

# NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: Second Round - Alabama vs Texas

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Moody Center

## Texas Longhorns

## Coach Vic Schaefer

## Taylor Jones

## Shaylee Gonzales

## Madison Booker

Media Conference

**Q. Now that you guys had a day to digest it, what did you like about the Drexel performance and what did you think the team still needs to work on?**

TAYLOR JONES: I think we did a good job at executing our offense the second half. I think overall, the second half was a lot better than the first half. I think we can all agree on that.

I think we went inside really well and got a lot of good paint points. Maddy had like 14 assists, so we shared the ball really well.

Shaylee obviously shot the ball great.

Yeah, I think that our offense flowed really well in the second half, and I think we also took away a lot of things that they were trying to do better in the second half.

And also we got a lot of O boards, too.

SHAYLEE GONZALES: I agree with that. Our second half was a lot better. Before the game we watched a lot of film preparing for that team, and obviously our upcoming game we're also watching a lot of film.

I feel like just preparing super well for the teams and knowing the scout team playing against our practice players really helps.

MADISON BOOKER I agree with their statements. Another thing I think we did well, in our first five minutes we



went on a 9-0 run. I think we been doing that every game. I think more what we need to work on as a team is just when we go on that run the first five minutes after the media timeout, keep going on that run.

**Q. For all you guys, what are ya'll's initial thoughts on the Alabama team?**

TAYLOR JONES: They're an SEC team, so I feel like that whole conference is very physical. Coming into this game, I think that they're going to be a lot more physical than Drexel was.

They're basically playing four guards, one post. That's going to be a different matchup for our 4 player, but their 4 player is also going to have to guard our 4 players.

I think they're very quick and attack the ball, get to the rim lot, and they also have good shooters. So our defense is going to have to be on pointe.

And they also have a 5 player that can finish around the rim. After watching a lot of film last night, they set a lot of ball screens, so we worked a lot on that in practice today.

So just making sure that we're physical and strong and ready to come out and play.

SHAYLEE GONZALES: Yeah, got a good shooter, good point guard, good inside game with their post player. We know they're going to really push the ball.

Also in transition we got to match up well and just know personnel.

MADISON BOOKER yeah, like Slim said, basically like they push the ball very well transition-wise very quick, fast.

They want to score in transition, and I think it's going to be a great test for our team to see how well our team defense is and transition defense is.

**Q. Going off that, Taylor, what are your impressions of Essence Cody and what she does for Alabama? Madison, did you know Essence at all in high school,**



## AAU circuit?

MADISON BOOKER I did. I did indeed. I know quite a few of those girls. Karly Weathers and Sarah Barker played on kind of the same travel team. They were older than me so played on a different team, but I'm familiar with their game.

TAYLOR JONES: I think after watching the game last night and more film, she's really physical. We have height on her, but she is really athletic, and last night I think she did a really good job at like getting O boards, getting defensive rebounds.

I think her guards also do a good job at reading the defense when she sets a screen and rolls. So our on-ball defense is going to have to be good.

I think she can finish well around the rim, but it might be a little bit more challenging for her with our height. Last night Florida State's post was about her height. It'll be a fun matchup.

We have not shied away from playing some of the best posts in the country, so I don't doubt our defense will be able to handle her.

**Q. Maddy, you have gotten shoutouts in KD, Sheryl Swoopes. Wonder how does that make you feel when you hear from people like that?**

MADISON BOOKER: I mean, it's a blessing. Just the people I guess like I looked up to as a kid. Just watching their game. Watching their highlights and wanted to be like them.

It's a big blessing. Makes me smiles from time to time.

**Q. Wondering logically what has this period been like for ya'll to have to quickly prepare for an opponent you don't know and never prepared for, and also still work on the stuff you need to work on?**

SHAYLEE GONZALES: Taking it game by game. We were able to watch that game of Florida State and Alabama right after our game, and so just watching their game.

Later that night we had film. Then this morning we also had film and practice. So just preparing super well for that and knowing what he need to do to win.

TAYLOR JONES: Yeah, like she said, we were able to watch the game last night and our coaches do a great job of preparing beforehand. Coming into the whole tournament, I think that they -- Coach Schaefer assigns

different coaches different roles, so I know Lovato was already scouting them.

So going into like last night after they won, we already had some clips pulled up and we came back last night and watched a lot of film. This morning we watched a lot of film. Our practices were centered around Alabama.

So we'll probably watch more tonight and then maybe a little more tomorrow, so I'm not worried that we won't be prepared.

**Q. For Taylor and Shaylee, obviously you guys were part of the team from last year's second round loss. What's been the mentality in the locker room to avoid that from happening again, I guess?**

SHAYLEE GONZALES: We keep saying, Final Four. That's our mindset. We just got to take it game by game. We know we don't want to lose. We got a lot of older girls on this team and me being a sixth year, you know, I want to end with a bang.

