

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: Regional 1 Final - LSU vs UCLA

Sunday, March 30, 2025

Spokane, Washington, USA

Spokane Arena

LSU Tigers

Kim Mulkey

Flau'Jae Johnson

Aneesah Morrow

Mikaylah Williams

Elite Eight Postgame Media Conference

UCLA - 72, LSU - 65

THE MODERATOR: We've been asked to waive the opening statement, so we'll open it up to questions for LSU student-athletes.

Q. Aneesah, we heard on the broadcast that you broke your nose. What was the play that that happened on and what made you want to go back in the game and give it your all out there?

ANEESAH MORROW: I don't know who is lying and saying that I broke my nose. My nose was bleeding. But I'm tough and I'm going to go out there and compete with my teammates. I'm going to try to do everything that I can.

Q. Aneesah, you played your last game in the purple and gold. Curious on how would you reflect on your journey playing with this team?

ANEESAH MORROW: I would say, honestly, my first practice coming in here, I was up for a challenge and just seeing how much that I persevered, but not only on the basketball floor, but with my teammates. I know that they have my back and I have they back far beyond LSU, and I'm grateful for that because you don't get to experience teammates like that.

Q. Flau'Jae, you had a monster of a second half. Just what was your mindset coming out of halftime and really trying to will your team into this -- back into this one?



FLAU'JAE JOHNSON: Just a mindset of perseverance. I didn't have a good second quarter. I feel like I made the team go into a drought. So I just tried to come back in the second half, not forcing it, just play within the system and try to make some stuff happen.

Q. How difficult did they make it inside, obviously, for you guys to get good looks? Some of the things that were you able to do earlier in this tournament you guys were unable to do today. What did their defense have to do with the amount of turnovers that you guys had offensively?

ANEESAH MORROW: I would say of course size. You alter your shot a little bit. Also I would say very physical. We play physical teams, but very physical on the inside.

FLAU'JAE JOHNSON: I don't know, I don't really think -- a lot of my turnovers, I don't think they did nothing. I think it was unforced. It was on me. I made bad decisions. I didn't pass it at the right time. I don't really think -- of course they got length and all of that, but on my end, I feel like it was just some unforced turnovers that weren't necessary.

Q. The season as a whole, how do you think you'll remember it? What do you think the memories are that you'll take from it?

FLAU'JAE JOHNSON: First, I want to just want to thank God. Like, I feel like this season I went through so much, and I really, like, overcame a lot. You know what I'm saying? I feel like the number one thing is my relationship with God. Like, it got so much better because that's who I ran to when stuff got hard. Then when I went to God, I was able to open up to my teammates, I was able to open up to Coach Mulkey, and I thought I became a better person, and I became -- I really became a leader. That's who I am at heart, and that's -- like, I want to continue to be a better person.

So we had success, we made history, but man, I have sisters for life and God, man, he's so good. Like, even in this moment of defeat, like, I'm still, like, thank you, Jesus,



for the opportunity, you know? So I think there's a lot to be learned from this. Definitely going to sit back and learn, but just gained so much perspective from this year. It was beautiful.

ANEESAH MORROW: I would just say, honestly, I'm just grateful for the opportunity. A lot of people don't get the opportunity that I get and that I receive just to be able to come to LSU. I feel like they help helped me not only mature on the basketball floor, but as a person. And Coach Mulkey, thank you for everything. Seriously.

Coach Mulkey challenged me to be a better person, to be a better player, and she challenged me to be able to make it in the real world. She keep it real with you, she show you how it is, and honestly, I'm just grateful for that. I said that I wanted to leave DePaul and find my second family, and I did that. They have had my back through it all. They have encouraged me throughout the process, and I know that it was hard being away from your family and, honestly, experiencing a culture shock.

I had to grow up a lot. I put a lot on my shoulders to come out and do what I did every night. Nobody in the country did what I did every night. Nobody in the country have done what I did over the four years, and I'm honestly just proud of myself for overcoming as much as I've overcome and being able to do it at the biggest level.

MIKAYLAH WILLIAMS: I think for me the biggest word is thankful, just thankful to be able to play with Aneesah Morrow for two years, thankful to be able to play with Flau'Jae, thankful to be coached by Coach Mulkey, thankful to be on one of the biggest platforms that I could be on for women's basketball.

I think another word for me is learning. Like, I'm still learning. I'm only a sophomore, so I've learned so much from Nees, I've learned so much from Flau'Jae, I've learned so much from Amani, all the seniors and everything. So I just continue to take those things, learn, and then hopefully when we come back again, I'll have better decisions and better knowledge of what to do in those certain times.

THE MODERATOR: All right. We'll thank the LSU student-athletes and dismiss them and then take questions for Coach.

Q. We talked about it yesterday, obviously trying to limit somebody else from going off, but Jaquez and Gardiner just above their average from behind the arc. I know you were getting after the girls on those closeouts most of the game. What did you see there?

