSON: I think we played with about eight to nine to 10 players this whole year. I told them in the locker room that I was proud of them because we had one point guard the whole year. Literally, Reagan Bradley played the point. She would defend the best player. I thought Amirah came and had a great season this year. She didn't play for a few years and really was our go-to post player inside this

season.

Tiara, I thought had a really good couple 30-point games. We had two 1,000-point scorers this year. So there's a lot that we can take from. I thought we were really competitive against Baylor against a half. We were competitive against Colorado for three quarters. So, again, when you're dealt with adversity, you have to sometimes look at the positives, not so much the negatives.

Q. For both of you, it felt like, especially in the third and fourth quarters that the defense had continued lapses of judgment in performance. What happened there, was it a game plan issue?

TOYELLE WILSON: I don't think it was lapses of judgment, I'm not really sure that's the word to use. I think they actually just hit some shots. A couple times when we were supposed to switch, we didn't. A couple times when we doubled down on strong side, we shouldn't have. But I don't think it was a lapse of judgment or the other word you used.

Q. They were 0-12 from three-point range. Does that affect how you defend them going forward? When the shots aren't falling, do you play it differently?

TOYELLE WILSON: Yeah, I think once she hit one, we tried to make the adjustment. I think Mabry got them going hitting those threes, but certain players make big plays, and they did. They hit, they strung a couple along, you know. So, I think the adjustment, you got to get up tighter on them. I thought they tried, our kids, it wasn't about not trying, but locking in and being ready to make those adjustments in game.

Q. Amirah, did you feel like -- you guys got off to such a hot start with the big early lead, was the mindset that maybe you should have put 'em away by halftime, or did you feel like you allowed them to stay in maybe late in the second quarter where they chipped away at that?

AMIRAH ABDUR-RAHIM: I just feel like we did have a really good start, and I think coming out in the third quarter,

you know, they had a really big quarter, they hit a lot of shots. Like Coach T said, we just had some missed switches, some delays on ball screens that kind of hurt us. I just think that is what got them back in the game. No, we fought our hardest to stay in it, and I just think it was their big shots that got them the win.

THE MODERATOR: All right, coach, thank you.

TOYELLE WILSON: Appreciate it.

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