

March 8, 2015



South Carolina – 62
Tennessee – 46

An interview with:

**COACH HOLLY WARLICK
JORDAN REYNOLDS
CIERRA BURDICK**

THE MODERATOR: We're now joined by Tennessee head coach along with student-athletes Jordan Reynolds and Cierra Burdick.

COACH WARLICK: Hard-fought game. South Carolina was tough. They played hard. Very deserving of the game.

Thought our kids battled. It just wasn't our night.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. I don't know how much South Carolina did differently defensively, but it looked like it was more on its game defensively than in your first meeting during the regular season.

COACH WARLICK: Probably so, because we only scored 46 points. We missed easy shots. We missed layups. We missed free throws. Our margin for error against South Carolina is very small. It has to be small.

You got to make shots that are around the basket, layups. We didn't.

Q. Girls, can you speak on that run they had at the end of the first half. How did that affect your mindset going into halftime, if at all?

CIERRA BURDICK: I mean, it's a game of runs. This is basketball. You expect them to make runs. Then you come in with the mindset that we have to make a run. We went on a run before they went on theirs.

Mindset at halftime was the same as always. We have to come out and continue to

compete within the first four minutes. So I commend them for the run they made. Once they made it, we couldn't really get it back, and that's what hurt us.

Q. Jordan, the SEC tournament is an area where you've thrived offensively. Talk about your mindset.

JORDAN REYNOLDS: Well, I tried to stay in attack mode for my teammates just to take some of the pressure off of them. I know they've had a great season, you know. They're so used to the double-doubles by Cierra Burdick, Andraya Carter, Bashaara, those big great names. I try to take pressure off of them because I know the teams are going to come after them harshly.

I thought it would be a time to step up because anybody can play in the tournament.

Q. Coach, do you still think this is a one seed going into the NCAA tournament? What is next for Tennessee?

COACH WARLICK: You know, it doesn't matter what I think. It hasn't all year. It doesn't matter.

We can have the number one RPI, the second toughest schedule in the country, and it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter what I think and how hard these kids play.

We lost Isabelle Harrison and the world has ended for us. That's what's out there. The world has ended.

You know, we're stepping up to the plate. We got something to say.

So I don't know. I don't know what we're going to get. We're going to take whatever they give us. Seeding and schedule, I'm not convinced that comes into play anywhere. So we're going to take what we get.

Q. Holly, talk about the difficulty that Welch presents in terms of the ability she sometimes has the killer second-chance points?

COACH WARLICK: I thought we did a better job on second-chance points. She's got a passion to rebound. We got to put a body on her. We did at times, then she got loose at times.

She's a tough player to defend and tough player to keep off the boards.

Q. When you're talking about seeding, as though Harrison's loss will affect that, that's what is out there.

COACH WARLICK: Yes.

Q. What are you basing that on? Mock brackets?

COACH WARLICK: That's all I hear in the media. That's all I'm reading, all I'm hearing. I think this team has proved that it's tough. They lose their best player, and this team has competed in every game.

Our bench is probably not as big as everybody else's. I can say what I want to say, but it's not going to matter if I think we should get a one seed or a two seed.

All I know is we can take what we get, then we'll prepare and battle for it.

Q. Cierra, your second game against South Carolina now. How tough is it banging down low with South Carolina's frontline?

CIERRA BURDICK: They're a physical team across the board, their guards, posts, tweeners. They're a physical basketball team. I think that's the way they're coached up, their mindset. They're blue-collar workhorses.

So it's physical down there. Then the fact they can continue to sub in and out and have a revolving door, I mean, that hurts. They're having fresh players, and we're having people playing 30, 40 minutes.

It is what it is. We just got to continue to go back to the drawing board and get better. I commend South Carolina. They played a great basketball game. They were the better team tonight.

But we will come back stronger.

Q. Coach, talk about Dawn Staley, what she's done with South Carolina, what that means for the league and women's basketball to have another powerhouse.

COACH WARLICK: It speaks for itself. She came in and has turned that program around. She's worked hard doing it.

She's kept players in the state of South Carolina. Those players that were going to North Carolina, were going to Georgia, she kept them home. That's a tough thing to do.

They bought into what she believed and had a vision, so...

I mean, this league, it's a tough league. This tournament is a testament to that. It's been a battle.

You know, I think the bottom five in our league can compete with a lot of people all across the country, and they won't get to do that because we kind of beat up on each other. They more than likely won't get in the tournament.

But I think this is the best league in the country. But South Carolina, Dawn has done a great job with that program, absolutely, absolutely.

Q. Coach, last night you said that the bench was going to have to be a big factor today. How much of an impact do you think that had on today's game?

COACH WARLICK: You know, I think all of us, we missed layups and we missed free throws. I don't care if you're on the bench or a starter. You can't have those looks and not win the game. If you don't get stops at key moments, you don't keep them off the boards, that's key, too.

I don't know so much if it was the bench. I thought we got good player from Jaime Nared. I thought she did some really good things. Nia Moore as well. Alexa Middleton. We needed to make shots that we were open, get stops. It boils down to those very simple things. We didn't.

Q. What is your message to a senior in Ariel Massengale after a tournament like this as you look forward to March Madness?

COACH WARLICK: Well, she's been a major factor for us and our success. I think she had a tough tournament. It's part of it. We're not going to give up on her. She'll get back in the gym.

She's a great leader. She didn't score today, but what a great leader she was on the court and on the bench. We still needed her, regardless of what her stat line was.

I would never tell her to quit shooting because I think she's one of the best shooters we have.

Q. Tennessee has been Tennessee for so long. If you could explain for everyone your

confidence in how these last two losses are just that, not some changing of the guard, just two losses.

COACH WARLICK: I don't know. This team is really a great example of being Lady Vols. When your back is against the wall, you don't crumble. You have a lot of belief and faith in your coaches, your teammates and the system.

I'd really be bothered if it didn't affect us and we weren't upset because we're competitors. We want to win everything we do. We want to win every practice drill. We want to win every shooting drill. It just carries over.

Yeah, we're hurting right now, but I know this team. I know what Tennessee teams do: we go back to work. We're going to learn from this. We've learned. We're going to learn from it. We'll be a better team because of it.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, ladies, thank you very much.

COACH WARLICK: Thank you all.

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