

Southeastern Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

Sunday March 4, 2018

Dawn Staley
A'ja Wilson
Tyasha Harris

South Carolina Gamecocks

South Carolina - 62, Mississippi State - 51

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

DAWN STALEY: I just want to just kind of congratulate Mississippi State. They played a great game. And sometimes coming in undefeated puts a lot of pressure on you. And I don't know if that was the case, but I thought our players were ready to play the game and they stayed engaged for 40 minutes and that's the kind of effort it took to beat a team like Mississippi State.

THE MODERATOR: Take questions for the student-athletes.

Q. You said yesterday about wanting to make history. Now you're the first team to get four. How great is that to have another record added to your names?

A'JA WILSON: It's a blessing. It is a blessing and an honor. The SEC is a great conference and to make history like that, to be a team that's gone four times in a row to the championship and won it, it's just a great. It's a great feeling. I can't even put into words the feeling that I know I have with me being within it. So this has been a great tournament.

TYASHA HARRIS: It was amazing. I mean, A'ja and Easy, they were undefeated all their four years in college -- and Bianca -- in the SEC tournament, so it was an amazing feeling for them, but also me. It was crazy because it's history. I mean, not a lot of people can say that. And it's crazy to be up here with the greatest teams like Tennessee and Auburn and them.

Q. A'ja, can you just talk about, I mean talk about a week swing of last week on Sunday you're, you have the vertigo and then here you are a week later winning another championship.

A'JA WILSON: It's crazy. I think it's kind of also on my



senior night, it was really different. It was not a good feeling for me. But at the same time I give it all to my medical staff. They really helped me get back to feeling normal. And it really, it's a good feeling. It was tough, I did not know -- I'm pretty sure I had a breakdown with the team in my room. I had to talk to them because I needed things to get out. I needed them to understand what was going on and what vertigo was.

So after I talked to them and they really helped build my confidence up and I believed in them and I trusted them and we had confidence in one another, in each other, and that's what you got to take. That's what it takes to win a championship.

Q. Social media now. Just curious if you got a look at your phone to see how many missed text messages and how many missed calls?

TYASHA HARRIS: Yeah, I did.

A'JA WILSON: No. I ain't got the juice like that.

TYASHA HARRIS: I haven't got to look at my phone yet so I'm still waiting.

A'JA WILSON: Not yet, but the Tweets are coming. Just know that. @_ajawilson22 on Twitter, you feel me?

TYASHA HARRIS: @TyHarris_52

A'JA WILSON: @_ajawilson22. A J A not A S I A.

(Laughter.)

DAWN STALEY: Does that mean you guys won't let me follow you?

A'JA WILSON: Um, no.

Q. What does this mean now you still got another tournament to play and you guys are the defending national champions, how much confidence does the three games you played here and being SEC tournament champions again give you going into the NCAA tournament?

A'JA WILSON: I think it really does help our confidence out a lot. Throughout the season we had a bunch of

doubters, people were not even expecting us to make it past Tennessee in this tournament. So for us to come out and do what we did I think it builds our confidence up and it shows people, yes, we're going to have a target on our back, but at the same time we can handle things like this, we can handle adversity and that's who we are, that's our system.

Q. Ty, I don't want to jump too far ahead but are you feeling the pressure yet to keep this streak going?

TYASHA HARRIS: No, we just go day by day. So we're on a high from this right now and I'm just worried about that right now.

THE MODERATOR: All right, we'll take questions for coach.

Q. Looking ahead, tournament seedings will start being discussed over the next week. Where do you think that this team should be? As a 2 or a 3? Of course, I'm sure you would rather be in Lexington, but what do you think this win does for your seeding in the NCAAs?

DAWN STALEY: I don't know. I think what we did was control our own destiny and then it's in somebody else's hands to decide where we go. Obviously we can't do anything about it once it's announced, but besides win our tournament and see if that puts us in a great place where our fans can attend the games.

Q. Your defense, how impressive was that today, holding Mississippi State to their fewest points, they had the comeback against y'all in the fourth quarter back in February, but you kind of put the throttle on them there in the second half particularly.

DAWN STALEY: I just thought our kids were engaged and locked into the game plan and they did not want to lose. I think they wanted to create their own history, which is to win four SEC tournament championships and they were determined to do it.

THE MODERATOR: All right, coach, congratulations. Thank you.

DAWN STALEY: Thank you.