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An interview with:

**COACH GARY BLAIR
COURTNEY WILLIAMS
COURTNEY WALKER**

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Texas A&M head coach and student-athletes Courtney Walker and Courtney Williams.

COACH BLAIR: This is one of the reasons we needed to play today, instead of having a double bye, because I had to get my point guard some experience. I thought Knocks came in and handled herself a lot better than what she did in the second half against Missouri and the game against LSU.

We cut our turnovers down. Right before half, we decided to let them back in the ballgame with a lot of poor decisions, some of it by me, some of it by these two. We let them back in the ballgame.

In the second half we only turned it over five times. That's good for us. I thought we had a very good, quick offense attack after we broke the press.

We didn't want to set up because they were still going to continue their traps in the corner. What they want to do is make you ad-lib on offense, and they just want you to be able to create.

I think we've got kids that can create off the bounce, particularly with the Williams kid. She can create, get it to the middle of the lane.

We didn't shoot as well. She attacked, got to the free-throw line. Hopefully tomorrow we'll be better at knocking down free throws.

I thought that was good, but sometimes you've got to be able to run a halfcourt offense, as well, depending on what the defense is going to do.

Give Auburn a whole lot of credit. You win four straight after losing 13 straight, I cannot think of anybody that's ever done that in a long, long time. So give Terri a lot of credit. Tanner played well in the second half. Montgomery, she's just a great catch-and-shoot person that can also put it on the floor.

Give them credit. They're ready to start next year. We're ready to keep this year going.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Coach, could you address the challenges involved in trying to basically run your offense, especially in the halfcourt sets, with your starting point guard sidelined?

COACH BLAIR: Well, if you were in football and you lost your quarterback, you'd have to play the wildcat, okay? But we do not have to do that.

We've got a very capable backup in Curtyce Knox, who was highly recruited just like Jordan. She redshirted a year because of the depth we had at the point. She's gotten better and better.

A lot of times she can dominate a practice. But what she has to do at this level is be able to dominate with leadership and make the right pass, the simple, completed pass.

She's getting better. I was able to take her out in the first half and rotate her when we had a comfortable lead. All of a sudden that lead vanished, and I had to put her back in.

Curtyce is going to get better and better. She would start for a lot of other ball clubs in this league. But she wanted to be an Aggie knowing that the person we had at the point guard position back then was unbelievable. We owe her a lot for holding up that commitment because sometimes injuries happen.

Q. Coach, the play of your bench stepped up tonight. Give us your thoughts on that.

COACH BLAIR: I thought Jennings, Scott

and Mitchell were all very good.

Jennings, man, she's 007 or something. The kid ain't afraid to take a shot. Sometimes she has to give it up and get an assist, because she had Williams wide open in the first half for a layup, she shot a jumper she's been making. You put her over in the left corner, the scouting report on her, you better guard her. She'll kill you over in that left corner. That's hers. She owns it. She feels good about it.

Scott, she has had an up-and-down year for a senior due to her mother's situation and everything like that, all the procedures that her mom has had to go through. It's been tough. She's been going back and forth.

Jennings has been able to step in, where usually those are all Tori's minutes. Right now it's Jennings. Tori came in, did a couple nice things for us.

Rachel, you saw the good. If you been with me all year, it's a Clint Eastwood movie, The Good, the Bad and the Ugly sometimes. You saw the good. She was the only one effective on Tanner down there in the second half because of her size and she was doing a good job of getting her body over there.

Everybody else, when Tanner would get the ball, we were trying to come over and double her, make them have to pass out. Thank heavens they missed a couple threes. A couple times we missed the double that we should have been down on there.

Mitchell, she's a fine kid because I never know what's coming. Tomorrow she might dunk one, okay? But she might miss the backboard on the next one. But she loves the game and we love our Rachel.

Q. Coach, Auburn cut the lead to 3 points in the second half, then you pulled away. What was the key there?

COACH BLAIR: Not turning the ball over and taking good percentage shots early in the second half. But give them credit, they made a couple good runs and pretty good shots down there themselves.

I thought our halfcourt defense was outstanding the whole night, okay? I'm not sure what the percentage is, I don't have my glasses on. They shot 38%, but one out of 13. The one that they made, Frerking or whoever hit it was completely wide open. We'll take that, that's why we lead the nation in three-point percentage defense. We're proud of that.



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We have to do better tomorrow because LSU hit a lot on us every which way.

Y'all got something for my kids here?

Q. I was going to ask about the matchup tomorrow with the guards of LSU. They had 58 points on you in Baton Rouge. Courtney and Courtney, what do you plan on doing different tomorrow?

COURTNEY WILLIAMS: Particularly it was Harden. She had 26 points. I think she was like five for eight from the three. We want to make her put it on the ground because she's a spot-up shooter. She'll size you up, let you rest, shoot the three.

We want to attack her hard off the screens and make her put it on the floor.

With the other guards, they were coming off the screens, so we want our post to hedge correctly, go under the screens, follow the defense that Coach Starkey gives us better than we did when we went to LSU.

Q. You lost Jordan last week to an injury. How have you tried to adjust without her going forward?

COURTNEY WALKER: We just been trying to talk more. That was one thing. Of course, she's going to be a leader. As far as being on the court, C was doing a great job of talking on the court. Curtyce doesn't talk as much as Jordan. That's one of the biggest things, the leadership on the court that Jordan brings for us and trying to make up for that.

Q. Courtney Walker, on the flipside of that, playing with Curtyce for two and a half games as basically the starter, do you feel more comfortable with her now than you did two weeks ago or a week ago?

COURTNEY WALKER: I mean, yeah, always trying to build chemistry is a good thing. Curtyce is very capable. We had confidence in her to do what she's going to do. We have to settle down and do it, relax, break the press like we know how.

Q. Both Courtneys, you get great support on campus and on the road. Were you aware that the band and folks were MIA well into the second half? Did it give you a punch when they showed up?

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COURTNEY WILLIAMS: I heard them playing our school song when they had got there. Gave us some energy.

Q. Other than Arkansas, you've been the only other team in the SEC that played in this building. How much did that experience in December help you out for the day?

COURTNEY WALKER: It's been cool. I mean, it looks way different. SEC got it set up really nice. It just reminds me of Georgia still from the last two years of the tournament.

It was kind of different. Didn't really remind me of the way it used to be. Everything is different, set up for the SEC.

COACH BLAIR: We got to build this crowd for tomorrow. You got University of Arkansas still left in it. You've got me with my Arkansas ties still left in it, my family. You got Mississippi State with Coach Schaefer and his Arkansas ties.

The fans of Little Rock have been really good. Hopefully the weather is going to be beautiful tomorrow, sun is going to melt everything, snowmans are going to melt. We need people to come out and watch top-quality women's basketball.

The media has done a great job. But we need folks to come out. There is nothing better than Friday of an SEC tournament. You've got eight teams that are all NCAA playoff teams. It does not get any better.

You'll never have the men play in a situation like this right here in Arkansas, but you've got the women. So let's embrace it and hopefully you'll be able to host a regional here someday because I think this is a perfect venue, the facility is great.

Just like to thank everybody for coming out, all you guys. Let's go eat.

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