

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Kentucky.

Coach, your opening thoughts on tonight's win.

COACH MITCHELL: Well, we're happy to win and move forward in the tournament. I think the first game is always a tough one. LSU really battled today, played hard.

We had some great moments in the game when we hustled and played with great focus. We had some tough moments when we didn't and let LSU play harder than us and out-hustle us.

It's really what our team is. If we play with tremendous focus and effort and play for each other, don't let off the gas pedal, we're a good team. When we don't, you saw what could happen to us.

We're glad to survive today and try to get ready for a really good Florida team tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions.

**Q. Coach, can you talk about the first quarter, you scored 14 straight points. Set the tone because it gave you the lead for much of the game.**

COACH MITCHELL: Well, we played really hard at that time. I thought we were disruptive with our defense, were able to turn LSU over some, create some problems for them.

We're a good team when we can play tough defense, disrupt the opponent. I thought we did a nice job of that in the first quarter.

**Q. What played on the offensive rebounding in the second half? Did you see a change in what you were doing?**

COACH MITCHELL: Effort and attitude. We got a 20-point lead. You've seen it before this year. We get a 20-point lead, for some reason we just let off the gas. It's disappointing.

It's a great wake-up call for our team that we have to hustle for 40 minutes. We had some really, really great moments in the game today. They were all born from hustle. When we didn't, you saw how we looked.

**Q. For the players. Can you talk about playing Florida, what you remember from the game January 31st, a chance to get revenge.**

JANEE THOMPSON: I remember that Florida really out-hustled us. They played a lot harder than us. After that game, we had a meeting as a team. We tried to turn things around.

Florida is never going to stop. If we come out strong like we did today and we let up, there's a good chance we could lose that game because they always, always play hard.

That's going to be the key for us throughout this entire tournament, is making sure nobody out-hustles us or out-works us. If we work hard, we'll be fine.

MAKAYLA EPPS: I have a lot of respect for Florida and their coaching staff, everything they do over there down in Florida. We did get out-hustled in Florida. It was obvious as we sat down and watched it as a team. If we get out-worked or out-hustled tomorrow, it will show, more than likely lose that game. Coach Mitchell doesn't want us to lose based on effort and hustle.

**Q. Makayla, you scored 14 of your 17 points in the first half. The second half, did you change your game plan personally, take the leadership and directing the offense?**

MAKAYLA EPPS: I just got real hot. I tried to have the mindset the whole tournament to start aggressive early and often. I had a really solid first half.

I kept my mindset strong in the second half, but LSU, they adjusted to me. I passed up on some shots that my assistant coach, Coach Camryn Whitaker said I did.

It's not all about scoring. If I can direct the offense, then that's fine with me, too.

**Q. It seemed like the most complete game for Alyssa Rice today. Is it good to get production out of her?**

COACH MITCHELL: Yeah, I hope we continue getting good production from her. She made some crucial buckets. She scored nine points. We won by eight. It's good to see her being productive, really good.

**Q. For all three of you, you had 30 turnovers against Florida last time. It was a wake-up call maybe. What can you do differently this time to sort of combat them?**

COACH MITCHELL: We've worked really hard since that game to become a tougher team and a better team. The players have just really done a great job of taking that game as being one of the real disappointing times of our season. They've transformed themselves since.

It's a great opportunity for us. I would think that Florida would be licking their chops right now thinking they can employ the same game plan and get similar results.

It's a great opportunity for us to see how much we've improved, to see if we were, in fact, tougher. I believe that we are. I believe that we've made great, great strides.

There's no better opportunity for us than to have one of the real low points of the season, to get a chance to see if we can compete better and do a better job, move forward in the tournament.

**Q. Could you talk about that point in the fourth quarter when Makayla comes out of the ballgame, LSU starts to make a run, what happened in that span there.**

JANEE THOMPSON: Well, I think it took us a second to adjust. I didn't realize that Makayla had reinjured herself and she wouldn't be coming back. I think some of the younger players were just in shock for a

second.

I was just trying to get us to settle down and execute on offense and defense. But it was really on the defensive end. There was nothing that Makayla could do. We were just getting driven play after play after play. That's something we've got to try to correct tomorrow in our game. We got another opportunity. So we're excited about it.

MAKAYLA EPPS: Having to come out is not something I like doing. I don't really like being subbed out. Having to sit over there and watch my team struggle a little bit with the youth on our team. It was pretty hard on me. I didn't like that I had to do that to my team.

I plan on being here for a couple more days. Just got to be precautionary, you got to take care of yourself.

At the end of the day we got the win and I'll bounce back tomorrow.

**Q. Makayla, was that the same knee injury from Texas A&M?**

MAKAYLA EPPS: I just went up on that one layup from Jenee. It gave out. A bunch of pain shot through the front. It's just real sore right now.

**Q. Matthew, you've been in the culture in Gainesville. Can you talk about the job Amanda has done.**

COACH MITCHELL: She's done a great job. Dawn did an unbelievable job going 16-0 for the first time in the history of the league. That was an incredible job. I would rate Amanda's right up there with that. One of the absolute best coaching jobs.

But Amanda is a really good coach. She and I have been in the league the same amount of years. We've played a bunch of games. I've had to spend a lot of hours getting prepared for Florida. Amanda is really one of the great coaches in our league and in the country.

Their team always plays really hard, always difficult to prepare for because of the intensity they're going to bring. I think she is an amazing coach, has done an amazing job with that team this year. They're really, really tough.

**Q. Coach, do you look at this game as an advantage that you have played a game in the tournament now, whereas Florida has not played one, coming in cold tomorrow?**

COACH MITCHELL: I don't know. I've been in the tournament so many times. I've seen us play on Friday and play really well. I've seen us have a hard time getting started.

I don't think there's any way you can predict what's going to happen tomorrow. All I know is we really have to get our attitudes right and get our attitude and our effort right on defense or our stay will be short. None of the players want that to happen, I'm sure.

So, you know, tomorrow's a real stern test for us. We'll have to come with our best attitude and effort.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.