

# NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - Jacksonville vs LSU

Friday, March 20, 2026

Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA

Pete Maravich Assembly Center

## LSU Tigers

## Coach Kim Mulkey

## Flau'jae Johnson

## Mikaylah Williams

### Media Conference

LSU 116, Jacksonville 58

THE MODERATOR: Welcome to the Baton Rouge regional of the Women's NCAA Tournament. We're joined by LSU, who got the win tonight 116-58. We're joined by Head Coach Kim Mulkey, also by Flau'jae Johnson and Mikaylah Williams.

We'll start with questions first to the players.

**Q. Mikaylah, what did you feel like to get this thing underway. You have a number of girls who didn't have this experience, and it was important to get them touches. You shared the ball so well tonight. Your thoughts on getting this thing started.**

MIKAYLAH WILLIAMS: First off, we were itching. We were itching to play basketball. I was excited to come in here. Everybody was excited. The energy was great. I don't know if you could feel it, but the energy was immaculate. We came in trying to be disciplined, trying to share the ball, trying to get everybody involved, trying to get a lot of post touches. I think we came in and executed our game plan.

FLAU'JAE JOHNSON: We've been practicing, practicing, practicing, having great intentional practices. That's what we've been doing in practice and how focused we've been.

**Q. Mikaylah, you came out on fire. What was working so well for you? Also, you and big 4 were playing off each other really well. Talk about your chemistry.**

MIKAYLAH WILLIAMS: Oh, man. Me coming out on fire



was excitement. It was just excitement. I'm glad it turned out that way. Playing with 4, we clicked as soon as I came on campus. Even before that. We met at a camp, and the rest has been history. I'm extremely excited to finish out this season with her, and I hope we end out on a bang.

FLAU'JAE JOHNSON: Yeah, she's my recruit. Take pride in it. When Mikaylah get going, it's easier for everybody. Always know she's gonna hit that cross and hit that 3. So I'll be ready. She plays with so much poise and impacts the game in so many ways. When she's coming out, we're a better team.

**Q. This question is for you, Mikaylah. I talked to Flau'jae earlier in the season. I asked here what are the things that LSU needs to do to win a National Championship. Today is the first step in that. From your lens, what things would help you get there?**

MIKAYLAH WILLIAMS: I don't know if you heard Coach Starkey say it, but no rebounds no rings. We can start with rebounding the ball, and I think us all being on the same page and playing with each other and playing together and playing disciplined and closing out those big games in the fourth quarter, that's the biggest thing for us. Just staying disciplined down the stretch.

KIM MULKEY: They need to hear me say it while they're in here. Neither one of them had a turnover tonight. Bam!

**Q. Flau'jae, what do you think of Mikaylah not having a turnover while doing behind-the-back passes and no-look hesitation passes?**

FLAU'JAE JOHNSON: I mean, I see it in practice. So I'm not really surprised. But I feel like this week, we've just been super locked in. From a leadership standpoint, from an energy standpoint, and that type of energy, you play your best basketball then.

I'm excited to see how she comes out this March healthy. I feel like this is just the beginning. 18 and 10 is crazy, but that's what she's capable of. She's a triple-double type of player. It's nothing new to me. I'm glad we had minimal -- we had zero! That's what we do, baby! But that's what



she do, man. This is what she do. She's elite.

**Q. Flau'jae, you guys forced 28 turnovers tonight, also scored 116 points. You were kind of talking about your overall thoughts on this one. Did it feel like a complete performance by you and your team this evening?**

FLAU'JAE JOHNSON: Not complete because that second quarter we gave up too many points. We weren't talking. We were making small mistakes, which we can't do. We've got to clean up. I know Coach Bob gonna clip that, and we'll talk through it tomorrow, flush it and let it go. Not a complete game, but it's okay.

For the first round, you have to clean up those things game by game. If you had a bad game today, squash it. You had a good game today, squash it. You're on to the next. So not a complete game, but it was decent.

**Q. To both players, how refreshed and recharged do you think you were? Certainly looked like since the SEC Tournament to now, you're ready to make the next run.**

FLAU'JAE JOHNSON: Definitely recharged. Did a lot of extra conditioning. That's what you've got to do during the tournament to be in peak shape. I feel like we got a lot of rest on our legs.

This is what March is about. The team who want it the most. I was telling them when it starts burning and stuff like that, play hard through that because that's when you can reach different heights. I felt we were just ready to play. We've been going for a while. Me and 12 was like, let's get it. Like let's go.

**Q. Flau'jae, yesterday you talked about you and your teammates all playing that great game together. You had seven teammates that scored in double digits. You all had a couple steals. How was it to have so many teammates play that good game tonight?**

FLAU'JAE JOHNSON: It was amazing. That's what we need, and that's who we are. Beginning of the season, a lot of people got playing time. During the SEC, it dwindled a little bit.

We have to show we have a bench that can play that's just as talented, just as disciplined and just as focused. It's important to have that confidence and know they can play in the postseason, know they can play these games, and know that we have confidence in them and Coach Mulkey has confidence in them.

