



2018 Southern Conference Basketball Tournament



No. 1 Mercer vs. No. 2 ETSU

March 4, 2018

Mercer

Coach Susie Gardner

Opening Statement

"First of all, ETSU had a great season. Tiana Tarter is one of the best players I've coached against. Obviously, this is exactly where we wanted to be, a year ago today. I remember all the awful emotions and I was like "We got to get through this". I'm not certain if we would've won last year, we would have had the type of season we did this year. There was an energy, a passion coming to practice that we had one thing else we needed to do. To have a [win] streak, to go undefeated in this great conference, that's hard to do...I think our loss last year [in the SoCon championship game] is the reason this year was so incredible."

On building a lead

"We knew ETSU is really good. It was critical to go into half time with momentum. I thought we did a much better job of not relaxing...this year we played our normal game and were able to finish strong."

On the 2017-18 season

"Probably beyond my wildest dreams. I knew we had a good team coming in because we had the same team. We really focused on one day at a time. I didn't anticipate going undefeated in the conference. I think once we have time to catch our breath and reflect, we've made so much history at Mercer. You just don't have these kinds of years and I'm just so happy for these guys."

On heading into the NCAA Tournament

"We played a really hard schedule. We've played some big-time schools and we play all kinds of different conferences. We'll just approach the NCAA Tournament like we always do."

On Amanda Thompson's rebounding

"Amanda, I don't know how she does it. Without Amanda, we don't win this championship."

Senior Kahlia Lawrence

On her performance

"I was honestly just trying to do the things that I normally do for us to win this game I had to continue to play well. Scoring is something you all know me for and for me to put up however many points today was beneficial for the team. I really focused in on defense today. When we get defensive stops, it gets the energy going on the bench, on the floor, and for our fans. I just tried to do whatever I could to help my team today."

On emotions after the game

"We worked so hard to get to this point again. To do what we set out to do was just overwhelming, I couldn't control any of my emotions and I was so happy for my team to complete this goal we set early in the season."

On trailing at the start of the game

"We knew that it wasn't going to be easy to just come in here and beat ETSU. We got down but that wasn't a factor for us really, we just kept playing Mercer basketball."

Senior Sydni Means

On how an undefeated conference season

"Playing a team two and three times is difficult. At this time of the year everyone knows our plays. For us to execute is crucial during this time of year and we have a lot of respect for every single team in this conference. We just come into every single game knowing we have a mission and thank God we completed it this year.

ETSU

Coach Brittney Ezell

Opening statement

"It was a tough game on a bunch of different fronts. I am proud of the way our kids fought. I am proud of their resiliency the entire tournament. Lots of things could have gone a different way, but they did not [allow it to]. Congratulations to Mercer. To go 30-2 on the season is great and 14-0 in the league. Congratulations, and I hope they do well in the tournament."

On the toughness of the team

"We outscored them in the paint 34-22. We had a lull in the second half that ended up being the difference in the game aside from the free throws. We did a good job [with going in the paint], but our outside shots were not falling. We were just four or five minutes away."

On the senior class

"This senior class played in two conference title games, and there are not a lot of players who can say they played in one. There are a bunch of players in our league that will never play in one. Our seniors played in two [title games] and took on two really tough teams. This is not the end of their story. They have some games to play [in the WNIT]."

Senior Mallore Schurr

On the team and playing in the WNIT

"This team is like family to me. As many opportunities as we get, we will take them. But it still hurts to lose."

On fighting until the end

"When there was four minutes left, we were in the huddle and we all believed we could still come back. We never thought twice about it. We thought we could come back the whole time. We never gave up, but it did not come out the way we wanted it to."