

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

Friday, March 20, 2026

Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

Williams Arena

**Ole Miss Rebels**

**Coach Yolett**

**McPhee-McCuin**

**sira Thienou**

**Cotie McMahon**

Media Conference

Ole Miss 81, Gonzaga 66

YOLETT MCPHEE-MCCUIN: Just great game for us. Really have a lot of respect for Gonzaga. They played the whole way.

I remember what it's like to be on that end, and I thought that even though we didn't finish the way I would want us to finish, I thought it was pretty cool for them to be able to create memories for their fans and whatnot, and I know that they're young, so maybe they can build off of how they finished going into the next season, and I just wish them the best of luck.

**Q. Sira, this is your first game back in about a month. How did it feel to be back on the court?**

SIRA THIENOU: It was good. I was excited and it felt really good to be back on the court with my teammates and having fun and do what I love.

**Q. How are you feeling?**

SIRA THIENOU: Oh, great.

**Q. Sira, what advantage or what role do you think the size advantage that you guys had played in today's game?**

SIRA THIENOU: Can you repeat it, please?

**Q. Yeah, you had a pretty good size advantage on**



**them. I think you have seven players in your rotation who are 6'1" or taller and they only had a couple. What role do you think that played in your success?**

SIRA THIENOU: I don't know, I think we just played our way. We didn't change anything. We just came out and dictated and disrupted.

**Q. Sira, how did you stay so game ready? You hadn't played since middle of February. Mentally and physically?**

SIRA THIENOU: The team behind us, the coach, my teammates, they were wishing me the time that I was out, just trying to make sure that I'm good. They did everything possible to make me ready.

**Q. Cotie, how did it feel out there to get your first playoff win as an Ole Miss Rebel?**

COTIE McMAHON: Yeah, it felt great. Obviously we're going into the game with a mindset of 1-0, and I feel like if we start the game off how we did this game moving forward, I feel like we'll be in a pretty good spot. So I was really happy with our effort and the way we dictated and disrupted.

**Q. Do you have an update on Jayla Murray?**

YOLETT MCPHEE-MCCUIN: No. No update. She got hit in the head, so usually when that happens, then there needs to be just time, because if you get hit in the head, you're going to be a little bit shaken up. We didn't feel like we needed to put her back in the game, so we just did it as precautionary.

**Q. I think it was maybe Florida or a different game, you said that your defense was kind of suffering not having Sira because she sparked a lot of that. Four blocks, three steals today. How much did it mean to have her out there dictating and disrupting?**

YOLETT MCPHEE-MCCUIN: Oh, my gosh, 12 points, eight rebounds, three steals, four blocks after a month off? What do you think? I'm a happy camper, to the point



where I was like, I just wanted to bottle her up. I didn't even play her anymore after that.

She just means a lot to us, and I think her sitting out and having a chance to watch the game has really helped her, and we're going to need her, so grateful to have her back.

**Q. Can you talk about how Denim DeShields played today?**

YOLETT McPHEE-McCUIN: I was really impressed with Denim. Initially I was kind of upset with her because I felt like she should have commanded the floor more. Then as the game went on, she really started to come on with it, and I just kept telling her, that's the Denim that I want to coach, that's the Denim that I know, the whole time. I just couldn't stop saying it because she is going to be very important. She is the true point guard on the team. She's really the only true point. Cotie plays the point because she is talented, but Denim is the point guard. That's what we brought her in to do. I was really pleased after calling her up with the way she delivered.

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