I feel like when everybody's clicking, we're great. You see flashes of it. Early in the season, Duke, Bella, big plays. Grace, big plays. Z, big plays. Just instilling that confidence. We need everybody. It's not just me and Mikaylah. It's going to take everybody. I'm glad everybody getting their feet wet for sure.

**Q. Flau'jae, y'all scored 116 in a game and tied the record for the most 100-point games in a season. What are your practices like? How much do you all get up and down in a practice?**

KIM MULKEY: We don't let them go against each other. In all seriousness, we go against the guys. Because I want to sometimes, and I'm like no because if this one scores on this one, she's going to be pissed, and this one's going to get mad at this one, and they go at it, which you love in the preseason but not during the course of the season. I've thought so many times I need to do it, but I just say let the guys do it.

**Q. I assume when playing basketball if you play at a high level, this is what you want to play. How much fun is it to play like this?**

FLAU'JAE JOHNSON: It's so fun. If you want to hoop, come to LSU. If you really just want to hoop, Coach Mulkey, she's just like go ball, you know what I mean? And I think like everybody looking at her like this is why people like to come and play at LSU. This is why we get the best transfers and the best freshmen because they like to come play this style of basketball.

If you can put the ball in the hoop, you know what I'm saying, you can run the floor, you're going to love playing here. That's what I love to do. It's what 12 love to do. It's really fun, and we score a lot of buckets. In practice, we always emphasize push ahead, push ahead.

**Q. What do y'all think you can do differently to win Sunday?**

FLAU'JAE JOHNSON: Clean up mistakes. I believe that if we clean up those small things, those small mistakes, being on help side, talking on defense, helping the helper, being in rotation, those small things win championships.

Transition defense, cleaning up those things. Those are like mental lapses. And we're a younger team so I think just getting everybody to realize how crucial those little things are and it starts with us. It starts with me and 12. So we're going to get in the film room and fix that.

**Q. Mikaylah, Flau'jae touched on it earlier. Getting the young girls involved, like we said, the first time for**

**them, how do you think they did tonight?**

MIKAYLAH WILLIAMS: They did great, came out ready to play. They played hard and came out listening. I've said this since we started that they're eager to learn, they're eager to play, and they're great people and humans to be around. They did great, and I'm excited to see how far they go in this tournament.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for your time. Congratulations.

**Q. Kim, is there any way you can nitpick a 58-point victory?**

KIM MULKEY: Yeah. You want me to tell you?

**Q. Yeah.**

KIM MULKEY: Look at the second quarter. They shot 50-something percent, didn't they? 58 percent. That's too many points. I said it coming off the floor when the ESPN lady asked me. I said it's too many points. You gotta clean that up.

Yeah, we will nitpick it, but we won't nitpick it so much that we're going to look back at that. We've got to move forward. We've got to get out of here and watch this game and do a scouting report on them and get ready to practice tomorrow.

I think we had a few too many turnovers. The second quarter was sloppy.

**Q. What did you think of your offense tonight? What did you think of tying the Division 1 record for most 100-point games in a season?**

KIM MULKEY: The offense is not surprising. We've seen that all year. I've said it so many times, I feel like I'm a recorder. We can score the ball.

We just have to keep committing to things defensively when you play the great teams that are as good as you or better than you, and we've got to make sure that we show them turnovers. We've got to make sure the defensive help is there.

We got sloppy doing that. The record, yeah, I don't know how many 100-point -- what's the record? How many have we done?

**Q. 15.**

KIM MULKEY: So we've scored 15 games this year, 100

points? And that's tied the record? Yeah, that's a lot of scoring, but I've got a lot of scorers out there.

**Q. Kim, just Amiya, is she good to go?**

KIM MULKEY: Coach's decision. Yes, she's good to go. She'll play in the next game.

**Q. The decision to start Grace in the second half, I'm thinking you want to get the young girls minutes?**

KIM MULKEY: Yeah, and it was also my decision to put her back in in the first half when she had two. You didn't ask me about that. You're not staying on top of things, son, okay? Because I don't normally do that.

But I needed Grace to get some minutes, and the score was such that as I told her, I don't care if you foul out in the first half. Play hard. She needed to get in the flow and some minutes. I don't know that I've done that many times in my career.

So what was your question? Oh, I thought everybody did fine. Almost had eight of the nine that played scored double figures. So I think Bella and Divine didn't, but I think Bella had, like, ten rebounds, didn't she?

**Q. She did.**

KIM MULKEY: She tweaked her ankle a little bit there, but she's fine.

**Q. I know you emphasize defense and rebounding. How much do you think that has to do with the number of high scoring games you've had this year, or is it just the scoring talent, or is it the defense creates --**

KIM MULKEY: I think it's a little of both, depending on the game. Some games, we're giving up one shot. We don't let them get second and third shots so we're turning and throwing it up quickly. I think it's athleticism.

You better get on and move when Fulwiley is in that ball game. We're going to push the ball up the floor. Some of it is defensive stuff. But I think it just depends on the game, the opponent. I think it's just a little bit of everything.

