

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - South Dakota State vs Oklahoma State

Saturday, March 22, 2025

Storrs, Connecticut, USA

Gampel Pavilion

Oklahoma State Cowgirls

Coach Jacie Hoyt

Tenin Magassa

Stailee Heard

Media Conference

South Dakota State 74, Oklahoma State 68

THE MODERATOR: Joining us from Oklahoma State, Head Coach Jacie Hoyt, student-athletes Stailee Heard and Tenin Magassa. Coach, we'll let you begin with an opening statement.

JACIE HOYT: These types of games are always really hard to have the right words and be able to put all your thoughts together, but this has been the most amazing season of my life, and it's a testament to the character of every single person in our program.

While I absolutely hate the way that things ended today, I'm so proud. I'm proud of every single person. I'm proud of what we've built. The toughness, the love, the joy, it's uncommon, and that's what we set out to be this season was uncommon on the floor, off the floor.

Quite frankly, no one picked us to be here. It's a team that was picked 11th and finished third in the Big 12. No one saw us being in the tournament. No one saw us doing all the things that we did. While I'm really proud of that and it was amazing, it's just the journey that I'm most proud of and thankful for.

I'm incredibly grateful for just an amazing group of young women who I'm going to talk about to Harlow for the rest of her life, and we'll be able to look back together, and I'll be able to tell her about this season. I'm grateful for a team that made everything so enjoyable for me.

I'm really excited about what the future is going to look like



underneath the leadership that we have in the locker room and the culture that we have right now.

THE MODERATOR: Let's take questions for the student-athletes.

Q. There was a rebounding disparity. They had 47 rebounds, and you guys had 29. Can you talk a little bit about what was the difference between them being able to get so many rebounds this afternoon?

STAILEE HEARD: At one point we had no offensive rebounds. I think that speaks for itself. I just don't think we're as aggressive as we should have been to go get boards, and we knew all along that's all we talk about is winning the rebound war. When we do that, we win. You can't give them a second-chance opportunities on their offensive end. We gave way too many of those up, I feel like. That's just what made the difference in the game.

Q. Tenin, it feels like this was one of your best defensive games of your career. What was so hard about guarding Brooklyn Meyer in this game?

TENIN MAGASSA: She's a good post player. It wasn't easy, but tall enough to be able to disrupt her shot. It was a challenge. It wasn't easy, but it was fun doing it and getting some blocks, yeah.

JACIE HOYT: Listen, Tenin was amazing today. People have no idea how amazing it was because she got hurt earlier last week. Tenin has not had a single practice in the last week and a half. Not one. She didn't get a single rep. Not a single rep.

The injury that she had would keep any normal person out for up to three months. She came back in a week and a half. That is toughness. That is sisterhood.

Their post player is damn good, but I love who we're riding with. I love who we got to be with this season, and I can't say enough about her toughness. I've never seen anything like it.

We prepared all week to not have Tenin, and for her to

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come out and do what she did is absolutely amazing. It's inspiring. I think she took the standard of what toughness looks like for Cowgirl basketball to a whole other level today. I just had to let that be known.

Q. You guys did so well in the Big 12 Tournament. Then you go to Selection Sunday. Now here. Can you speak of the emotions and the joy that you've had this roller coaster ride and what lessons will you take back?

STAILEE HEARD: In my opinion I don't think it was a roller coaster to us, but to other people it probably was because they didn't think we would come out and perform as we did this season.

But I have never been on a team or played with girls that I've enjoyed playing with so much. This one hurts. This one hurts real bad because of the seniors. Every single one of them.

I mean, G and I, we road through it last year. Then to get Tenin in and Lex and to ride it out with Rylee and Landry and Stacie and all them, I feel like it's just probably the best year I'll probably have in college with the girls I had this year.

I just want to say thank you, Coach, because she brought in amazing girls and leaders for me.

Q. Officially playing your last game with Oklahoma State, what's kind of going through your head now?

TENIN MAGASSA: Well, I'm very sad because I loved playing with them the whole year. It was my best year of college, and I'm going to miss all of them so much.

Q. This question is for Ms. Heard. With the emotions you're feeling right now, and clearly everything that you've been through this season, what are you going to take away from this when you go into the offseason and get ready for next year to come back bigger and better?

STAILEE HEARD: I mean, I have a lot to take from just from the leaders I had. I mean, they set the standard. They set the bar high for us, for me for next year to take with me because I still have two years.

I think, you know, just staying in the gym, of course, but for the girls that are coming to us, just tell them and really emphasize the standard is pretty high. They have huge shoes to fill.

Coach said it. Our seniors put us back on the radar. No

one thought we would be here, and I mean, numbers, stats speak for itself. We were picked 11th and finished third, and here we are at the tournament. No one ever thought we would be, so...

