

Atlantic Coast Conference Women's Basketball Championship

Thursday, March 6, 2025

Greensboro, North Carolina, USA

Clemson Tigers

Coach Shawn Poppie

Hannah Kohn

Raven Thompson

Postgame Press Conference



Louisville 70, Clemson 68 (OT)

SHAWN POPPIE: What a basketball game. That's what March is for, tournament time is for. Two teams just giving everything they possibly can.

Hats off to Louisville for making one more play than we did. Obviously Jeff and his squad have a really good team and I think could make a deep run into March. I wish them nothing but the best and have the utmost respect for him and his program.

With that said, I'm so, so proud of the team we have in that locker room. I thought we competed with the best of them coming after obviously a game yesterday we fought so hard. We executed defensively quite a bit, and it's just unfortunate that we come up one play short.

Unfortunately with this group we've had this feeling a little bit too often, but we've been so, so close so many times. The only thing you can do is put your head down and keep working.

I'm proud of them. They need to keep their heads up. There's a lot to be proud of for how hard they've competed but also how they've carried themselves.

I'm proud of them. It's just a tough one to swallow.

Q. Coach, you guys very similar last time-out with this Louisville team and this time-out, just one point at halftime, but you guys held with them this time instead of the last time. What did you feel like you guys showed character-wise? Shot making speaks for itself, but the character, the passion, and to stick with

a really good team like this?

SHAWN POPPIE: Yeah, I mean, we learned. We learned from our experiences. We were just in this situation not that long ago, a week ago I guess it was in Louisville. So when you get to that locker room we can't relax. We were just here. I felt like we relaxed a little bit at their place in the third quarter and allowed them to get out in transition. I thought for the most part tonight we maintained our focus to get back in transition.

Now, it cost us some offensive rebounds, but we were willing to play that game, which is hard. When you've been crashing O-boards over and over and over for 31 games and then one game you say get back, it gave us the best chance to win. I thought we kept them out of transition so it made it a half-court game. Then on the other side we executed and made some shots.

These two to my left came up big for us. To end little runs that they have or put a run together for us.

I think some of that's learning from what we just went through, but also a credit to them of a belief that we could do it.

Q. Coach, the foundation that you guys have laid now under your first year but the new era of Clemson basketball, what do you feel are the pillars of that foundation that you can take from this solid run and move forward?

SHAWN POPPIE: Well, it starts with these two. Obviously Mia; those three have really gave us a lot, and that's three returners that we know we have. We got the job a little over -- just short of a year ago. We had no idea what we had, no home, no staff.

Like we're settled; we'll start there. But I've got three that are in that locker room that have played that we know that we can count on, but they also do things the right way. How they carry themselves, their work ethic, their commitment to wanting to win, but also how to represent our university.



I think that's hopefully what people in this room, people watching, our fan base, we represent our university -- I said this yesterday -- in a way that makes me so proud. We play the game in the right way. We fight; we compete; we try to defend; we share the basketball.

I was told on my walk here this is the first time since in the '90s we've had a plus advantage in the assist-to-turnover ratio for a season. We set the all-time single season record for most threes in a season, and I'm not even sold we shot it that great this year. So there's foundational stuff that comes with how we play, but also that's who we are.

You're not going to see just one person. It's going to be Clemson women's basketball, and I'm very excited for what we're about to build.

Q. Hannah, can you take us through that big shot to force overtime, what you saw and what you were feeling?

HANNAH KOHN: Yeah. I think we've been in a lot of situations even in practice where it's like, you've got to hit a shot to end practice, and I kind of just thought about that personally because we've ended practice where it's just hit a three.

Like nothing was really going through my head. Just if I see the rim, shoot it. I guess that was the thought. It worked out.

Q. I had a similar question about that shot. Hannah had six points in the second half, but they ended up being two of the biggest six points in the fourth quarter. Can you talk about the trust that you had in her in those final moments to force the game into overtime, especially after she didn't score against Stanford?

SHAWN POPPIE: Yeah. I've got the utmost confidence -- sometimes more confidence than she has for herself. Honest truth is she's been struggling to shoot it. I think it's weighed a ton on her shoulders. I don't know what she is over the last five games, but we probably don't want to talk about it.

With that said, she continues to put the work in. She's in the gym every day getting shots up, whether it be with the GA, on her own, with a coaching staff member, and ultimately she just wants Clemson women's basketball to win. That's it.

For us, if you get daylight, like she just mentioned, shoot it. But shoot it. Have some confidence to yourself. She went 4 for 6 tonight and that gave us a chance to be in that

game. She stretches the floor so much for us, not only to shoot it but just how defenses guarded her.

