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LSU – 71
Texas A&M – 65

An interview with:

**COACH GARY BLAIR
COURTNEY WALKER
COURTNEY WILLIAMS**

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

COACH BLAIR: When you get down 22-4, that's like being down in football 28-0.

But I loved the fight, how we came back, not just in the second half, but how we came back in the first half to cut it to 13 and had numerous other opportunities.

That's all on us about being able to handle the thing. But when they open up and hit as many shots as they hit here and hit Sunday at Baton Rouge, that's good offense and that's not very good defense.

LSU has turned into a very good ballclub late in the year, and a lot of it's Ballard because there's not a guard in our league that goes to the boards as well as she does. She just wills her way in there. Give her a lot of credit about how she goes. She had a lot of sidekicks.

When we had a chance at the end of the game, it was the loose balls, they got every one of them down under their basket and every offensive board after our defense was forcing them to miss. That's on us. Give praise to them for how well they got all the loose balls.

Our kids fought. But it's like going into a horse race or a track meet. You're running long and you're 40 yards behind, you finally catch up to them, they look over in your eye and say, Is that the best you got? Then they take off a little bit more because they got a little bit more left in their tank.

I thought it was a very good college basketball game. Both teams handled the ball a lot better. They had one turnover at half. I thought that was the difference.

We could not force a turnover either with our press or halfcourt defense. When you get behind 24-4, you cannot think that you're going to make every shot. You have got to be able to force turnovers and get into transition like we did in the second half and be able to score.

Most of that transition was off of long rebounds. We were doing a good job getting it off to Williams, Walker or Knox. We were shooting layups. That's what it's going to take.

Love the effort. First time in 10 years we haven't been in a semifinal. I'm really disappointed on that. But if I had to lose to someone, LSU's our rival, and they've outplayed us twice now in six days.

But we're getting better. We're going to put things in place. We'll be on the practice floor Monday afternoon.

Open it for questions.

Q. You cut it down to three with a minute and a half left. What was the call there at the end?

COACH BLAIR: Sometimes you don't need threes as much as you need baskets, okay? I'm trying to remember the play exactly. I knew Walker had one over in the left corner, but Curtyce just handed her the ball instead of penetrating, giving the defense a little bit of a chance to take her, then you get the penetration. Arkansas did a great job of that, penetrate, kickback.

We would pass around and sometimes you had to shoot a contested shot.

The shot, I think I'm with you, the drive she took, not the three. She passed up the three, didn't feel confident. The drive was not a good shot at all. She should have passed out to somebody on the backside. She didn't have a good look.

But give the kid credit. For what she's had

to go through in this last week, she's having to put on her big-girl shoes. She's growing and getting better.

Like it is, when you look at her stats, three for seven, two for three, four for four, two rebounds, two assists, three turnovers. Most people would enjoy that. She's a scoring point guard. I've got to get her to take more of the leadership role as we're going on because right now Williams is having to take the leadership role almost exclusively during the ballgame. We need it to be a joint effort.

Curtyce is going to get there. Her stats look good. There's more to basketball, particularly at the point guard position, than stats.

Q. You said yesterday that you were happy your team didn't get the double bye because you wanted another game of experience. After the sluggish start today, do you still feel the same way?

COACH BLAIR: We're going to have a heck of a game Monday afternoon with our men's practice team. We're going to keep going back. I got two kids that are sitting out this year. I've got a good men's basketball team.

We're going to keep playing, not just drilling, okay? I play a lot of kids. I play a lot these two, 38 minutes, whatever it takes to get them to play.

We need to play to get better. We will scrimmage hard against the men's practice team. That will get you ready for the elite teams that you have to see in the NCAA tournament.

Q. Courtney Williams, talk a little bit about what the team has been now through the last week and a half, two weeks. Do you feel like you're now really starting to understand how you need to play without Jordan?

COURTNEY WILLIAMS: Yeah, I think we understand how we need to play without Jordan. Especially in the second half of the LSU game, we cut down the lead to about three points. We see what we need to do to beat any team we play in the future. We need to get stops. We need to really rebound 'cause LSU has some good rebounding guards.

Me, Courtney Walker, Chelsea, Curtyce, we need to get in there and battle with the post players, rebound.

Offense, we need to take our time, read the defense. Jordan, she ran the offense when she was playing. Other than that, we need to

make a combined effort and have a leadership role, like Coach Blair said.

Q. Coach, you mentioned yesterday about the crowd turnout here in Little Rock. What did you think about that today?

COACH BLAIR: I thought it was good. What I think they ought to do is have a consolation game for Arkansas and ourselves. Just kidding (laughter).

I thought this weather, the atmosphere, 4800, pretty good. Give credit to the people who promoted the tournament.

People need to realize you're fixing to see two more good games tonight, and you're going to see two great semifinals on Saturday. People need to come out and support women's basketball, not just University of Arkansas, okay? Come out and support women's basketball at the highest level.

Give Arkansas credit for getting to the second round, playing with nine players, basically seven the majority of the year. Give Jimmy a lot of credit for what he's done with his team. He's created an atmosphere, again, that people want to come out and see the University of Arkansas play.

Love the crowd. Love the atmosphere in the game. If we would have pulled this one off, we'd have been talking about it for a long time.

Our job now is to get better as a basketball team, okay? Get better. We can still go a long way. We lost by three to Baylor. We lost three straight times to them. 2011 we get hot in the tournament, a lot of different people stepping up. Why not again?

That's what I'll be trying to get these kids, their teammates, to believe in. We'll just keep working.

Q. Courtney Walker, seemed like Jordan kind of called you together right there coming out of the half, held you in a huddle. Can you share anything she said?

COURTNEY WALKER: She just wanted to get our energy up. We can call X's and O's, anything we need to do, as long as we don't put our energy into it, there's nothing that can be done to fix that.

The way we started, we had made a good little run going into the half, then lost it again. Second half, we just wanted to bring more energy than they did, be able to play harder.

Once we started doing that, we were able to make a run with some good execution. Jada came in and did a good job for us. That's how we were able to come back in the game.

Q. Coach, where do you see your team being on the line?

COACH BLAIR: Six. Usually I got all 64 teams right last year. I'll be pretty close again. When I was at Arkansas, I was always the bubble team. We haven't been the bubble team at Texas A&M. We've earned our way in. This will be our lowest seed we've had in the last 10 years. But that's where we deserve to be. We'll play our way out.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much.

COACH BLAIR: Thank y'all.

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