

# NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - Southern U. vs South Carolina

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Columbia, South Carolina, USA  
Colonial Life Arena

## Southern U. Jaguars Coach Carlos Funchess D'Shantae Edwards Jaylia Reed

Media Conference

South Carolina 103, Southern 34

THE MODERATOR: Next up are the Southern Jaguars with Head Coach Carlos Funchess and student-athletes D'Shantae Edwards and Jaylia Reed.

Coach, if you would make an opening statement.

CARLOS FUNCHESS: I knew it would be an uphill battle from jump tip because they have a tremendous team. They have size. They have athleticism. Everything that you want in a basketball team, they have it, and they do a great job of coaching.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open for questions for the student-athletes. Seeing no hands for the moment, I'll get started.

You're both seniors. What's the message that maybe you have for the other players that will be coming back next year and what this experience was like and for them to encourage them to work hard and get back to this level?

D'SHANTAE EDWARDS: Anything you want to do in life, whether it's basketball, whatever your goals are, you have to put your all into it. You'll never be satisfied if you never put your all into it.

JAYLIA REED: To piggyback off what she said, there's no doubt in my mind they won't be back, because they will be. Just do it to the best that you can and always keep God first, because he's not going to steer you wrong.

**Q. Hi, ladies. Congrats on a fantastic season. I have**



**two questions. First question for each of you, what are you most proud of that doesn't show up in a box score?**

D'SHANTAE EDWARDS: I think the way I dive on the floor for 50/50 balls. I do like that. I think that is probably one of my things, yeah.

JAYLIA REED: I think we showed grittiness tonight at some points. Like in the paint, for instance. When they brought it down, everybody was like on the ball. So I think that was pretty good. That doesn't show up on the stat sheet.

**Q. When you think about the team what will you remember most five years from now about this team and this moment and this week?**

JAYLIA REED: I'm blessed to have been a part of this team. I had a long journey. If you know, you know. I'm blessed for Coach Funchess for taking the chance on me and for my teammates for being amazing and holding me up when I had hard days.

D'SHANTAE EDWARDS: I'm going to take away the diversity that we overcame this season. I feel like we had a lot of diversity thrown our way during the summertime, midseason, conference time. We held our held high and held it together as a team.

Like Jaylia said, I want to thank Coach Funch, to be coached by him. And for the girls I played with at Southern, I'll forever be y'all family.

**Q. You've got to be proud of what you accomplished this season, and you're leaving here as a team, players that won two NCAA Tournament games. There are a lot of Power 4 programs that that doesn't happen at. So you've got to be pretty excited about that, I would guess.**

D'SHANTAE EDWARDS: Yes, you are correct. I am very proud of everything that we have accomplished, big or small. Things that not a lot of people know that we accomplished, I'm still proud. I think this team, they did a



lot, I feel like, bringing in new players to show what we're capable of season upon season. I can't wait to see what they've got next.

JAYLIA REED: I agree. It just goes to show what Southern women's basketball is about. I'm going to come out and push up on you and make you uncomfortable to the best that we can, and yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations on a great season.

JAYLIA REED: Thank you.

D'SHANTAE EDWARDS: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions now for coach Funchess.

**Q. Carlos, you said you anticipated it was going to be an uphill battle throughout. Did you expect that they would continue pressing that way against you throughout the game?**

CARLOS FUNCHESS: I did. They're trying to get ready to win a National Championship, and they have to come out and set that tone. That's what they need to do, and that's what we would do as well.

They did a great job of disrupting us. I knew it was going to be hard to get to the mid 50s against them. I think they came in giving up 57 points a game in the SEC. I mean, that's amazing. You're playing against some of the best athletes in the country, in the world, I would say, in women's basketball.

I knew it was going to be tough. I was hoping that somebody could get extremely hot and give us 15 to 18 points, but it didn't happen. But we kept fighting, kept battling. It's frustrating. So I tried to keep them calm and just told them keep fighting, keep battling.

**Q. Coach, again, congrats on a phenomenal season, phenomenal run. What are you most proud of your team just throughout this season? We've had some conversations about overcoming adversity, and the girls mentioned it. For you, what are you proud of as far as seeing this program grow?**

CARLOS FUNCHESS: We went through a three-game losing streak, and they could have fractured, but they didn't. They stuck together. They toughed it out. We had some key injuries at that time. But we had some players that didn't play a lot early that stepped their game up, and that helped us down the stretch as we made a run the last four, five games of the season.

Like you said, overcoming adversity, sticking together as a team.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, what was your message to your team after the game, especially to those that will be coming back next season and kind of getting their mind right for the offseason and to get back to this place to three-peat?

CARLOS FUNCHESS: Just to stay hungry. Keep competing regardless of what the score is. You don't worry about that. You go out and try to play with structure on both ends of the court. I thought we kept competing. We just couldn't get shots to fall. They had a lot to do with it. They're one of the best teams, if not the best team in the country, but we kept battling.

To the ones that are leaving, I'm so thankful to be able to coach those young ladies because they gave me everything that they had.

To the ones returning, we're going to get back in the gym this summer and continue to work and try to get back to this point again.

THE MODERATOR: Looking at your schedule, you played a lot of the top teams in the country, especially early on. Did it help prepare you for today? It had to help to some extent to be in this environment. Scheduling-wise, moving forward, is that something you will continue to try to do?

CARLOS FUNCHESS: We'll most definitely play a competitive schedule. I think we had the number one strength of schedule in the country prior to playing our conference games. We're most definitely going to do that.

Yes, I think it did prepare us. But as a player, certain things you can't do anything about. If you're playing against a 6'7" and you're boxing them out and they reach over top and get a rebound, that's just they have a size advantage. They have some great athletes as well. So it did prepare us, but we couldn't overcome the athleticism and their size.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, congratulations on a great season.

CARLOS FUNCHESS: Thank you all.

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