

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - Marquette vs Ole Miss

Friday, March 22, 2024

South Bend, Indiana, USA

Purcell Pavilion

Ole Miss Rebels

Madison Scott

Player

Tyia Singleton

Player

Media Conference



MADISON SCOTT: We're excited.

TYIA SINGLETON: Yeah.

MADISON SCOTT: We're excited. Ready to compete together. Excited to be here. Grateful for the opportunity, so we're ready to seize it and just give it everything that we have.

Q. Kurt with The Associated Press. Madison, the SEC season, you probably know each other so well, your opponents. Can you talk about the challenge of having to be quick learners in the NCAA Tournament and what it takes to accomplish that?

MADISON SCOTT: It's definitely is challenge, you know, because you're facing an opponent that you're not, you know, as familiar with as you are with the opponents in conference, but I think the biggest thing we've been being intentional about, my team particularly, is just being coachable. Our coaches give us a great game plan, we're watching film, you know, we're asking questions. Our focus is at an all-time high because we want to win. We're not ready to go home, so I think just being coachable, that's been our biggest thing as players and just accepting everything that comes our way and being able to react quickly and trust the process, trust the game plan and, yeah.

Q. Again, for both of you, I'm just curious, I mean, obviously there's a very distinct identity, you mentioned it there, dictate and disrupt. How do you feel like that plays in March? Do you feel like that works this time of year?

MADISON SCOTT: I feel like it works all times of the year. I feel like that's our identity. That's who we are. It doesn't matter if it's March. It doesn't matter where we are, we take it with us. We packed our defense with us, and we're ready to display that, because we know that that's going to help us play and win and it's just who we are. When that's who you are, if you're not staying true to who you are, then, you know, the result isn't always, you know, going to be great.

MODERATOR: All right. Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome in. As a courtesy to your fellow media members as well as the coaches and student-athletes, please silence your cell phones. Please provide your name and media affiliation each time you ask a question during the press conferences. If you're joining on Zoom, please use the raise hand function for questions. We'll address questions in the room first and get to Zoom if time allows. Recording press conferences with your cell phone or via video is prohibited. You may record audio if you would like.

And so, with that, we will turn it over to questions for Tyia Singleton and Madison Scott from Ole Miss.

Q. David Eckert, The Clarion Ledger. For both of y'all, when you kind of visualize what needs to happen tomorrow to get a good outcome, what pops into your head?

TYIA SINGLETON: Um, just being who we are, dictate and disrupt, playing our defense, being extremely focused. I think that's very important for us because it got us this far, so definitely dictate and destruct.

MADISON SCOTT: Yeah, what she said. I think just being connected for 40 minutes playing the way Ole Miss basketball plays, I think if we're able to do that, we'll be successful.

Q. And I guess, again, for both of you. How does the team feel right now? The last -- obviously you got a little bit of a rest.



So, we want the result to be great. We want to win, we want to continue to play at a high level, so we packed our defense with us, we're ready to go, and we're ready to give it everything that we have.

Q. Hey, Tamika Catchings, ESPN. So, question is you guys were here last year as far as making it to the tournament. What did you learn from last year that I'm sure coach has talked about in your preparation for this year?

MADISON SCOTT: We learned what it takes to continue to play, you know, we got a taste of that. We made it to the Sweet 16 last year. There was many moments last year where there was highs and lows, but it was staying steady through the highs and lows. I think that was the biggest takeaway from last year. Like you mentioned, sir, we're playing against different competition, you know, teams that we aren't necessarily familiar with, but so throughout the game there's going to be ups and downs. There's going to be things that happen where we have to make adjustments and be ready, and I think it's just staying steady, you know, through the highs and the lows, staying steady and just being ready to do whatever it takes to win. That was the biggest thing from last year.

And then we learned how important also it is to just stay connected throughout all of that, pause we can't -- it's not one against five. It's five against five. Of course we need the 15, we need everybody on our team to do their job and be ready to go. So I think just staying connect for 40 minutes, staying true to who we are and trusting in God, trusting in coaches. Good things will happen.

Q. And one more question. For you in particular, just watching you over the last couple of years has been amazing. What do you feel like you really worked on from last season to this season to put you guys in this position.

MADISON SCOTT: Wow. (Laughter) I think it's the biggest adjustment, the thing that I worked on the most is how I present myself to my team, if that makes sense. Being more of a leader. Leading with my actions. Showing the way that we do things at Ole Miss. I've taken a lot of pride in doing that and sometimes I fall short, but I want my teammates to know that I've been here. I've gone through a lot of ups and downs but I've been here, and I'm ready to attack everything with them. I want to be a leader for my teammates, you know? So that's been the biggest thing, just trusting myself to do that and then having great teammates that trust me makes it ten times better, so, yes, ma'am.

Q. Sam Gore, ESPN. You're part of March Madness,

so I'm just curious as to how many other games you guys watch, even though you're locked in on what you do, and if you sort of get fired up just watching everybody else play when you're not out on the floor.

TYIA SINGLETON: I feel like it's March, so, you know, great basketball. It's time for great basketball. I just feel like as long as we just stay focused and stay focused on our opponent and not worry about what's next after that, we just stay focused on that one particular game instead of what's ahead of that, you know, just one game at a time, but, of course, we watch other teams because it's March. Who don't want to watch basketball? It's a great basketball time, but definitely staying focused on who we have in front of us at that time.

Q. Madison, back to -- oh, Kurt, AP. Back to leading with a purpose, was there a defining moment or turning point this season where you kind of had to help the team weather the storm? And how were you able to do that and get yourselves here?

