

Southeastern Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Saturday March 3, 2018

Gary Blair
Danni William
Anriel Howard
Texas A&M Aggies

Mississippi State - 70, Texas A&M - 55

THE MODERATOR: We'll start with an opening statement from coach.

GARY BLAIR: First I would like to give credit to the SEC for putting this on in Nashville. I wish we could be here every year. I think it's a very neutral site in the middle of the SEC. This would be perfect if we could get your arena more than once every five years. But hospitality was good, the hotel was good, the restaurants were outstanding. We have had good crowds.

About the game, I thought we controlled three quarters of the first half. We got outplayed pretty poorly the last five minutes when we got into foul trouble and then they're Mississippi State, but I loved our fight. The first 15 minutes we were doing some good things, we were sharing the ball, we were having a lot of people score. In the second half they started looking like the No. 2 team in the nation, particularly in the third quarter they started running, getting the three, Vivians hit a couple, we had our hands down instead of our hands up on defense and I think they had six of them in the third quarter and I think that was the difference in the ball game. Give Johnson a lot of credit, she did a good job defensively on Danni and even though Danni got 11 shots off, a lot of them were rushed, just because of good defense. McCowan just intimidates you inside. We missed a few bunnies in there that we should have had, but that's just due to her presence. It's not what she scores, it's her presence in that lane. That's a big aircraft carrier in there that does a good job for them, to allow them to play their four guard offense they run the dribble weave offense as good as anybody in the country they're very balanced, they got a couple pretty good kids coming off the bench and they weathered the storm. Just like they did yesterday against Kentucky, they weathered the storm and then saw what was going to work and then the game took over. But I



think we played a whole lot better than what we did when we were in Starkville, but give them credit, they're a better basketball team, I'd like one more shot at them. That means if I get one more shot at them I'm going to be in the Sweet 16, Elite 8 or Final Four, because they're sure the heck going to be there.

THE MODERATOR: Take questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Anriel and Danni, great job today and good luck in the NCAA tournament. Question for Anriel, coming out the way that you guys did and really punching them, Coach Schaefer said that you not only punched them but you floored them. What was it like to take it to them in the first 15 minutes or so like Coach Blair said and how much did you guys feel like you had the momentum?

ANRIEL HOWARD: Well thank you for the best wishes, but I do believe that we came out playing very hard. We competed. I'm proud of my teammates, I'm proud of Danni, proud of coach, the coaching staff, it just shows how close we are. But we still have a lot more to give, we have a lot more to give and I know that we can even go harder than what we did tonight. So I'm very proud of my, this program, but we still have some ways to go.

GARY BLAIR: I'm sorry for the media having to wait 50 minutes to do this. It will be changed next year because the coaches will make sure it is changed if the SEC is not going to do it, but this is ridiculous, you all should be out watching that other ball game now where the rest of the media is. But look, I appreciate it, if you've got no other questions for us, we're going to go find a good steak or a piece of fish to eat.

Q. When Morgan is as aggressive as she was offensively today and looking for her shot, how much does it add to their offense when they have not four but five who can score for them?

GARY BLAIR: Morgan is just a winner. I asked her before the game when they were warming up, I said, Morgan, are you going to go try to play at the next level? She said, if they will have me. That's how humble that kid is. And they will have her, because she knows how to make a team work. And she's got a great heir apparent next year in Holmes and another one sitting out, but she's a team-first player. And

Morgan was very good today, okay. She was very good. She penetrated on us, hit a couple of tough shots and then when we got into foul trouble it was like a turnstile down there, we just opened up the flood gates and let them drive right, shoot a lay up, and that got a little bit old.

THE MODERATOR: Danni, you played 40 minutes today for a third straight day. Especially going up against a team like Mississippi State, was there any fatigue, having played that extra game, factor into the second half?

DANNI WILLIAMS: Absolutely, but that's what, we could have been a four seed and had the extra day, so we take that upon us. But at the end of the day I was just trying to do whatever my team needed and if that's play 40 minutes, then that's play 40 minutes as hard as I can.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thank you very much.