

NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: Second Round - Mississippi State vs USC

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Los Angeles, California, USA

Galen Center

Mississippi State Bulldogs Chandler Prater

Madina Okot

Jerkaila Jordan

Media Conference

Q. For any of you really, what do you think it is about playing in the SEC that prepares you for this time of year?

CHANDLER PRATER: So many ranked teams and such high level competition. I think being a first-year player in the SEC it definitely was a lot of fun having that level of competition.

Even if you get knocked down one night, the next night it might be another big one to play against.

Just high competition every night.

Q. Maybe Jerkaila, just taking on the challenge of a player like Juju Watkins on both ends of the floor and the challenge she presents?

CHANDLER PRATER: You want me to speak? Yeah, Juju Watkins is a generational talent. Honestly it's going to be really fun playing against a player like her who obviously has worked on her game so much and prepared at such a high level and is such a great scorer.

It's going to be a lot of fun matching up against her, and we definitely are taking pride in the fact that we're in this place and we're playing against a high seed and getting ready to go against them at home.

Yeah, I mean, there is no way you can look past it when you're playing USC.

Q. Obviously ya'll playing a top seat like USC, can ya'll talk about ya'll mental preparation with all the traveling



you're doing? Just got a victory yesterday. How do you prepare for tomorrow's game against a loaded team like USC?

MADINA OKOT: We been really working and we been really putting in work, and mostly defensively.

And we just hope that defend we had yesterday because we believe that defend we had yesterday helped win the game.

And we going to bring it tomorrow, too. (Smiling.)

Q. Obviously Juju isn't necessarily a one-on-one matchup. Seems like everybody is going to play some kind of part in defending her or whatever. Can you just talk about how you maybe have to take that kind of team-minded approach to that assignment?

JERKAILA JORDAN: Yeah, just like what Madina said, defense is going to keep us in this game. Kept us in the game yesterday. Just bringing that defensive mindset or letting our defense create our offense. Like you said, not just one person is going to have to guard Juju. It's going to take a team effort. She's like Chan said, an amazing player, generational player.

It's going to take all of us to be on the same page and we're going to bring it tomorrow.

Q. What did you notice did about USC's defense. You guys are so good at scoring in the paint, but they're one of the best defensive teams in the country. What it's going to take to exert your advantage in the paint against them? I guess Madina.

JERKAILA JORDAN: Wait, hold on. Just kidding. Madina, you got it.

MADINA OKOT: It's a good defensive team and we just got to be smart. Yeah.

Q. Jerkaila, do you have anything to add to that?

JERKAILA JORDAN: I would try to speak on behalf of my



coach. He is making sure we just go up with two feet. Make sure we stay in our layup, don't fade way, and just embrace the contact.

Like you said they're a great defensive team. Going to be a physical game, so make sure we go up strong. Yeah, just going in with a heads of steam, and it's going to be a battle, so I'm excited for it.

Q. Chandler, can you talk about just it's obviously Women's History Month. Does that play a part in your motivation to bring more eyes to what's going on today and the hype of everything?

CHANDLER PRATER: Yeah, I was just talking to somebody about how cool it is to hear my family members, my friends posting and talking about the women's tournament so much. Like obviously the men's tournament is always like real March Madness tournament.

But like everyone is watching the women play. A lot of people are knowing names and the faces and the stories of the players, which also means a lot, because basketball is really cool.

But like the locker room and the combination of all the different players from different places and people relating to their stories and being hometown heroes is what makes it very special.

Especially during Women's History Month. We're putting it on for women's sports, and it feels really cool.

Q. (Indiscernible.)

CHANDLER PRATER: They're both hometown heroes.

JERKAILA JORDAN: Yeah, I would say from my experience, I just remember watching the women's tournament on TV. And just watching it expand, players like Juju, and you see all the players who have paved the way. Even before, just watching how it has grown and evolved over time, watching it with your own eyes.

Not only that, but being a part of it, playing against people that created the way. Like I said it's a cool experience.

At the end of the day I'm still amazed and shocked coming all the way here to California. It's cool and it's an experience. At the same time we're here to play basketball, and at the same time here to experience stuff, too. I'm grateful and excited for this whole journey.

Q. Everybody asked about Juju. USC is more than just Juju. What's your overall impression of the team

and what do you really have to work on without giving away you're overall game plan?

CHANDLER PRATER: I think they're a gritty team. Teams that play such a difficult non-conference and conference competition, like playing UCLA, what, three times to this point? They've learned how to stand and fight and to face adversity.

But we do that every night in the SEC as well. I think it's going to be a really gritty game and it's going to come down to a lot of toughness.

Like we said, defense travels, and it's got to come to this gym tomorrow night. (Smiling.)

So it's going to be tough. Going to be gritty. We like a fight so it's going to be fun.

Q. Just question for any of you. What's your day-to-day like as far as just preparation? Obviously they're a deep team like you said. Can you just talk about do ya'll watch film? Are ya'll resting your bodies? What is your day-to-day like?

JERKAILA JORDAN: Still kind of adjusting to the time. I wake up at 7:00 a.m. every day because I think it's 9:00 a.m. back at home. Just adjusting to the time. We got to rest a lot yesterday. I think we're resting a lot today.

Really just got to bring our mind, our mental.

But I think we're ready. I think we're -- Madina what do you think?

MADINA OKOT: Yeah, just like Jerkaila said, we have good rest, today off, and getting treatment and, yeah, just trying to focus. Tomorrow is not going to be easy.

Yeah.

CHANDLER PRATER: Shoutout to our masseuse Ebony who we brought with us who has been taking good care of us. She's making sure we ready.

JERKAILA JORDAN: Katie Jones too, our strength coach.

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