

THE MODERATOR: We're now joined by Kentucky.

Coach, your thoughts on today's win over Florida.

COACH MITCHELL: Great victory. We were really tough today. We tried to make the game about that. Thought we were really together today. We certainly wanted that to happen for our team.

We tried to be tenacious and just stay with it. Had a really, really rough start to the game. I thought that the players were very tough together and tenacious today. That was the theme of the game. That's what we were trying to accomplish.

I think they did a fantastic job. That team of Florida's very, very tough. Really good players. Always well-coached. Our players need to recognize they just beat a really good team today.

Happy for the victory and glad we're still alive in the tournament.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Coach, could you talk about the confidence you get when Makayla is leading a fastbreak.

COACH MITCHELL: Well, she played well in transition today. Really did a good job, as all our players did. We turned it over 30 times in Gainesville. I thought we were back on our heels all day January 31st.

I thought that Makayla, Janee, Taylor, some of our post players got on the attack. As we practiced this morning, we called it press attack. We wanted to attack and score. We did not want to just break the press, we wanted to try to attack and score. I thought we did a fantastic job of that.

Q. Janee, you didn't score in the first quarter, 13 points in the second quarter. Do you consciously tell yourself that it's time to go or do you let the game come to you? Why do you think you score in bunches like that?

JANEE THOMPSON: I think I just let the game come to me, like you said. I try to start the game off being more of a floor general, a leader. I know I got Makayla Epps who can take over the scoring load.

I just popped open for some open shots. She found me a lot of times. I just hit some shots. Once I got going, it was good for our team. It gave us a lot of energy. I was glad to see that.

COACH MITCHELL: Janee Thompson is doing the best leadership job that we've had done at Kentucky in my nine years. She could have run the practice this morning. When she said she's trying to provide leadership, she's not trying, she's doing it. She's really at a high level right now, and it's making a huge difference for our team.

Q. Coach, could you talk about Texas A&M, a game you got down in. What is it about this team that you can continue to battle back?

COACH MITCHELL: Well, we've really tried to emphasize being high character. We try to talk about the importance of that. We try to talk about the importance of our attitude.

I thought we were getting really good shots early in the game. We started to hang our heads just a tiny bit at the first media. We tried to get that straightened out immediately because we were getting really good looks. I thought we came out real aggressive.

You cannot let offense dictate your attitude. You have to stay with it and be real tenacious.

It's something that we talk about and we try to practice every day. We try to be people that are resilient. I think that's an important quality for all of them to have as basketball players and people as they move on.

I'm really proud of the team.

Q. Coach, give us an update on Murray. I saw her carried off. Was that serious?

COACH MITCHELL: That was not serious definitely. They were just having a little fun.

A knee to the thigh, right there, a little stringer, charley-horse-type deal that is very painful. When she would get out and get playing, she could move, it would settle down. Then when she would step, it would tighten back up.

We'll just treat the heck out of it. This will be a great opportunity for her, probably first time in her career with something that's painful that won't limit you from playing unless it really gets to you pain-wise.

We have the best, in my mind, trainer in the world. Courtney will work a lot with her. We believe she'll be ready to go. It's just a deep thigh bruise.

Q. Makayla, your coach talked about the attitude of attacking and scoring. Can you take that same approach against a South Carolina team which has a reputation of locking down defensively?

MAKAYLA EPPS: As long as you're aggressive and your mindset is to be aggressive early and often, that's been my mindset for this tournament, and it's worked in my favor and for my team's favor.

You have to credit South Carolina for what they do. I feel like once Kentucky gets out in transition, it's off to the races. It's hard to stop us in transition.

Q. Makayla, in the third quarter they hit some shots, started paying more attention. The whole point of getting the good guard play is to be able to have the option of getting it off to your bigs. At halftime did your coach tell your big players to be ready?

MAKAYLA EPPS: We always tell our bigs to be ready. Coach Amadou works hard with them. They put in a lot of hard work. We see them. Sometimes the guards miss them, but we see them. When we give them

the ball, we're confident in our ability. I found Evelyn Akhator on a great eye cut one time. It's just stuff that we practice on. Our bigs have a lot of confidence. They know eventually we might not see them the first time or second time, but eventually the third or fourth time, we'll see them. When we give them the ball, we expect them to score.

Q. Matthew, it's clear that South Carolina sort of has been the queen of the SEC here. Are they as good as Tennessee when Tennessee was almost at the height of their powers or are they just a different team because they're so defensive oriented?

COACH MITCHELL: They're a very good team. Only the second team to go through our league undefeated in a year where there were a lot of tough teams. You have to give them a tremendous amount of credit for the team that they are.

We get to play them twice every year. We have a very healthy respect for Coach Staley and their players and program. It's always a very tough game for us to get ready for.

There are no secrets between the two teams. We will get back to the hotel, get our minds intent on going out and doing our very best, trying to earn a victory tomorrow.

They are a very, very good team. 16-0 speaks for itself. They were very good today. So great team, and we look forward to the challenge tomorrow.

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