You just look at all of them, and they can all score in different ways. I mean, Jada is a scoring point guard. Fulwiley is a scoring guard when she's at the point. So let it rip. Let it fly.

**Q. Just talk about what you saw out of Flau'jae and Mikaylah, their chemistry. My second question, ZaKiyah Johnson seems to be a silent assassin. She**



**got after it, and we're talking about everybody else.**

KIM MULKEY: There was a point there, I don't know, help me, three, four minutes left in the game, and I looked out there, and I had that freshman class. And I thought, this is fun for me to watch, to watch those freshmen out there together.

Mikaylah, Flau'jae, I say this every chance I get. You may never see the likes of them staying at an institution. This one's four. Unless something crazy happens, I would think Mikaylah is going to be here four years. And she's right. She had to help recruit Mikaylah. But that's what you should do. Great players want to play with great players.

Z, I put her at the 3 a little bit there in the end of the game. That's her natural position, and she's done nothing but be a great teammate, a joy to coach. And whatever you need me to do, Coach, I just want to play. That's why I moved her inside.

**Q. Coach, we've seen the depth and the versatility all year. When it comes to March, just talk about how fun it is being able to roll out so many lineups, especially against teams that you've never seen before and how challenging that may be for other teams.**

KIM MULKEY: Well, it allows you to play them early in the games because you have seen them perform in the SEC games. Regardless of what the score is, it gives you some confidence to look down there and go Bella, get in there for Flau'jae and give her a breather, regardless of what the score is. Because those kids, they're freshmen. And if you don't give them minutes through the course of the year, you're not going to have confidence when you get down to the playoffs.

I'm very confident putting different lineups out there, as you see. I don't think you can do a scouting report on us and say Mikaylah, Flau'jae, and everybody else. I think you better do a detailed scouting report because you don't know who we're going to start, who we're going to play, the flow of the game. I can go big with two bigs. I can go big, small. I can go both small. The game just kind of dictates that.

**Q. Are you looking forward to Sunday and what the atmosphere could be like now that it's official and this will be the last game for --**

KIM MULKEY: I am. I was pleased with the crowd today. As the game got going, I looked up and said we filled this thing, other than three or four sections in the end zone behind the students. That concerned me because 5:00 is traffic around here, and it's people getting off work.

I will say this again. Flau'jae Johnson deserves to have this place sold out. What she has meant to our community, to women's basketball, to all sports at LSU, when you think about LSU sports, we can all sit and start naming people that played in all the sports. Flau'jae may be the only one that we don't need to know what her last name is. Just say Flau'jae.

She'll go down in the history of LSU athletics as not only a young lady that stayed four years, first McDonald's All-American I signed here, won a National Championship, Elite Eight she's been in. What she gives and does in the community with all her money, and she's just, she's a joy. And as a coach, man, you hope you can just coach those kind of kids in your lifetime, and I've been blessed to coach several.

But it's just we need to sell this place out. It was a great crowd today, but I saw a few empty seats so I'm gonna harp on that tonight and tomorrow, and hopefully it will be a memorable day or night. I don't know if we're playing a daytime game or a night game yet. But let's do our part as people that appreciate a young athlete like that.

**Q. This is a little bit of an off-the-wall question. I wanted to ask, your outfits during March Madness are some of the most memorable I've seen in the last several seasons. I wanted to ask, what do you do with the outfits after you've worn them at a momentous time. Are they in a collection?**

KIM MULKEY: No, they're in my closet. I guess at the end of the season, somebody will come get them and auction them off. I don't know. They leave them at my house. And, oh, I'm supposed to wear that tonight, and I wear it. I don't know.

**Q. I heard something on the radio that fashion trends recycle every 20 years. 20 years from now --**

KIM MULKEY: Say that again. Recycle fashion?

**Q. The cycles in fashion come around every 20 years.**

KIM MULKEY: Bell bottoms. I wear a lot of bell bottoms. Some of y'all are pretty dang old in this room. Y'all can remember the bell bottom days, right? I won't point you out, but you know what I'm talking about.

**Q. I did have a follow-up to my earlier question on defense. Can you comment specifically on the points off turnovers? I think it was 18 steals, 38 points off turnovers.**

KIM MULKEY: Well, you're being active. You're playing a team that's not supposed to win, but you can't look at where they're placed. You're looking at you're in our bracket, you're in our way, and you're one of the six games we need to win. And you go out there, and you play hard.

And I think we have athleticism, speed, and quickness with certain ones on the floor, but we also have strength. We also have some strength out there. So get after it.

And if people score -- and I thought Jacksonville did score in that second quarter. Make the shots that they make hard. Just play defense. When you get on down this road, guys, it's gonna get tougher, and you hope that your defense, you hope that your rebounding can help you when you're not scoring 100 points or whatever we did, you know, 15 times this year.

Good teams are going to make you execute in a half court. When you get right down to it, you're not going to get all those fast break points. You're not going to get all those steals. When it gets closer to narrowing this field down, you're gonna have to execute in half court.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, congratulations. Thank you for your time.

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