So just keep winning all that we can and prepare as a team and it's just super fun to be with this team and hopefully we can keep winning.

TAYLOR JONES: Yeah, I think the pain of the loss from last year, you don't forget those games. I don't really even think that this team has had to address that much.

Like I think that we know coming into this game, like, okay, last year we messed up. We're not going to do that again. We're going to keep on going.

So I know in the summer and in our off-season we used that for motivation and now we have a lot more things ahead of us. Just taking it one game at a time not focusing on the pastor future. Just one game at a time.

VIC SCHAEFER: Yeah, just great day to be a Longhorn. Giving God the glory for No. 31 last night. Proud of our team. Excited about the opportunity that we have tomorrow afternoon.

Obviously for me personally, when I think of Alabama women's basketball, I think of Kristy Curry and Kelly and what they meant to Alabama, how good they've been over the years. Obviously had some experience playing them and their team and they're always so well-coached. Always disciplined.

So they are obviously somebody I consider friends and colleagues in the businesses. I don't have many in the business, but certainly feel like they are. Have a ton of

respect and admiration for both of them and their staff. They have a former player that played on or final four team in '98 at Arkansas, Tennille Adams on their staff.

So really good basketball team. We'll have to play -- we're going to have to play really well. Obviously they come from a great league with lots of teams like ours, and so we won't be anything new for them.

So, again, I thought we played well in spurts yesterday. I thought the third quarter was really good. But I thought we had a lot of rust that we had to knock off in the first half.

But I was really pleased with our third quarter. Again, we got a big challenge in front of us. We'll have to play well. They are a big, tough, physical, aggressive basketball team, Alabama. Before we can start talking about Xs and Os and strategy we are going to have to match that toughness and competitive spirit that their kids have.

I'm really impressed with them.

**Q. You mentioned big, tough, aggressive. What were your impressions of Cody last night? More than doubled her average, got a lot of rebounds. Did you know she was that good?**

VIC SCHAEFER: Yeah, didn't play like a freshman. Moment obviously wasn't too big for her last night, and she certainly has our 5 players' attention as well as my attention.

We're going to have to obviously handle and deal with her. She's not just -- she didn't just finish last night, but she set so many ball screens in transition. And she's a big girl. Her screens are very effective and a lot of times they're blind. You don't know they're coming.

So you have to really have your head on a swivel or you're going to get pinned and you might get hurt. She's really good what she does. At the same time, we have to really be aggressive handling that screen.

**Q. Vic, Madison was telling me about she was a big fan of your Mississippi State team's watching those Final Four runs. How unique is it to have a relationship that I guess kind of goes back to then? You recruited her in middle school and then end up all the way here in Texas together.**

VIC SCHAEFER: Well, obviously it's not common, and so it does make it special. You know, any time you recruit a young lady, to me, there is -- and, again, I was a parent. You know, I had a daughter that was being recruited and kids can go a lot of places, win a lot of games.

You know, that's true if you're a really good player. With Blair it was who can I trust with my daughter. Who can I have confidence in with my daughter. With all of our players, and especially Madison and her family, just knowing that we have their trust and confidence here at the University of Texas, you know not a place -- they know I'm here, but they warrant familiar with this place.

So it just means -- it's pretty cool. We share a lot of different stories together and lots of different experiences that date back to our time in that great state. We both have so many friends and family and great memories there.

So we share a lot of admiration for our time in that state. We have so many great experiences, so it's really cool.

For me, when you're recruiting you invest so much time, energy, effort in these kids. Book is no different. So it's really cool to have the relationship that we have, and the stories we can share with each other.

**Q. Along the same lines, she mentioned want to be the best that's ever come from Mississippi. You coached one of the best ever in Victoria Vivians.**

VIC SCHAEFER: Yeah.

**Q. How much it means to her to bring attention to that state. What kind of impact can she have?**

VIC SCHAEFER: I feel the same way. You know, I felt that way when I was in that state and there is still a part of me that is so fond of so many people in that state.

You know, you just to have really experience it and experience the people. And I'm not just talking about Bulldogs. Bulldogs, Rebels, all of them. I think she's to be commended for that.

So, look, I've said this a lot, and I thought about it, Victoria Vivians was of heck of a player. First team All-American her senior year and all SEC. Book as a freshman, she's better than Victoria was as a freshman.

Now, she has to do -- she plays a completely -- she just has a different game. She has had to be our point guard. And not taking anything from Victoria, because Victoria Vivians was never a afraid of any moment, never scared. Had a scoring mentality unlike anybody I've ever seen, and I'm really fortunate to have been able to coach her. She's impacted my career far, far reaching.

And so when you start comparing them as freshmen, I

think Book is a little bit ahead of her as a freshman. We'll see how it all goes as her career goes.

