

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

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Columbia, South Carolina, USA

Colonial Life Arena

## Southern U. Jaguars Coach Carlos Funchess

Media Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome Souther head coach Funchess. Coach, just an opening statement and we'll take some questions.

CARLOS FUNCHESS: Well, this never gets old. I'm just happy that these young ladies came out and worked extremely hard and it turned into a championship for them.

They gave their entire summers away as far as working out and conditioning and ended up winning the championship, so I'm just extremely proud and happy for them.

**Q. Coach, what's up, man? How are you?**

CARLOS FUNCHESS: Hey, Rob. How are you doing?

**Q. Great. How was the trip in?**

CARLOS FUNCHESS: Great. Wonderful. Like I said, it never gets old, Rob.

**Q. Awesome. So just want to ask about your veterans. What do you think, if anything, is different about your team's mindset this year as opposed to last year, if anything, that you noticed?**

CARLOS FUNCHESS: Well, I mean, we're always going to go out and play hard and play with some toughness. With nine new players, getting that chemistry, that was the main thing, them getting comfortable playing together, getting the rotations down, us as the coaching staff knowing who we're going to bring in at what time.

They adjusted to it well. It's a quick turnaround when you're trying to get a team prepared to win a championship with nine new players in a matter of seven months. It's extremely difficult, but they stayed the course.

**Q. Obviously last couple years we have spoken at length. Can you just share again what makes Southern women's basketball special beyond just the toughness and the winning and some of the intangible things that you all do behind the scenes that people don't see?**

CARLOS FUNCHESS: Well, we recruit high character young ladies, smart young ladies. Over the last eight years we have a 100% graduation rate. We want the right people in the program to keep our culture going. That's the main thing.

They're going to come in and play as a family. They're going to play as unit and they're going to support each other.

**Q. Coach, talk about the toughness? Especially on the defensive side the numbers just really come off the page in terms of how great your defense has been this year.**

CARLOS FUNCHESS: Well, when we are evaluating talent, we make sure that they go out a little bit. Defense is always going to travel. Defense can be a staple of your team as far as rebounding and pushing up and going to the basket.

Again, that takes toughness. We want players that are going to play extremely hard regardless if things are going good or things are going bad. So we're going recruit those type of young ladies.

**Q. Setting up your schedule, I noticed non-conference early on you play some big ones.**

CARLOS FUNCHESS: We do.

**Q. Then you won 8 out of your last 10 games?**

CARLOS FUNCHESS: I like playing really, really good teams early. They're going to play different styles of basketball. Sometimes like Washington might play some zone, UCLA might do a lot of man. It's just going prepare you for the conference season.



We're not going to play against teams in our conference like the University of Iowa or Iowa State with Audi Crooks down there. So we play a combination of different teams just to prepare us for our conference season.

**Q. Coach, what have you enjoyed about this journey this season with your team?**

CARLOS FUNCHESS: Well, the main thing is just overcoming adversity. We started out pretty well. We had a couple of really good non-conference wins, but you have to be able to handle success. You got to continue to do the things that got you to the point where we were at that time.

We beat Arizona and University of Houston, I think it was back to back, and then I thought we kind of flat lined a little bit.

But we did a good job coming down the stretch battling through some injuries and just overcoming adversity.

**Q. Coach, D'Shantae said when I asked her why Southern, she said it's because you treat the players beyond just players, as people. Can you speak to that program ethos?**

CARLOS FUNCHESS: Well, we're going to be hands-on as a coaching staff. Not only myself, but every member of our coaching staff. We're going to go above and beyond the call of duty. If they need something or have any issues, we're going to try to make sure we do everything possible to make sure that we get that handled for them.

And they know that, so in turn I think that's one of the reasons they give us 100% on the court and also in the classroom.

**Q. They talked a lot about Samford's three point shooting. That's something they said they know from the scout. Does that check with you?**

CARLOS FUNCHESS: Most definitely. They have a young lady Rivera, I think she's the No. 1 at least in the nation in three point makes. I think she has 109 three point makes, which is phenomenal. She's attempting 10 threes a game, so we most definitely going to have to make sure that we know where those young ladies are and get a hand this their face and make life tough for them tomorrow night.

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