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for your time. Questions for Coach.

Q. Stailee talked about that you didn't go and get those rebounds. Was that characteristic of play throughout the year?

JACIE HOYT: Well, first of all, I think South Dakota State is really good at going and rebounding. Their guards specifically. I think that's a little bit unique to a lot of the teams that we've played. So a lot of it came from guard play, which our guards needed to be better, but I do think that definitely not to make excuse, but when you've got a rim protector like Tenin, and then you don't think you're going to have her against the caliber of post player that South Dakota State has, it wasn't as big of an emphasis as it should have been this last week because we were just so concerned with how we were going to guard in the post.

You know, it's just a sucky situation. I mean, I could have been better at preparing them. At the same time I think we were making the most with what we were going through, but credit to South Dakota State. I mean, they wanted it more I thought on certain plays. Definitely not used to that from our team, but I think South Dakota State, I mean, they're experienced. All those kids, they've been here. Our kids haven't. That's a part of where we're at as a program right now. You know, just learning.

Okay, we got to the tournament. What does it take to win in the tournament? I thought they made winning plays today. We didn't make some of those winning plays that we needed to, but at the same time experience, you can't do anything about it. So I know, I know, that in the future what happened today is going to stick with the kids that we've got. When we're back here in a year, it's not going to be the same story.

You live and you learn, and it's just a part of how it went today.

Q. I just want to also talk about the third quarter surge that South Dakota State had when you guys come out with a 7-point lead, and then it was just a series where it's just Brooklyn Meyer over and over again. What kind of happened in that timeout in the fourth quarter that you're kind of telling your group that they need to regroup?

JACIE HOYT: Well, it's a game of runs. We talk about it

all the time. Sudden change is a term that we use a lot. That's the name of the game, you know. They went on their run. We went on our run at one point. It's just how it is.

So in that fourth quarter it was just embracing sudden change. They made that run when Tenin was out, and I thought we made the adjustments we needed to. Probably a little bit too late, but at the end of the day it was what it's been all season long. Hey, regroup. Sudden change. Got to fix it, figure it out, make the adjustments that are necessary. You know, we made the push that we wanted to, but it was just a little bit too late, so...

Q. How do you reflect in the locker room with this team and their seniors in their last game in this jersey? What have they meant to this program and the history that you guys have been able to break records?

JACIE HOYT: They mean the world. Their names are going to be talked about as long as I'm here. They took it to a level that I've never been a part of in terms of their leadership from top to bottom. I think a lot of programs talk about family. They talk about sisterhood. It's real. It's palpable here.

For those seniors, that was them. They either chose to stay after a tough year, or a lot of the transfers came here to spend their last year with us. I've never been a part of a locker room that is hurting so bad after a loss like our team just was, but say the most amazing things just about the year that they had, the sisterhood that exists within our team. So that's what we're carrying with us, but I'm grateful to them for changing a standard, setting a standard, and now just like Stailee said, it's going to be up to the rest of them to take that and run with it because we're in a great place, but I think we all want to continue to be, you know, not on the losing end moving forward.

I have no doubt that the ones that we've got still here and the ones that are coming in are going to do everything they can to not just get to the tournament, but win in the tournament.

Q. You said you guys were picked down at the bottom when it started and then clearly you exceeded those expectations. Is there any particular reason that you think that -- I mean, I talked to South Dakota about that they came in playing with house money. Is there any particular reason why you think -- I mean, clearly after this they're not going to see you as a team that's going to be at the bottom. Do you wonder why they picked you last? I mean, I know you know what you saw in that gym and what you saw during the offseason, why you're here now in the tournament, but is there any

particular reason you think why they would see you down at the bottom?

JACIE HOYT: I think we had a lot of transfers. Well, first of all, last season was very average. Right, we don't like average. It was very average. The truth of the matter is we got a lot of transfers that weren't big names. You know, we had a lot of players that just weren't big names. Even this year with what we did, we still didn't have a lot of players that were named on All-Conference team like I thought they should be.

No, I think I've got to talk about just the job that our coaches do. Incredible with development. What we've been able to do with kids in terms of development and taking kids that were maybe not very high on other people's radars, not the five-stars, not the All-Americans, but go out and beat the All-Americans. I think that's the Oklahoma State way right now. At least for women's basketball, and probably for about every coach at Oklahoma State.

But that's who we are. You know, we're going to outwork you. We're going to compete. We're not going to be afraid to be the underdog. Our kids were fearless all season long.

I think that people were probably maybe correct to overlook us early, but I think just what a testament to the development of our coaches -- or, I'm sorry, that our coaches are able to do.

Then just a testament to our kids and their fearlessness and their love for each other and willingness to compete.

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