But that's two pretty good Mississippi girls right there that have had -- have really I think put that state on the map. I know that state is awfully proud of both of them. I'm just really grateful that I've had the opportunity to coach them both.

Both of them, not only are they great players, they're just wonderful, wonderful young ladies, come from wonderful families.

**Q. We wasn't able to touch on Madison's performance yesterday because time ran out. Just wanted to get your perspective on the way she's been able to develop throughout the season in terms of I guess decision making as a playmaker? I know over time you're trying to get Shaylee the ball, but also sticking with the game plan of going down low. How has she been able to balance that throughout the season and grow in that aspect?**

VIC SCHAEFER: Yeah, she's learned really quick with me, got to take care of the ball. That's a big, big stat. As I told you the other night after we won the Big XII championship, she was most proud not of the 25 points but of the zero turnovers. That's what she wanted to bring up right away.

Again, she's gotten so much better and she understands the importance of taking care of the ball. She knows I'm not a fan of 50/50s. The one or two that get through in the seven or eight that don't, I just am not a fan of those percentages.

So she's really learned to value the basketball and run her team and get people the ball. You'll hear her last night. She's so unselfish and enjoys the assist as much as the made basket.

Again, that's what makes her great. What makes her a great teammate. What makes her a great person. Again, we're really fortunate to have her.

**Q. How is your sleep schedule. Been able to get some sleep in or up all night watching film?**

VIC SCHAEFER: This time of year, it's not good, but I always say I can sleep when I'm dead. We'll figure it out. I'm trying to give these kids every ounce that you got and making sure you're preparing them and putting them in a position to be successful.

That's what we do as coaches. Just comes with the

territory. Put in a full day today and I'll try to get a little sleep tonight.

**Q. What are your impressions of Aaliyah Nye and what she's able to do shooting-wise from three?**

VIC SCHAEFER: Man, she's really good, Danny. She's really a complete player. You look at her statistics, shooting the ball from two, from three, great handling, big guard. Big, physical guard.

She's just really good. There is so many really good players on the team. I mean, you talk about her and Barker, but both those kids to me, they're kind of -- they kind of are really, really important to that team and make them go.

I know Barker is first team all SEC and she certainly is great in her own right. I'm not sure that Nye doesn't have equal importance. They're separated by about two and a half points what they average.

I think that's where teams get the -- teams that have to guard them. Somebody is going to have put their best defender on one of them and the other one is going to take advantage of you if you're not careful.

So I think that's what makes them so unique. Again, playing a four guard lineup, and reminds me a lot of my state teams when I had Victoria at 4. She was my 2 guard for three years and move her to the 4, she's first team All-American.

I never will forget, she said -- pulled me to the side one day late in her career and said, hey, coach, how come you didn't figure this out a little earlier, moving me to the 4.

She said, I would much rather play the 4. Nobody is guarding me at the 4 and I don't have to chase them guards around the perimeter. I go and lay on some big 4 player and I can guard them down there with a whole lot less energy.

It just -- Barker is a tough matchup offensively for you. You can put a guard on her and then you're going to have a 4 player on one of those other players.

We're going to have to be really good, really solid. I think the thing I like about my four players is we've run into some really good four players this year, and Iowa State has a pretty good one. After the game all anybody wanted to talk about the defensive job she did on her -- in the championship game.

I think we held her to three points, so she's a great player. Nye is going to be a handful for us. I feel like our kids have

a pretty good understanding how to defend the whole team, and we're going to have to do a great job doing it. They're averaging -- you look in their last five games, scored in the high 70s and 80s. One time they been hold to 60s. That was the Tennessee game.

Averaging 75, 76 points a game in the SEC. That's a lot of points. They're scoring a lot of points in that league. That's a credit to Kristy and her staff and that team. We'll have our hands full defensively.

**Q. Blair said that she doesn't think the fundamentals of your defense have changed very much over the years from A&M to state to here. She thinks your approach to how you teach it has changed. Do you agree with that?**

VIC SCHAEFER: I'll have to have a closed-door meeting with her and find out what that means. I'm not sure. (Smiling.)

You know, we do the same drills every day that I've been doing for long, long time. You know, I think maybe part of that, her justification is instead of three minutes today of defense on the floor we went one minute. Instead of two minutes of mirror, we went one minute. Instead of ten minutes of shell we went seven minutes.

And, again, this time of year while I still want to work on the fundamentals and keep our habits, I've learned to not try to do as much between days and between games.

And so, again, I think what we're teaching and how we're teaching it certainly hasn't changed. What I want to say is -- and I've got former players up and down my hallway -- none of your former players ever think you're the same coach today that you were when you coached them. They always think it was much harder. You know, back when they played.

Maybe that's what she's talking about. I don't know.

