

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - George Mason vs Florida State

Saturday, March 22, 2025

Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA

Pete Maravich Assembly Center

Florida State Seminoles

Coach Brooke Wyckoff

Ta'Niya Latson

O'Mariah Gordon

Media Conference

Florida State 94, George Mason 59

BROOKE WYCKOFF: Just really proud of my team. Really, really proud of my team and the way they battled. This is the NCAA tournament. Every team is a really good team and George Mason is a very, very good basketball team.

They're conference champions. Had a great season. They gave us a really good challenge today.

But no matter what the adversity was, no matter the mistakes that we may have made or things that didn't go our way, these players continued to battle and battle and again and again and again for 40 minutes.

So I'm just so proud to get this win. Just proud of who they are and definitely how they played tonight.

Q. Ta'Niya, this was the best we've seen you, feels like, in several weeks tonight. Seemed like you're playing with other another level. This is the NCAA tournament. Did you feel like that two-week break really helped you to perform tonight?

TA'NIYA LATSON: Yeah, definitely. We got some time off for spring break. I had some good time with my family and friends and then we came back and we got to work. I felt good during practice. Got my groove back from injury I feel like. That was something I wanted to harp on, being good in practice so it can translate into the game.

Q. What did you ladies think of your offensive and defensive execution, particularly in the second half?



O'MARIAH GORDON: In the second half our defense was our main vocal point. We were able to get stops. We had a little break where 14 started to go off, but we came back and we were able to defend and do what we were supposed to do to, get the rebounds how we were supposed to, and then that translated to offense. We were able to get out and run and do what we do best.

Q. Felt like the fourth quarter is what we're used to seeing from you guys. Did it feel going back to the two-week break it took a few quarters to get the cobwebs off, and once the fourth your hit you were ready to run with it?

TA'NIYA LATSON: Oh, yeah, definitely. They gave us a run for our money in the second and third quarter, but we had to get stops and score and stay together. That's something we stressed in the huddle, staying together and scoring and settle in and hitting our free throws, hitting our jumpers, hitting our layups, and just staying together.

Q. O'Mariah, as a senior, what it like getting this first win, getting over this hump that you guys have been battling for the last couple years?

O'MARIAH GORDON: It feels great. Super blessed and super happy that each and every one of us were able to put the work and did what we're supposed to do and be able to get this win and go on to the next round. It feels great.

Q. How important is it to get off on that start you guys did scoring as much and holding them to as little as you did?

BROOKE WYCKOFF: Yeah, it was huge. You know, just, again, hadn't played in two weeks, so shaking a little bit of the rust off. Obviously tournament atmosphere and jitters. But I love the way we came out, and that was the first quarter, and then how we finished in the fourth quarter.

Again, we knew George Mason was going to give us a run, they were going to give us a great challenge, and they did. As Ta'Niya said, they hung in there. Ta'Niya led us with



not only her scoring but the way she just wasn't to be denied.

She hit the floor a bunch of times just scrambling to get the ball and make sure we had the possession. She rebounded and I'm just really, really proud of how she led us tonight.

Q. Brooke, how does first NCAA tournament win for you as a head coach of the Seminoles sound?

BROOKE WYCKOFF: Feels great. Sounds great. Feels great. But I just credit this team, again, with the work they put in all season to get us to this position.

To put us in this position to win this game. Feels really good and I'm just happy for our players.

Q. When they pulled within 7 in the third you called time out.

BROOKE WYCKOFF: Uh-huh.

Q. What happened there in the huddle before...

BROOKE WYCKOFF: This team that I have is very smart. When I call a time out they know exactly what I'm going to say.

We talked about how we would let Suarez get a couple looks, good looks, and just that we needed to turn up the intensity defensively.

That was it. Just to dictate. That's what we always want to do defensively. We weren't doing that I felt just to start, and so that's what we talked about. They did that, and when we do that, our defense leads to our offense. That's what sparks those runs.

Q. Your team went on a 31 to 6 run. What defensive and offensive adjustments did you make in the first three quarters to the fourth?

BROOKE WYCKOFF: Yeah, we talked about it. We knew we were going to have to overtime just impose our will with our pace, defensive intensity and wear our opponent down.

I felt like we did that. We locked down again defensively and really just continued to pressure the ball, continued to battle for rebounds, and that just leads, again, to just playing with pace offensively.

I mean, we had 46 points in the paint. That wasn't just the post players, that's guards getting to the rim and imposing their will that way.

This team knew what they had to do to finish this game and they did it really well.

Q. KK played with three fouls in the second half. Still finished with a double double.

BROOKE WYCKOFF: Yep.

Q. You kept her in. What was behind that decision and your trust in her?

BROOKE WYCKOFF: Yeah, I mean, she knew exactly the situation and I thought she played really smart. Avery Treadwell gave us a couple good minutes off the game to spell her, but we need KK in the game. She knew the situation. She still really did a great job of protecting the rim, but doing it smart.

That's what have to do, you have to trust your veterans and I'm glad she performed. She did a great job.

Q. Ta'Niya had 11 made free throws out of 14 attempts. So good at getting to the free-throw line.

BROOKE WYCKOFF: Yeah, she's amazing. That's the thing she does so well, is she's really, really hard to stop. And then she's attacking with pace and feeling good, she gets to the free-throw line or she scores or both.

And so, yeah, just her and her ability to knock down free throw is one of the best I've ever seen. So love her focus. And just even when she didn't get calls, she didn't let it get to her. She just kept going and wouldn't be denied.

Q. Coach, the key to this game for you was rebounding. How would you evaluate the rebounding performance?

BROOKE WYCKOFF: Yeah, I loved our offensive rebounding. I thought we did a really good job of getting ourselves not only offensive rebounds and second chances, but points off those.

We could have been better defensively rebounding but, we got some really, really clutch ones. That's a good offensive rebounding team George Mason. I loved that we only gave you up one second chance point in the second half, so that was key.

Going to keep working on it and keep making it a point of emphasis.

Q. There was a moment where Amaya Bonner lost a ball. Wasn't a great play on the offensive side. Then

went down, like sprinted down and stole it and got it right back. To be able to see that from one of your not necessarily star players, what does it show about this team's like want and will to win?

BROOKE WYCKOFF: Yeah, it shows how locked in and how unified they are that they're willing to make every single play and do everything they can to get a team win. That was a perfect example. I loved that play.

Just that, okay, we made a mistake. We're going to keep responding and keep going. That's Amaya's play and so many times over this game I just saw that growth in us.

Q. Five for five from Sydney from deep.

BROOKE WYCKOFF: Yeah.

Q. What did you like about her confidence to keep shooting the ball after rough stretch last couple of games?

BROOKE WYCKOFF: Yeah, that's what good shooters do, they keep shooting confidence even when they've had a little bit of a slump.

So Sydney, we always think it's going in when she puts it up. When they sees that first one go down you can count on some for coming.

So I love, again being how she was confident, kept shooting, and had seven rebounds. That's also really good for Syd. That's a huge number for her on the defensive end.

Proud of her. Huge, huge game.

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