MADISON SCOTT: There were many moments, I think. (Laughter) But one that stands out in my head, I'll never forget it, is we lost two in a row this year. We lost to South Carolina and then we turned and lost to Texas A&M. That was a big moment because here we are in the thick of our season where teams are giving it all that they have. We're playing in one of the best conferences in the world, SEC, and teams are trying to finish out strong. The placement, everything was so close, so dropping two games like that, it put us in a really bad position, so there we had to make a decision whether we were going to continue to lose, continue to be so far into ourselves that we didn't do what the team needed each and every one of us to do to win, or we're going to rise to the occasion. We're going to be the best teammates we can be. We're going to give it up every day in practice so the result in the game will result in Ws, you know?

We really had to make a decision and in that moment, I had to make a decision, you know? I had to make a decision to really be intentional about my talk, about how I practice. Just about being a great teammate. Just about letting my teammates know, we've been in this position. Last year we lost two in a row as well but we can weather the storm as long as we do it together. So that was a big place in the season and I'm glad that we were able to overcome it because maybe we wouldn't be here. So God is good.

MODERATOR: We're going to turn it over to a Zoom question here. We're going to have Gabrielle Lewis step up to the mic here on Zoom.

Q. Hi, Gabrielle Lewis. Both of y'all are veteran leaders and after the LSU game, Coach Yo talked about kind of the inexperience, you know, with the ball and at the point guard position. How are y'all focusing on taking care of the ball at this game and then also guiding younger players like Zakiya?

MADISON SCOTT: Well, first we know it's a team effort. We know we don't have our point guard, Kirsten, you know, due to injury. We've had all season long to kind of figure out ways to adjust and we found that it takes collective effort.

Yes, we have a great point guard in Zakiya and we have a great point guard in Toddy, Kennedy, you know, and we have people who are very capable of doing that but that one person doesn't have the pressure. You get what I'm saying? We've made it clear that we're all collectively willing to help bring the ball up the floor. We're very versatile. We have plays where anybody can really start the play in order to execute it at a high level.

So just everybody knowing that we're collectively going to do whatever it takes to win the game. It's not on one person, it's not one person's responsibility to bring the ball up the entire game. We're all going to chip in and help in any way that we can.

As far as Zakiya, Zakiya's amazing. Young Thundercat. You know, the future is bright and even now, she's going to be in a big position, a position that she's never been in before so it's our jobs as her teammates to guide her and to let her know everything is going to be okay. We trust her, and I'm excited to see her blossom and flourish in this opportunity.

Q. Madi, Sam Gore, ESPN again. When I close my eyes, I can't tell if it's you or Coach Yo answering these questions, so obviously (Laughter) she's had a tremendous impact on you.

MADISON SCOTT: Yes.

Q. To the point where you even answer questions like another coach. So, is coaching something you're planning on getting into? It's a two-part question. And can you kind of put into words what playing for Coach Yo has meant to you.

MADISON SCOTT: Definitely coaching is something that's in the back of my head, something that I'm very interested in. And Coach Yo has meant a lot to me. This is year four with her, and I already announced I'm coming back. It'll be year five in the future. Coach Yo keeps me on me toes. She pushes me past my limits. She really has helped me

grow, you know? And it hasn't been easy for her. I know there's been a lot of difficult moments but she never leaves my side. She's always there, and it's bigger than basketball. She wants me to be great on the basketball court, but also great in life, so she's teaching me life skills that's going to help me be successful.

I'm a representation of my coach. We all are a representation of our head coach which is why I come up here and I speak so well and stuff like that. She's taught me a lot, and I'm taking notes because one day I want to be a coach as well. So there's nothing that she does where I'm not thinking about it like hmm, why did she do that? But it's all because I'm just eager to learn, I'm hungry, and I'm just excited for all the opportunities that come my way.

TYIA SINGLETON: Great mentor.

MODERATOR: We'll go to another Zoom question here from Gabrielle Lewis.

Q. Yeah, this is for both of you. The SEC really has this defensive spirit and I think you guys exhibit that maybe better than anyone. What makes defense so central to the SEC culture and what's distinctive about that SEC defensive style?

TYIA SINGLETON: I feel like the SEC is just very physical. We're very tough, and I feel like our defense is very physical, very tough. The difference from our defense is just like, you know, you're going to do what we tell you to do, not the other way around. Just dictate and we disrupt and I just feel like this SEC is just more physical than a lot of conferences.

I come from the Big Ten where it wasn't as physical. Coming to the SEC was different. It was like a culture shock to me, I was like oh, Lord, what is this? (Laughter) But it helped me in so many ways and it helped me with Coach Yo because I was just like Coach, I don't know this type of defense. This is different for me. But heavy on just physical and tough.

MODERATOR: Yeah, we have time for one more question here.

Q. Madison, you mentioned coaching. If the opportunity were there, would Ole Miss be a dream job or would it be challenging to coach -- do you think it would be challenging to coach at your alma mater?

MADISON SCOTT: That's big shoes to fill, you know? (Laughter) With Coach Yo doing what she's doing now and she's just beginning. There's so much success and



blessings coming her way but definitely if the opportunity presented itself, I would love to do that.

Oxford, Ole Miss, they show me so much love. They've helped mold me into the woman I am today. I'm still growing, I'm still improving but I wouldn't be where I am without Coach Yo, University of Mississippi, my teammates, all the relationships, everything that's come out of coming to the University of Mississippi. It will always be near and dear to my heart. So definitely, to answer your question. Yes. (Laughter).

MODERATOR: All right. Thank you, Madison and Tyia. Appreciate it.

TYIA SINGLETON: Thank you.

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