American Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Tuesday, March 10, 2026

Birmingham, Alabama, USA

Legacy Arena At The BJCC

Charlotte 49ers

Coach Tomekia Reed
Princess Anderson

Postgame Press Conference

Florida Atlantic 74, Charlotte 70

TOMEKIA REED: Well, I will say that we had a very slow start. I thought that the ball was being played extremely aggressive on one side and not the other.

We had a battle. Foul counts was 30 to about 10. We had to battle, and we didn't play smart in some possessions. We didn't play hard in some possessions. So I thought it just got away from us early.

But I will say we did not stop playing. I will say that the girls competed. They fought to get back into the game. They executed, and they got after it.

We just came short because we took too long to get the start going.

Q. Coach, obviously your team had the great comeback towards the end, couldn't quite finish it. What does that tell you about your team, being able to rally back and force overtime?

TOMEKIA REED: Well, I can remember some games where we lost it late and didn't fight. My team just showed a lot of resilience right there down the stretch. They showed a lot of willpower. You could tell at some point that they didn't want to lose this game.

I know Princess took over. She hit three after three back to back, and you could just tell that they didn't want to lose this game right there down the stretch. It showed that they were resilient. It showed that they were mentally tough.

We had a lot against us. We had to play through it. I was just really proud of them.

Q. Princess, obviously outstanding performance from you, trying to will this team into it. I know the loss really hurts, but knowing you really left it all out on the court for your senior year.

PRINCESS ANDERSON: Of course I'm a little upset, but sort of like Coach said, we did have a slow start. But the key word for us going into the tournament was finish. Either we always have a good first half and a bad second half or a good second half and a bad first half.

I think we just -- if we could have just got more stops and rebounded more and had a better start, things just could have been different.

But at the end of the day, like Coach said, we fought. We did not want to lose.

The one thing I can say was down 20, somewhere around about, we fought and we came back. So I can say I'm proud of my team for that.

Q. Coach, how does it feel knowing Princess really left it all out there on the court for you with this outstanding performance as a senior?

TOMEKIA REED: I will say this, and I'll say it respectfully: When we got Princess, we didn't know -- we knew Princess could score the ball, but we knew she wasn't being used the right way where she came from.

There was a lot of people who didn't believe in this kid, but my staff and myself and her teammates believed in her. She came in and she beat all odds. They said she couldn't remember plays. They said she couldn't execute.

She did everything for us. She remembered plays. She executed. She led us the entire year. She scored the ball. She did everything for us. This player right next to me at one point didn't even want to play basketball anymore because it had gone so bad for her.

She dug deep, she looked at me and said, Coach, if you

believe in me, I believe in you, and she came and played for me and gave me everything that she got, and I'm so proud of you, Princess.

A lot of people had counted her out. But we believed in her from day one, and she has been outstanding. She has really pushed this program to where we want it to be in year two. Doubled our wins for us from four last season to eight. Made the All-Conference team, my first player at Charlotte in my era to make the All-Conference team.

So I'm just really proud of the player that she is and the person that she is and the woman she has became under my leadership.

Q. Coach, looking at the season as a whole, what did you learn about yourself and this program, and what do you hope your players take away from this season?

TOMEKIA REED: Well, myself -- man, I had to become a different type of leader this year, and people don't understand being a leader is not just about coaching a game.

You have to wear the hurt from these players. Princess lost her uncle. Ja'Navia Gabe's brother was murdered. My assistant coach mama died. My other assistant coach grandmother died. My other assistant coach grandfather died. Another player lost her favorite aunt. But you've got to keep going.

You can't be heartless, but you have to sympathize and you have to carry the weight that they have. But you have to keep going.

So for myself, I was able to understand that I carried their pain, I shared their pain, but as a leader, I to stay strong for them.

That made me proud because they don't understand how many nights I cried. They don't understand how I asked God to let the angels be with us today, and they are with us. It just didn't turn in our favor.

But I learned how to be strong in the face of adversity. I learned how to be strong for my kids when their heads were down. My players could have quit. Ja'Navia Gage played with her brother murdered. She never left this program until it was time to go to the funeral.

And I'm not talking about half brother. I'm talking about her blood brother was murdered. My kids stayed strong. So just carrying the weight of that just showed me a lot about who I am and how I was able to lead this program, and I'm super thankful.

I had great support around me and my staff had great support around me and my administrators, and my supporting staff was really good helping us get through this. I've got some strong players, so this has been an awesome year in spite of.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports