

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: Second Round - San Diego State vs LSU

Friday, March 21, 2025

Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA

Pete Maravich Assembly Center

LSU Tigers

Aneesah Morrow

Flau'Jae Johnson

Mikaylah Williams

Media Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcome back to the Baton Rouge regional for the Women's NCAA Tournament. We're joined by three Lady Tigers from LSU, the No. 3 seed. Immediately to my left is senior Aneesah Morrow, to her left is junior Flau'Jae Johnson, and then sophomore Mikaylah Williams.

Q. This is for Flau'Jae. Besides having to turn your shoes off, what's been the most difficult part the past three weeks of trying to get back into a game flow since you've been out.

FLAU'JAE JOHNSON: It really hasn't been difficult. Being out at first, it was like a change for me, but it really did change my perspective, and I think for the better.

I feel like in that little short time, those three weeks, I feel like I got my mental in order. I feel like I've become a better teammate. I feel like I'm seeing the game from a different point of view, so I could help my team.

At first it was hard. I learned to love the hard stuff. I learned to love conditioning. I learned to love just the little things a little bit more. So it ain't really been that difficult.

Q. Aneesah, for you, what was that Texas game like re aggravating the foot injury, and what have the last couple weeks been like for you getting back?

ANEESAH MORROW: Of course difficult for me. I wanted to go back on the floor and be able to compete with my teammates, but sometimes you have to learn how to tell yourself no. Sometimes you might think that I'm super woman, but I'm not.



Everything happened for a reason, and that's just what I had to take from that moment.

Overall, I've been getting my conditioning up, being in the weight room, strength and conditioning, getting as much treatment as I can, and I'm ready.

Q. Flau'Jae, you're one of the veteran pieces. What has been the message to your team as you guys get ready to go on this run?

FLAU'JAE JOHNSON: To be honest, it's just like my message is everything is your fault. I think that's the best way to take accountability, and I think that's what we're missing as a team. Like it's always your fault. Find your fault in it, and that way we can fix it.

When you try to learn how like to lead a team, the first thing you've got to do is look in the mirror. So I can like -- one of our -- what is (indiscernible)? She's like our -- I don't know, but she's amazing. She tells you, when you're pointing at somebody, you've got three fingers pointing back at you. So it's like you've got to hold yourself accountable first. So I always try to tell them like it's our fault.

I know to get through this tournament it's going to take everybody. Yeah, we're the big three, but it's going to take a big eight to get to where we want to go. I know this because of how hard the Elite Eight was last year. You look down the bench and you're like, dang, we need one more, we need two more. You see what I'm saying?

It's just about like we need everybody. Everybody is important. We've got to be accountable about what we do off the court and on the court.

Q. Flau'Jae, quick question and a follow-up if I could. You feel a hundred percent? You ready to go?

FLAU'JAE JOHNSON: Yep.

Q. You're 9-1 in the NCAA Tournament since you came to LSU.



FLAU'JAE JOHNSON: That's got to go.

Q. What would you say, what takes winning at this time of the year? What do you have to do to win at this point of the season?

FLAU'JAE JOHNSON: It takes more. No, I'm just playing. I'm just playing.

No, it takes -- it's going to take everybody. A lot of things are always against us, and I always say like people play us different because we got these three letters on our chest, so we've got to protect that with pride. You know what I'm saying? You've got to have pride about it.

You've got to have pride for those 50-50 balls. You've got to have pride knowing that every game is not going to be your game. You know what I'm saying? It might be Neese's game, it be 12's game, it might be my game to go get rebounds. Every game is not going to be your game, but you've got to see how you can affect the game when stuff's not going well.

I think, with us being out and 12 having to carry the load, I think she realized, like everybody has a part, you know what I'm saying? This whole situation kind of with the injuries and everything, it kind of made us come together and grow stronger.

It takes a lot of focus. But I always tell them, like last year when I was walking in the back of that arena, and I seen Iowa and Caitlin Clark celebrating with the confetti falling on them, I seen red because I was like, dang, that was supposed to be us.

It's kind of hard to explain that to people who weren't there, you know what I'm saying? Once you get that feeling, you don't ever want to feel that again. We cried in each other's arms after that. So it's going to take a lot of like heart because everybody tired right now. Nobody got legs. So it's going to take something else.

Q. Mikaylah, what has this week been like in terms of the intensity, the practices, the points of emphasis for you all just going into this?

MIKAYLAH WILLIAMS: Obviously we've been trying to be real sharp going into this. We've been paying great attention to like the details and, like what Flau'Jae was saying, the discipline of things. We've been going real hard, conditioning, making sure that, when it is crunch time, we've got that extra wind to get down and back and make that block or that extra steal or whatever.

I think for us the biggest thing was just being locked in mentally because at this point in the season, it's not the person who's the most physically talented. At this point it's the mental.

Q. Aneesah, how do you guys kind of handle a layoff of two weeks from an SEC Tournament to the first NCAA Tournament game?

ANEESAH MORROW: First, I would say we held each other accountable. That was the first thing. We made goals for each other. Everybody needs to be in the gym at this time. You have a sign-in sheet. We did that amongst captains, and we were like, if we're able to do this and there's some people relaxing right now, then we're getting ten steps ahead of those people that are relaxing.

Just staying together within those two weeks, but also challenging yourself. What is something in your game that you have to work on? If it's free throws, if it's jump shots, if it's finishing around the basket, those are the things we worked on in our two weeks.

Q. For Morrow and Johnson, I'm wondering how would either of you describe both the staff's approach and your own approach to trying to maintain or optimize your fitness going into this tournament? While I realize everyone -- you all say you're ready to go 100 percent, I think when people see you in walking boots on Sunday and the compression shoes today, it can be confusing. Maybe they don't understand the technology and so forth. How would you just describe the approach to optimizing for this?

ANEESAH MORROW: I would say honestly a lot of people see me in a boot, and I go out, and I get a double double.

(Laughter).

What? Like it's honestly just to take a little bit of stress that might be on my feet while walking without a gym shoe on, just having that boot on, having a little bit more support.

Of course we know how much time we spend in getting treatment this whole time for two weeks and being able to take that next step. So I guess it will just show on the floor.

FLAU'JAE JOHNSON: Yeah, and I mean what I think is just like, if you get on that court, nobody -- you're not hurt. You know what I'm saying? You get on that court and tell Coach you're good to go, then there's no excuse. You've got to be good to go.

For me, I just try to take every precaution. I've been doing more treatment than I've ever done in my life, really

learning how to take care of my body.

The boot was more so really like a precaution. They told me you can get out of the boot, but I'm like, no, I'm doing good. I'm not changing nothing up. That's just how I am.

Q. Just what did you see in that game against Texas? Flau'Jae said you're going to need eight, not just three. What did you see out of the other five that gives you some hope about their ability to step up when the moment is needed?

MIKAYLAH WILLIAMS: I think the biggest word was hope, just knowing that the people sitting on the bench were ready to step up and they were ready when their name was called.

That just gives -- I guess it gives them confidence. It gives the coaches confidence in them. It gives Aneesah and Flau'Jae confidence in them, me confidence in them, just knowing that they were competing with the Number 1 team in the country at the time. So just a whole bunch of confidence going into March.

FLAU'JAE JOHNSON: I think a lot of confidence in them, but it's just like the small things, like we lost to Texas by seven, missed eight free throws. You see what I'm saying? I think they kind of understood more of like it's not about me coming in and hitting that big shot. It's more about me coming in and getting this stop and then getting on the ground for that 50-50 and then making them free throws.

I think they understand. In practice, we've been pushing them. I've been pushing Jersey. I've been pushing Lili. I've been pushing Jada, KG. Like, KG, where you at? Jada, where you at? We're going to need you all. You all can look at us. I'm like, don't look at us to go do it, say I'm going to do it.

I think everybody got to take pride in that, and I think they have that. Jada got an unwavering confidence as a freshman that I never had. She's going to be better. KG is just an absolute baller. She's just got to get out of her head. And Jersey, I think her ceiling is so high, just being 6'5" and being able to move like a guard, like that's different.

It's just us pouring into them, I think, is more so what we've been doing.

ANEESAH MORROW: I would say I remember sitting in the locker room and talking to the doc and everything, and I'm like, well, they holding their own. I'm like I'm really in pain right now, so I've got to take a step back.

Honestly are seeing the confidence they have gained in these two weeks, that's another thing too, showing that they can go up and compete with at the time the Number 1 ranked team in the nation and being able to hold their own.

Sometimes when you're not getting in the game and you might not get subbed in, you lack a little bit of confidence, but knowing they played a whole half without me and Flau'Jae, like the sky's the limit honestly.

Q. To any of the players, what's it been like having Seimone Augustus on the staff this year? What have you learned from her as a coach, and have you seen her becoming more comfortable with becoming a coach?

MIKAYLAH WILLIAMS: I think for me, the relationship builder with coach was definitely after the Washington game when I scored zero points. I called her, she came to the room, and we were just talking. I was just like, I don't know, obviously. The confidence, it was low because I've never done that in my life.

So I was just like what do I do next? I think her just pouring in that confidence and just keep going, keep going, like she was telling me that it was okay, like it's okay, basketball players do that sometimes.

Then just shaking back. I think her biggest thing is just shake back. It's okay to mess up, it's okay to do whatever. So just shaking back for that next day in the NC State game.

FLAU'JAE JOHNSON: I would say just like how to be a professional. I always talk to her about the next level because that's where I'm going to be soon ultimately, and I'm just like, like small things, like how do you do this? What is it about the playbook? How much faster is it? What do I have to do in order to be okay when I get there?

I don't know, I try to ask her more about that and just like development. She got one of the nastiest crossovers over ever, so I've been trying to figure that out. Like she's great.

And she's like really consistent as a person. She don't have days where she's here and here. She's always right here, and that's where I'm trying to get.

ANEESAH MORROW: I would say the same. Coach is very calm and collected every day. One thing that I really learned from her is just diet and taking care of your body and how important it is if you want to be able to be that elite player and play for so many years and dominate, at the same time, you have to take care of your body.

Q. Mikaylah, after Aneesah went down during the Texas game, you were still on the court. What was your message to the rest of the team and the rest of the girls out there on how to bounce back from that, especially in such a high stakes game for you all?

MIKAYLAH WILLIAMS: Obviously we want Neese on the court. She's our senior, our vet, our leader, like we want Neese on the court. I think my message to the rest of the team was this is your chance to step up and fill in those big shoes.

For the most part, I think Sa'Myah and Jersey and Aalyah, I think they did step in and do what Neese does, but at the end of the day, my message was work hard, do the best you can, fill in those shoes, and when your name is called, be ready.

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