

# NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Four - Samford vs Southern U.

Wednesday, March 18, 2026

Columbia, South Carolina, USA

Colonial Life Arena

## Southern U. Jaguars

## D'Shantae Edwards

## Jocelyn Tate

### Media Conference



THE MODERATOR: Just start with an opening statement.

D'SHANTAE EDWARDS: I think our energy, I think we're still building off the excitement of winning our tournament. I think we're all excited to be here, so I think as a team, obviously our defense, I feel like the intensity we'll bring tomorrow is going to be what to look for.

JOCELYN TATE: Yeah, competing against Samford, we're so very excited, so we got to go into this game with the right mindset and just sit together, listen to our coaches so we can get this win.

THE MODERATOR: Questions in the room for our two student-athletes?

**Q. Jocelyn, what do you know about Samford? Anything? What have you guys talked about? Jocelyn and D'Shantae.**

JOCELYN TATE: Yesterday in practice we were going over a little bit of scout, so we know they can shoot the ball really well. They have a really good point guard. I know one of their shooters was leading the nation in threes, so we got another scout, you know, like of the shooters, so that's what I know.

D'SHANTAE EDWARDS: To piggyback off that, knowing we are playing one of the best shooters in the nation off the three-point line, I think that's going to rewire our brain for how we play defense. I think knowing how to run them off the three-point line is going to be a little different for us because we guard a lot of drivers and maybe one or two shooters here. Knowing at least all five from Samford can shoot the ball and the three, I think it's what's going to be our adjustment for tomorrow.

**Q. All Samford can shoot the three, all players. Noticed your three point shooting defense is really good. Tell us about how you defend the perimeter.**

D'SHANTAE EDWARDS: As Coach would say, hard nose. We don't play five feet off. If we're not being able to touch you we're not close enough. If we're not in your grille, we're not making you uncomfortable. The ability to run guards and good three point shooters off the line is because they're -- we're in the shooting pocket.

JOCELYN TATE: Yeah, we pressure up on the ball so no matter what you're good at, shooting three, driving, we put pressure on ball. That's what we're going to have to work on tomorrow.

**Q. Ya'll play in a lot of arenas like this, big wide background and seats, what is the seats here, 15, 17?**

THE MODERATOR: 16.

**Q. Could you describe playing in an arena like this prepared to some other places would you have been?**

D'SHANTAE EDWARDS: Our coaches prepare for that. I feel like our non-conference is already challenging. We play schools in big arenas like this, so I feel like they gave us a mindset as these girls lace their shoes up the same way we do. Regardless of the arena, it's a lot of seats, but it's okay.

I think just have fun and be confident in what you do.

**Q. When ya'll won the league, talk about that, cutting down the nets. As far as you can describe, Jocelyn first. Talk about that experience and that celebration.**

JOCELYN TATE: It was just pure joy. It was our second time winning it in a year, so I think we were prepared for it. We knew we could win it. Our coaches talked about it all year long. We had the team for it. We had the coaches for it.

Yeah, we were really excited. Some of the girls it was their



first time winning a championship, some of us our second time. Everybody was just excited across the board.

D'SHANTAE EDWARDS: I think to put all the hard work in since June, it just showed everything. It was a breath of relief like we finally did it. No more talking about it, preaching about it, or trying to have our hard days and still talking about it. No, we finally did it.

I feel like as a team it just brought us closer together. I feel like it was just literally an undeniable moment for happiness.

**Q. Why Southern when you were being recruited and your whole process?**

D'SHANTAE EDWARDS: I came from a program where the coaching staff was unstable. Not all agreed with each other. And I came to Southern and my first visit I'll never forget, all the coaches were in -- I don't know, they were all in correlation, they all moved on one accord.

You don't get that a lot. A lot of coaching staffs and people are still trying to move up. All the people on any coaching staff are okay with being where they are and accept their role.

As a player coming from a different program seeing that, it just felt like home. All these coaches treat me more than an athlete, they treat you as a person. They know the mental challenges you have outside the court and it's not just about words, actions show that. That's why I chose Southern. More than words. It was their actions.

**Q. If it you both could speak about being back on this stage for the second year in a row and all the positive vibes with all the success that not only you've had but over the last three years just the program like Howard, you all, Jackson State, collectively?**

JOCELYN TATE: I'll start. I'd say it's some of the nerves going into the game of course. I'm a little nervous. I think it's another chance for us to show how hard we work. Our conference is really tough to play in. I think us coming and playing a different conference, we can show how hard we work, what we are made for.

We're all really excited to see how much hard work we put in the entire season and know that we deserve to be here as much as anybody else.

D'SHANTAE EDWARDS: I think what we're doing here is bigger than Southern, bigger than the girls on this team. I think it shows other HBCUs what we're capable of. Doesn't matter where you are in the nation, but all that matters is

the work you put in, the quality of work that you put in.

I feel like if you put in good quality of work, you're going get here. Anybody has a possibly to be sitting here like us.

**Q. D'Shantae, we've spoken and we always talk about the toughness. How did that show itself last week for you all and why is this -- why was the championship probably a little more special for you than last year?**

D'SHANTAE EDWARDS: I think as a team we came and played two teams that we lost two games to during the conference time. I feel like the toughness to come in that game and not keep the mindset oh, I've already lost, it might be hard, this, that.

I think the toughness we had coming into the game and still played like this was the record was 0-0 between both teams. That was the toughness that we showed and to continued to show and the reason we're here.

JOCELYN TATE: So, yeah, there was some teams that we lost to I don't think we should have lost to. Going into the tournament for one it's hard beat the team three times in a row. They know that we know that. The teams we did lose though we played A&M and Alabama State down the stretch and we had to go into the game with the right mindset and toughness to get the win.

So we had to forget about the losses and just go into it as another regular game.

**Q. I'm writing a story on Olivia. How does she fit into your program and help you'll get back to where you are now?**

JOCELYN TATE: Well, she's coming off the bench so I think she does a really good job coming into the game with the intensity she has, putting up threes. She does a really good job.

A lot of people playing her role coming off the bench may not be able to perform like she does. She does a really well job knowing what she has to do coming into the game. She's very coachable. Yeah, just wonderful for our program. She fits in well.

D'SHANTAE EDWARDS: I agree with that. I think Liv is one of the hardest working players on our team. I feel like she came on this program coming from a different program with a different mindset and we had -- like her role changed so she was no longer like the shooting guard. We put her as a 4 man. She excelled in n the league. There is not a lot of 4 men in the league that can shoot the ball as well as she can.

She just excelled and everybody can see that.

**Q. You've won 8 out of their last 10 games. What is the difference? What got you to winning those 8 out of 10 games?**

D'SHANTAE EDWARDS: I guess sticking with the script. I think we all had the baseline set in the summertime and didn't go our way as we planned. We did have more losses than we expected, but I think not giving up on the set goal or plan that we had in place is why we were able to win ate out of the 10 games. Trusting the process.

JOCELYN TATE: I agree, trusting the process, sticking together, listening to the coaches, and listening to the game plan. Doing the things we did in the wins we had. We had to carry them over into the next game and continue to do the same thing and same process, so...

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