

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Four - Stephen F. Austin vs Missouri State

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Moody Center

Stephen F. Austin Lumberjacks Coach Leonard Bishop

Media Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right. We now welcome Leonard Bishop to the podium. Coach, congratulations on making this NCAA Championship appearance and for your conference title. We will begin now by asking you to make an opening statement and then we'll open it up for questions from the media.

LEONARD BISHOP: Yeah, extremely blessed to have this opportunity to represent Nacogdoches and Stephen F. Austin community the way that we have this season. Again, any time we're talking about dancing in March, it's a really exciting time for us, so, again, our players have worked hard for this. Our staff has worked hard for this. All of our support staff, our administration, everybody has poured into this group, so extremely excited to represent our university and our community on the biggest stage.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Coach. Now will we take questions first from those media members assembled here in Austin and then we'll go to those media members on Zoom. If you are on Zoom and you wish to ask a question, please use the raised hand function to ask that question. When you're called on for your question, state your name and affiliation first.

Q. Hi, Coach. You've been at SFA for three years and made it to the NCAA Tournament twice. How do you feel about that?

LEONARD BISHOP: Amazing. Again, it's a rich women's basketball tradition here at the Ladyjacks, at Stephen F. Austin, so any time, like I said, we're talking about dancing in March and seeding and things like that, it's really a blessing to represent the university in this manner.

Q. Coach, you guys have been the number three side in the conference tournament the past two years,



basically followed the same conference of getting a conference title. How does it feel to come in, even though maybe people look down on SFA as a three seed, coming in with a conference title?

LEONARD BISHOP: Yeah, I think it's Stephen F. Austin and it's the Ladyjacks, like I said. You can look down on us all you want to, but we're going to come into confident.

I don't believe in numerology, but it's my third season, we're the third seed... again, for the third straight year. The Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, all those things line up for us to feel confident in that tournament as well, so just proud of my group for finishing through and finishing strong and coming away champions.

Q. Coach, what kind of jumped out to you about Missouri State on film? Obviously they're a bigger, defensive-oriented team. You guys get out. What pops out to you when you watch them on film?

LEONARD BISHOP: Yeah, their length, their athleticism, like you said. They're a lot bigger than a lot of the Southland teams that we play day in and day out. Coach Cunningham does a great time of after time-out sets and things like that to get them easy point.

They do get out in transition. They're gritty on the defensive end, so a lot of things that we talked about in this short turnaround time for prep that we've got.

At the end of the day, we've got to be the best versions of ourselves. Missouri State presents their challenges, but we got to make sure we're playing our brand of basketball if we want to come away victorious.

Q. SFA won the conference title as a third seed, technically an underdog. How do you feel about carrying that momentum into the NCAA Tournament?

LEONARD BISHOP: Yeah, I think I have a lot of players in there that carry themselves with a chip on their shoulder, whether they felt like they were under-recruited or anything like that. Yeah, we're the third seed but we're Stephen F. Austin so we're going to have confidence. Hopefully we



carry a little bit of that chip on our shoulder into no tournament as well and play with that edge that allows us to be at our best around be as aware as we can.

Q. With your team, a lot of people talk about Harmanie Dominguez. A lot of people talk about Ashlyn Traylor-Walker. Even the freshmen, Aziyah Farrier and Kaylinn Kemp have made names for themselves. Talk about the play of your MVP, Myka Perry, after taking two years off of college basketball and coming back and winning MVP of the conference tournament.

LEONARD BISHOP: Yeah, extremely proud of that kid. Again, and SEC'er, went to Florida out of high school and then took two years off to take care of herself, but extremely proud of her maturation process throughout the year. It took her a little while to knock the rust off of taking two years off but when the stage was at its brightest, she shined and I was really proud of her.

She's a really quiet kid. She might be the quietest kid I've ever coached. I call her a church mouse because that's how quiet she is. But her game speaks volumes. There were a couple of times in that tournament where she was allowed to express herself, whether that be an and one or a charge and it was really fulfilling as a coach to see that emotion come out of her at the right time.

So just really proud of her for continuing to grow, continuing to represent her family and this university the way that she has and I can't wait to see what the next few years hold for her.

Q. Coach, a couple connections of your team to theirs. One of your assistants has some Missouri State experience and I think you coached Angel Scott and she's a reserve guard at Missouri State. It's kind of cool, those connections. What do you remember about Angel when she played for you?

LEONARD BISHOP: Yeah, Angel was a really good player for us. We had her and her sister here. We talk about family all the time and she's one of the ones. We coached a lot of sisters here at Stephen F. Austin and that was a set of sisters that we were able to coach and win a championship with.

Coach Yang graduated from Missouri State. So, again, he wanted to take the scout because it's a little bit personal for him. So, again, a lot of connections and, again, we're playing at the University of Texas so we're talking about three programs that have a really rich tradition in women's basketball so it's an honor to come out here and represent Stephen F. Austin and play against Missouri State and have the opportunity if we win to play against Texas.

We're not taking that lightly.

Q. SFA has not played in Austin for a while and it's a very new experience for y'all and it's a much shorter commute compared to Missouri State. How does that put you in a more advantaged spot?

LEONARD BISHOP: Yeah, I would think it feels like a regular road game for us. We took a four-hour bus ride here and that's typically what our travel is in our conference season, about three to four hours, so, again, we're trying to treat this as a regular game, but also understand that it has much more implication on it.

I thought we got a good night's rest and hopefully we'll have a good practice here in a few seconds and we can let it go rip tomorrow night.

Q. Would you consider it a home game?

LEONARD BISHOP: No, I would not consider it a home game. There's a lot of other things going on. We got this media stuff going on. We got different signage at the hotel. You can tell it's got a different level to it for sure. But, again, we try to keep it as normal as possible as we can for the student-athletes.

THE MODERATOR: All right, I'm looking around. I don't see anyone on Zoom with their hand up. I believe that we are finished with our questions here in Austin, Coach. I just want to thank you for your time and best of luck to the Ladyjacks tomorrow evening. Thanks for joining us today.

LEONARD BISHOP: Thank you. Axe 'em, Jacks.

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