

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Kentucky.

Your opening thoughts on the game against South Carolina.

COACH MITCHELL: Before I talk about the game, I want to thank everybody in Jacksonville, everyone who had a hand in our experience here in Jacksonville. It was very, very good. Great facility, great people. We were treated in a first-class manner. We appreciate the Southeastern Conference and everybody involved with bringing the tournament to Jacksonville. It was really first class. I hope we're back here sometime. It was a great experience.

Congratulate South Carolina. What a fantastic game they had. They really played aggressively today with a lot of fire and enthusiasm. We were just not able to match 'em today.

We had a tough day, but I'm real proud of our team. Back in the first few days of February, we were 4-6, didn't know what was going to happen with the rest of our season. What we have accomplished in the month of February, the beginning of March, I'm extremely proud of our players and our team.

As good as that looked out there today for South Carolina, I wouldn't trade places with them. I really, really love our team. Great, great group of young women who have worked hard to become a team.

Today, fortunately for us it's not our last day to play. We have time to learn from this one. We have time to go back and improve as a team. Excited to enter the NCAA tournament with this team of Wildcats. Really, really proud of them.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions.

Q. Matthew, what can you do when they're shooting like that and hitting everything?

COACH MITCHELL: Well, you can guard a little bit better. Could have gotten up and played a little bit better defense.

I'm sure we'll look at the tape and there will be plenty of moments where we didn't play as well as we needed to. We needed to play really well to win a game like that.

It's the semifinals of the SEC tournament. You have to play well.

So there were some times that we could live with their three-pointers because we were trying to really limit them to 35 points or less in the paint. That was 38 they got. We were around there.

Now, maybe they didn't have to score in the paint, they made 12 threes. It was an unusual day shooting the ball for them from the standpoint of how many they made. It definitely hurt us today.

But we'll find out where we could have played better defense and we'll go about trying to correct that

part of it.

Q. Matthew and the players, what do you do to sort of not let this erase the eight games before it as you move forward?

COACH MITCHELL: You have to keep everything in perspective right now. It's one loss in the SEC tournament. If you'd have asked us when we left Columbia whenever that Thursday was, we were 4-6, were we going to be playing on Saturday in the SEC tournament? Our team worked hard enough to get here Saturday.

Listen, I know the character of our players, the character of our team. As disappointing as today is, we won't run from it, we won't hide from it. We will have patience and teach where it was a lack of experience or aptitude or you didn't know exactly what to do. We'll be real, real tough on issues of hustle and effort.

That's how we've approached all of this stuff since the first part of February. So we have a very good basketball team, the makings of a very good basketball team. We'll get the same amount of time as everybody else to get ready for the first game. We'll have a day in between. It's all even now.

We'll teach from this one. I don't think we'll have any trouble at all just being honest with our players like we've been. The players have responded well. I don't think this will have any lingering effect. Certainly doesn't need to.

MAKAYLA EPPS: Just like coach said, fortunately for us our season is not over. We still get a shot in the NCAA tournament, which I'm grateful for. I'm sure we'll make a good push in that one.

It's something you have to learn and bounce back from. It's not the day we wanted at all. I feel like we was very well-prepared. We got out on the court and didn't do what we was prepared to do.

We'll bounce back from this one and I'm excited from it.

MACI MORRIS: Like Makayla said, we get to play in the NCAA tournament. We'll go home and practice and work hard, just keep preparing for our next game, whenever that is. We'll bounce back. We'll treat it like another game.

We can't dwell on the past; we just got to look forward.

Q. Matthew, how important is seeding at this point for the NCAA tournament? Do you want to be a top-four seed? Is that the goal?

COACH MITCHELL: Well, it would be great. I don't know how we wouldn't be with the résumé that we have. But I don't really focus on those things. I have zero control.

We just try to stay real focused on the things that we have control over: attitude, effort. When we don't

take care of that, we try to make sure we understand what the consequences are for that.

There are smart people that will get in a room and we'll see what happens.

I'm proud of our team. Again, they've come a long way as a basketball team. They're great young women and first-class people. I love coaching this team.

Q. Maci and Makayla, can you talk about defensively how you struggled to stop the three-point shot. Talk about what happened out there.

MAKAYLA EPPS: We was more focused on the point. Limiting them to 35 points in the paint was our goal. The perimeter players, like me, Maci, the other two, had a lot more focus on that. Then they started getting hot from three.

Like coach said, we could have played better defense. We gave up 12 threes. You have to credit them for shooting the ball really well tonight. We could have done a lot better on the perimeter guarding.

MACI MORRIS: It's just a learning experience. When a team starts getting hot like that, we got to learn to adjust. So hopefully in the future we plan to stop people in the paint and their guards start to get hot, we'll adjust and learn from this.

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

COACH MITCHELL: Thanks, everybody.