I think if I look back at that very last possession, she may have had another opportunity if I'm not mistaken. She looked clear from the sideline, but we just missed her. It is what it is. With that said, again, she's a big bright spot for us moving forward.

Q. With Loyal McQueen having a career season, averaging a career high in points per game; Mia Moore elevating her level at the P4 level; Hannah Kohn and Raven Thompson having unbelievably successful seasons after transferring from Chattanooga. What would your message be to any player potentially considering coming to play for Clemson in the future?

SHAWN POPPIE: Hey, if you want to have fun and get better, here's the place. Kids develop under our watch. We play a fun brand and one that in my opinion prepares you if you want to keep playing after this and also allows freedom to play to your strengths.

I think that that's what you've seen with the group we have. Everything you just mentioned is exactly right. They've all played in much bigger roles than we ever have. We needed that. We know that. But if you look at our roster there will be plenty of room. Phones will be ringing here in the next couple weeks.

Q. Shawn, what has this group as a whole meant to you this year, just the buy-in into what you want to do and what you hope to build, and does it take you back to 2016-17 early at Virginia Tech when you were helping Kenny build what he was doing in Blacksburg?

SHAWN POPPIE: Absolutely. I owe this group so, so much in different ways. Obviously these two left Chattanooga to come to Clemson not knowing what it was going to look like. A belief that they would find their way to play somehow, some way for us, but what role, we don't know. Leaving big prominent roles where we just had come from and winning two championships and one with Hannah. So everyone had a trust and a belief in what we were going to do. While we didn't really have a roster put together.

You think about them, all the transfers. Loyal McQueen has one year left; Anya Poole one year left and have come from teams that had been in the NCAA Tournament, and we're getting ready to start this thing all the way over.

It's back to what -- I just answer with facts, and, hey, we're going to help develop you on and off the court. It's taken a long time for this group to gel, but behind the scenes

they've just kept working, kept working and doing things the right way.

For them, the foundation that they've laid, the blueprint of Clemson women's basketball there's no doubt skipped some steps, right, of showing fan base and anyone watching who we are and who we are about to be as we continue to move this thing forward.

So forever indebted to them in so many different ways, but collectively that belief, it means a lot to me for sure.

Q. Kind of a similar question to what you've been asked already, but you had two competitive games against two historic programs in Stanford and Louisville. Obviously different results. But can you talk about how those two games alone can help you build a program down the road, especially in your first year?

SHAWN POPPIE: Yeah, absolutely. That's just the last two you've seen. We go to NC State early in the year, a four-point game. Virginia Tech, they were in the Final Four a couple years ago. There's a couple kids on that team that were there, and a two-point game. We've had a lot of these.

I think why you could say we're building and what we're going to build is very, very special is because we've been very, very competitive with a group that's been a bunch of new faces.

Truth be told, all but two of them came from the mid-major level and they've shown up to come to this level and compete with the best of them. To beat Stanford twice in our first year, to get a win here in Greensboro, just that alone, all while we just took Louisville who's been to however many Elite 8s and a couple Final Fours in the last few years, these are established programs that we've come and compete and give them everything that they want, all with a group that a lot of them that were playing at the mid-major level a year ago.

I think that speaks to who they are, but also how we are going to do things, and we expect that Clemson women's basketball is going to be put on the map here in the near future.

Q. Raven, I'm curious from a player's perspective what's it been like to play for Coach Poppie this year and to see the foundation being laid and the steps you guys are making to build this thing back up, and what does a couple days like this in Greensboro do for you guys in the future?

RAVEN THOMPSON: Like he said, I feel like it puts us on the map. We're just getting started. We're new. So we have a lot of seniors. It's the same thing next year. We've got to gel and build together so we can get back here again.

SHAWN POPPIE: That's the most words I've heard her say in a long time in this media. She's getting better.

Q. Reflecting on this game, something of note was the free-throw shooting differential. Just 14 attempts for you guys; Louisville got to the line 32 times. Still ended up just being a two-point game with all those trips. Was there anything defensively that gave you struggles that sent them to the line that many times?

SHAWN POPPIE: Man, I asked you to ask a question, now you're trying to get me in trouble. (Smiling).

Their athleticism, obviously they're so quick downhill, it's hard not to put your hands on them, and they're relentless. They continue to come at you, come at you.

I think that forced us to get some, again, what I would say, soft fouls, but it's a foul. My only ask would be that 94 feet of pressure gets 14 free throws.

But with that said, a lot of that is -- most of those are they're just so athletic and downhill, and it's hard to keep them in front as they just keep coming at you.

Good question.

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