

# American Athletic Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Monday, March 11, 2024

Fort Worth, Texas, USA

Dickies Arena

## UTSA Roadrunners

## Karen Aston

### Postgame Press Conference



UTSA - 58, South Florida - 56

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

KAREN ASTON: Yeah, I think it was a hard-fought game, no question. It looked like tournament time. You're at that point where everybody kind of knows what everybody's doing. It was a struggle, I think, for both teams to score. I just thought that our team kind of dug in. We talked first, second, third quarter, just loose balls, second-chance points, all of those things. We were sort of losing that category and really that was the only one that we were losing. So I just wanted them to try to buckle down. At least if you're going to lose, make sure it's not from loose balls and offensive rebounds.

I just thought that it helped that Jordyn got going in the second half, and then I thought Siena gave us a deep breath with a couple of her threes, and then we started to really lock in defensively.

But just a hard-fought game. Really proud of our team. I think the first game's hard to play when someone's played before you. Hopefully, we'll play a little better tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take some questions.

**Q. Siena had two crucial 3-pointers down the stretch. That swung the momentum in y'all's favor. Can you speak to her performance and what it meant to the team?**

KAREN ASTON: They were huge. They went to a zone in the second half to try to slow us down on the inside because Jordyn had started to establish herself a little bit, Idara had a big bucket. We were struggling to shoot the

basketball. Siena really I thought the last couple of weeks, she had a really good game at Wichita, starting to mature, and she spends a lot of time in the gym and we sort of thought, okay, let's try something different here. It was good. It was really good.

I thought really another factor for Siena was really her defense. There was a specific game plan for each individual defensively as well as our team, and I thought that she really gave us an added dimension on the defensive end also. So super proud of her. She puts in time and she has to feel good about her performance today.

**Q. Can you talk about the contribution of the bench tonight. It was just unbelievable, Coach.**

KAREN ASTON: Yeah, I mean, a lot of people would look at Jordyn as a sixth starter. I mean, there's no question. She spent a lot of time starting last year, and I've had people ask me why not move her back into the lineup, but I'm comfortable with how we start. I think that our lineup has started games really well and it is nice to have someone come off the bench and have the rotation change a little bit where you get some scoring off the bench.

But Siena was huge for us. Honestly, I thought Hailey's minutes were good. She didn't score any. I think she had a free throw. But I just thought that, again, everybody had a job to do and aside from just all the crazy loose ball rebounds, I thought everybody did their job really well.

**Q. Jordyn, you played a great game tonight, particularly in the second half. What adjustments did you make personally to elevate your game and help push the team to victory?**

JORDYN JENKINS: My coaches talked a lot to me just about being patient and just trying to survey the floor and get good shots. I know that I'm kind of like a spotlight on our offense and just about being patient and trying to find the right shots.

**Q. Jordyn, can you walk us through your mindset with the team facing adversity and how you're able to stay**



**focused and contribute during crunch time?**

JORDYN JENKINS: Yeah, whenever we're in timeouts or huddles, we try to just over-communicate and know what we're doing on that possession. Big credit to Kyra. She leads us in all of our huddles and we stay connected in our huddles. I think that's what grounds me and that's what helps me out whenever we're in close-game situations.

**Q. Speaking of adjustments, you picked up those two player control fouls. So what adjustments did you make in that area? Because it seemed a little bit different after that point.**

JORDYN JENKINS: Yeah, since I had those two offensive fouls early, maybe getting to the basket would be a little tougher on me. I think I'm very versatile and can finish around the rim in other ways than back to the basket. I just think I utilized what the defense gave me and adjusted mid-air.

**Q. Coach, despite the win, how much emphasis will be placed on addressing the turnovers and offensive rebounding for tomorrow's game against East Carolina?**

KAREN ASTON: I don't think I have to say much about the offensive rebounding. I think they knew. It's not like we weren't trying. I just think that they were very determined. They come from different places on the floor than maybe what we're accustomed to. We haven't seen them in a while. They crash from space, which is a little bit different for our post players. I think they knew. It wasn't like I was telling 'em something that they didn't understand. They were quicker to the ball, maybe they played yesterday, maybe we were a little bit nervous, frozen, whatever, but they know.

Turnovers will be a huge issue tomorrow, for sure. East Carolina is really, really terrific as far as their activity on the ball and reading passes, reading eyes, so we'll obviously have to be better at that. Our assist-turnover ratio was still positive thanks to Kyra, which I haven't mentioned her at all, but when you look at her line, and I'll echo what Jordyn said, it's just she's a very calming effect for us and her decision-making was terrific today.

**Q. Jordyn, what does it mean to you to have this program back in the conference tournament semi-finals second year in a row?**

JORDYN JENKINS: Extremely, extremely exciting. I've been thinking about this moment for about a week now. I've been up late in my bed just dreaming of winning this tournament. We have one that we were short last year and

this is the same game that we're going to play, so we want to get to the championship, so we're going to do whatever it takes. I'm excited.

**Q. Along those same lines, is it meaningful to win a game like this against a program like South Florida just because of their pedigree and their history and kind of where you want UTSA to rise to?**

KAREN ASTON: Yeah, I think it's very meaningful for a lot of reasons. This is a new league, it was a new atmosphere we had coming here to Dickies Arena. We just got comfortable in Conference USA and changed gears and I just think that even watching East Carolina today, watching USF yesterday, you can tell that they were comfortable here. They've played here before, they expect to win, they've won a lot of basketball games, in particular South Florida, so I think to have our second win against a program that has been the traditional power actually in this league and I have a lot of respect for Jose and how he does things. I think he's a great coach. And just a solid, solid win for us. But, again, you advance and that's the biggest thing for us.

**Q. For both of you, tonight y'all got your 17th win of the season. It's been awhile since the program got to that number of wins. In fact, the 2009 team was the last to do it. That's also the last team to win a conference tournament. Do y'all kind of feel the vibe of just kind of how special this season has been?**

JORDYN JENKINS: Yeah, I'll go first. Yeah, we've just always had a growing community at UTSA and we've just been building ever since last year. I can only speak for last year. We've had a lot more fans and just a lot more support. I really build and -- what's the word? Like, I feed off of their support. I think we all do. Yeah, the only way is up.

KAREN ASTON: I would just say that it's funny because I read an article on Kyra White today, online somewhere, I was reading something, and she talked about how determined she was, and all of the players here, to sort of like take on the mantra of moving the needle for the program. I'm just really proud that they have taken that to heart. That's what we've talked about for three years, and each year we've made some strides to have a winning record and be eligible for post-season play, and potentially still have a shot at the NCAA Tournament, it's really quite amazing, to be honest with you. That's the buy in, that's the buy in from the players, it's the buy in from the staff, and I'm just excited to see how we continue to grow. I'm excited for this group that they have a chance to replicate being in the semis again. As a coach, I'm just excited to see what did we learn last year, we were in the semis and



how did we approach that and what do we take from it to be better this year.

THE MODERATOR: All right, thank you, coach. Thank you, Jordan.

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