**Q. From your years of experience in the SEC is there truly an SEC style of play? Does Alabama maybe embody it?**

VIC SCHAEFER: Yeah, I believe it. You're talking about quick, athletic, physical. I mean, our thought for the day today was we have got to be -- we have got to be physical. We have got to play athletic.

When I say that, I mean we have to block shots. Alter shots. You have to play -- you got to play on the ground with your feet and have great technique, because there is a level of quickness and athleticism in all sports in that

league I think.

And so, again, not to take anything from the league we're in because there is so many good teams, great teams, great players, but one of the things about Alabama is they really -- they're really quick with the ball. I think, Kristy has always done a great job coaching them.

As I mentioned when we first started, when 21 sets a ball screen now, you can make two left turns and still be only halfway around it.

So we're going to have to really, really be good technique-wise in dealing with that stuff. I do, I do think there is a level of competitive spirit that those teams in that league just seem to have.

I do think our team is like that. I think we're built that way to an extent. So, you know, we'll see how it all shakes out. I do think in that league there is -- it's a little different.

**Q. Coach, obviously you're very familiar with Alabama and Kristy Curry. How much are you relying on the previous knowledge to prepare for tomorrow?**

VIC SCHAEFER: You know, I always have things in the back of my mind that I've had to deal with them. At the same time, I've just -- I'm always a guy about -- I know what happened -- I have files and files on every team I've ever played. You know, two and three files on all of our conference foes.

You know, I always keep them and go back through my notes. I'm a note taker. I've always been a note taker. If I have to go to a meeting I have a tablet with me. I have a lot of notes.

After a game we write down at halftime on one side what we need to adjust and then have postgame comments on the other side. So I always go to those just to do my homework.

And so the things that I can recall with Kristy and her teams at Alabama are pretty clear to me in my head, and then I'm always a film guy so I'm going to go look at certain films that I feel like have more value than others.

Certainly can't go back and look at 18 films. I might try, but I can't. And so I'll go back and have to value the ones that I feel like might have some pertinent information, whether it's offense or defense, and do it.

So really more than that, I think you just have to figure out when you start of the looking at personnel -- and I told our staff this yesterday. In the old days, ya'll, you could scout a

team one time a year. In person.

Now you can't. The NCAA has ruled that out. When you go scout somebody you're not trying to draw up plays. When you scout somebody, speed and quickness. That's what you can't get off film.

When you sit and watch them courtside in person, that's when in my mind I'm evaluating, speed and quickness.

You might be able to get a play call, but at the end of the day in person, that's what you really get.

If you ever watch a football coaching staff, when the other team is doing their deal on the other end of the field, a lot of O coordinators, offensive coordinators will go down there and stand at the 50 and look at the other team, because they want see just how big them dudes are, in person.

The D coordinator might go down there and look and see just how big those guys are or how fast or speedy they might be in real life. It's just different. I think when you sit there and watch them, that's what jumped out yesterday. Both teams. I thought both teams were extremely athletic, quick, fast, got up and down the floor.

We worked a long time today on that in our practice, the speed of the game.

**Q. All these things you're talking about preparation, film, notes, is it a challenge to pare it down and simplify so the players don't get too much in their heads?**

VIC SCHAEFER: Yeah, four sure. When we went through film today I gave them offensively what our package is going to be. Then I told them, defensively on each player what our goal was and maybe something that they're really good at that we need it really try to eliminate.

And then you give them something as a team that we have to do together to guard them collectively versus, you know, just an individual statistic or individual thing that somebody likes to do.

And so I think you're right, I think you have to be careful. You can't overload them. But here is the thing that I love about our team: When we go to film, they bring their notebooks. They take notes. I want them take notes.

I was a guy and I didn't figure it out until late in my college career, but if I didn't write it down, I can't recall it. For me, I can get this scouting report right here from Elena and look at it and go, yep, that's right, yep, that's right.

But unless I physically write down the plays, write down the movements, it's just the way my brain made. Hard for me it recall them. I have to physically write it out.

See, this is my physically writing up a play. So I know -- I've got all of them. So when I'm out there and she's going through things that we have to defend, I can tell her, go through double high, go through double stagger away.

I can call those and she goes being okay, I got tournament. We been together so long she knows what I'm talking about.

It's just me. Just kind of how my brain works. If I just -- again, going back to my college days, I think I shared it took me a little while to get out of the college until I figures out I had to write my notes exactly how they were on the board and come home and rewrite them. It was just hard for me to recall. For me I have to do the same thing.

So I think it's really important with our kids that we kind of keep it simplified. If you come to a film session with us, our kids are really good. I love that about them. They're very intentional and take the right notes. They get information.

For me maybe it just makes me feel better. At least if I know they wrote it down, in my mind they at least got it somewhere up there.

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