

# American Athletic Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 12, 2025

Fort Worth, Texas, USA

Dickies Arena

**Rice Owls**

**Lindsay Edmonds**

**Malia Fisher**

**Sussy Ngulefac**

Postgame Press Conference



the coaching trail for a long time. He's been there 25 years at the same place. I know you have a lot of respect for what he's built there and vice versa. What about somebody like that that's been around that long continuing to achieve? We just don't see it very much in the coaching profession. What's your observation on them as an opponent and in this conference and the consistency that they seem to have?

USF - 69, Rice - 62

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

LINDSAY EDMONDS: It's a hard one, a tough one. Emotions are obviously very high. We, unfortunately, just didn't get off to the start that we needed to get off to in the championship game. Played a tremendous second half to get ourself back in the ball game, but, unfortunately, we just dug ourself a little bit too much of a hole in the first half and didn't dictate like we should.

So hat's off to South Florida and Jose. He's an incredible coach and they're very talented. Again, great team and hat's off to them.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Congratulations on a great year. Talk a little bit about being 7-1 the last two years and what a great run it's been for your team.**

LINDSAY EDMONDS: Yeah, it's been an incredible run. Like I said, this one hurts and it stings. No one ever wants to come in second place. So definitely a disappointment, a lot of upset young ladies in the locker room. But no one expected us to be back in this place again this year. No one expected us to be here last year, and so I think it just speaks volumes for our culture and our program and who we are and what we're about and how we do things and I'm proud of that.

**Q. Obviously, I know you've probably known Jose on**

LINDSAY EDMONDS: Yeah, I've had bouts with Jose. Even when I was at NC State as an assistant, we competed. We played in the NCAA against them and regular season and all the things. So he does a great job recruiting. He gets players that fit into his system. He has a very intricate offensive system that in one day of prep, we didn't do that great of a job of being prepared for it. But again, I think it's just finding pieces that fit into his system, and he knows how to win because he's been in these situations a lot of times. So, again, hat's off to him.

**Q. Coach, I wanted to ask about the first half where you guys were 0-8 from three and that seemed to be the only difference in the game. You actually had about the same amount of field goals and you guys just couldn't buy a bucket. Then my second question is for you two guys. In the beginning of the first half, you kind of carried the team and then in the second half, once you put that Kobe mask on, you pretty much came in like that too. So if you guys could kind of answer those or give any light to what that was like.**

LINDSAY EDMONDS: We definitely struggled from the three-point line tonight. That's not something that we've done since we've been here this week, and I don't know if it was legs or fatigue or what the case may be. I thought we got good looks. The shots just didn't fall. The first half I really felt like it was just our defensive intensity that we were lacking in. But again, I thought we got good looks. They just didn't fall. Unfortunately for us, their shots did fall at a really high rate to start the game.

SUSSY NGULEFAC: I think in terms of the first half -- my voice is gone. But I think it was just like kind of settled for the threes a little bit. After we weren't hitting a few, we just



... when all is said, we're done.®

didn't make the adjustment early. And like coach said, they were hitting shots and our defensive intensity didn't really pick up until the second half, which we won the half, but we had to find the fight a little earlier.

MALIA FISHER: I took a good elbow to the nose, so I missed a lot of the first half, but when I came back, obviously, I saw that we were down, so my mindset was just try to do everything I can for my team to get back in the game and, unfortunately, we came up short.

**Q. What you've done the last two years, so hard to do, winning four games in four days. You almost did it two years in a row. Could you speak to kind of the foundation that was laid here, I know you hope to build on it for the future, and the expectations that you have as a really dangerous team in the post-season now.**

LINDSAY EDMONDS: I just think we are a team that is tough. I think we're a team that plays together. I think we hold our culture at a very high standard, and we want to always put our best foot forward and impose our will, and I feel like the last three days we have done that. Today, unfortunately, we just didn't do that.

But our foundation, we've been laying it ever since I got here brick by brick and it hasn't happened overnight, but here we are being in back-to-back championship games. So I think the future's very bright. It's going to be hard to see these five seniors go and see what the future's going to look like without them, but I'm also excited for the future.

**Q. When you look back at this season, how do you categorize it from success to where y'all wanted to be. Obviously, a nine seed made it to the championship game and came up short. How do you kind of piece that together?**

LINDSAY EDMONDS: I mean, from the whole season, obviously, I think it's no secret we didn't have the overall season that we wanted to have from the expectations of where we finished last season to how we wanted to start the season, how we wanted to start the conference play. But I think, again, it just matters of how much this team bought into we are here and it's the third season of our conference -- or of our regular season, and so now it's 0-0 and best team will win, and we came out trying to do whatever it took to keep playing and to continue playing and it just goes to the grittiness and the toughness of our team.

We let the losses fall away from January and February. We weren't worried about those. We were just worried about the present. We were where our feet were and we were trying to be the best Rice women's basketball team

that we could be.

**Q. What are ya'll going to remember about this team and this run this year?**

MALIA FISHER: I mean, the locker room is definitely something you're always going to remember. It's all intangible memories that I'm going to take with me. We have a championship behind our belt and a lot of teams can't even say that, and we've been there twice and most teams can't even say that, so probably this one, for sure.

SUSSY NGULEFAC: I think the biggest thing is the locker room, the relationships that -- we built a family here, and that's what you're going to take away from it. Of course, like, today didn't go the way we wanted it to, but we won last year and that was special in itself because a lot of people counted us out. And just the camaraderie we have and the ability to buy in and fight together and when our backs are against the wall, we show up, we show up every time. We've done that time and time again.

So I think just the toughness and the grit, you take that away and you take away the relationships you built with not only my sisters as my teammates, but also the coaches. It's a family atmosphere that you don't get everywhere and you don't take it for granted. So like some people say, the sun will come up tomorrow and we'll be fine, but the biggest thing we're leaving with is the relationships that we built.

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