KIM MULKEY: I want to say this first. The saddest day of your life as a student-athlete in basketball is when you take that jersey off your senior year and you never put it on again. Now, some will go on and play pro ball, but that's why Nees is so emotional. That's a tough pill to swallow when you're a senior. And as I tell her, only one program will be happy in another week. Just one will be happy.

And Betts did not beat us. We guarded her as tough as we could guard her. We did not take advantage of Betts being off the floor in the second quarter and we allowed perimeter threes and other people to step up. But I will say, as I said before, they're not all about Betts. Betts is just a safety valve down there. When they get in trouble, she can score it at will.

But I look at the stat sheet, we outscored 'em four field goals. Now, the foul line, I think they went there almost 30 times to our 12. We out-rebounded them. I would have to go back and look at the shots. We missed just wide-open shots. We knew going in the paint that there would be opportunity for her to alter shots and block shots, but some of the shots we just missed. We missed until I can go back and look at the film and see why we missed those.

Our defense on Betts was as good as we could do. Our discipline defensively cost us. Examples would be when the shot clock was winding down, we are taught every day it's a hot situation and it's an automatic switch, and we gave up several of those today, wide-open shots. So it was a good game. It was a good game.

Q. Obviously Aneesah is emotional. She thanked you. Just what was it like for you to coach her and see just her kind of historical career unfold?

KIM MULKEY: You wish you had Aneesah every time you walked on a court every day because you knew what you were getting from her and her effort. It didn't matter how banged up she was, how hurt she felt. Nees only knows how to play, and that's hard. And she will take this loss extremely hard because that's how she was raised. And give me the Aneesah Morrrows of the world every day.

Q. You heard the girls talk about it. How will you view this season and does it soften this blow to hear them talk about personal growth as opposed to basketball achievements?

KIM MULKEY: As competitors, nothing softens the blow that you're this close to another Final Four (indicating), but being old like I am and being around awhile, I've learned to keep perspective, and time will help me think about things through the course of the year on things that we did that were really amazing, and -- and the portal, right? It's time

to get in the portal. This one leaves, this one goes, this one comes. So next year we'll start this thing up again and see what kind of team you have and go to work.

Q. This is the second straight year you guys get eliminated in the Elite Eight --

KIM MULKEY: Is that terrible or is that good?

Q. Terrible.

KIM MULKEY: Is it? How many Final Fours you play in?

Q. None.

KIM MULKEY: So it's probably pretty good, huh?

Q. Yeah.

KIM MULKEY: All right.

Q. Just curious how you would sum up the journey to the Elite Eight this year and how does it differ from last year?

KIM MULKEY: Different team, different players, role players from last year played bigger roles this year, transfers. I had five in that locker room that had never been to a Sweet 16, never been to an Elite Eight, and the amount of experience that they got will be valuable.

Yeah, I mean, I learned to celebrate every team I coach. Some have overachieved through the years, some have gone just as far as I thought they could go, and then some have underachieved. And that's the fun part of coaching. When you retire, you sit in that rocking chair and you think about all that.

But more importantly than any of that is listening to three All-Americans hurt and talk about things that they have learned that have nothing to do with basketball.

Q. You mentioned the three All-Americans. What was it like to coach all of them at the same time, having all three of them on the same team?

KIM MULKEY: A blessing. It was a blessing. I never take them for granted. I just really value that they chose to come to LSU and play in our program and through good times, wins, and bad times, losses, watch them own their team and own their play and get better and get better.

Q. Obviously just like any other year, you have seniors that are going to graduate and obviously we only see a glimpse of what you guys have been

through just this season. What does this team mean to you and how was it to coach all of them?

KIM MULKEY: I think I would probably need a few days to think and answer that with great detail. After a loss or even an of a victory, it's hard to just sum up in a press conference what this team means. Obviously we had a heck of a year. We -- just off the top of my head, we were a top seed again in the NCAA tournament. We got to host. We won games that we probably should not have. We managed injuries, I thought, as good as we could.

But there's so much more that I want to say, but I would have to just really let the emotion go away after a loss and just really, really think about what a very, very good year we've had, third year in a row in the Elite Eight with a National Championship thrown in there. So there's more good than this loss getting to a Final Four.

Q. I asked Flau'Jae about her second half, and so I wanted to ask you the same. Just what did you think of the way that she really took over the second half and also just her impact on your program?

KIM MULKEY: Well, I remember when I took the LSU job, Flau'Jae Johnson was the first McDonald's All-American that I signed at LSU. I had not coached and won anything at LSU, and she came to LSU. So she jump-started our program, really. And then the portal helped us. We brought in Angel and lots of other players. But Flau'Jae was a high school All-American and we got her. So I'm forever indebted to Flau'Jae Johnson.

I think she told you -- the game was lost in the second quarter. That's where the game was lost. We didn't capitalize on Betts being off the floor. And she feels like she was a big part of that not having played up to what she -- her standards are for herself in the second quarter.

In the third and fourth quarter, I think she really, really tried. That's what All-Americans do. They just try to figure out some way to impact the game, and she did. She did.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.

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