

2019 Ingles Southern Conference Basketball Championships presented by General Shale



No. 2 UNCG 77, No. 7 Samford 70
March 9, 2019

UNCG Spartans

Head coach Wes Miller

Opening Statement

"I thought it was really a gutsy performance by our guys. We had a great week of practice and I thought our preparation was great, but we looked a little out of sync early. I think you have to give Samford credit for that. We didn't look like who we were defensively at times. I thought the two zone saved us and our guys figured out how to play that down the stretch and made some stops. Our guys down the stretch just showed tremendous fight."

On Francis Alonso's performance (31 points, 13-of-14 free throws)

"This guy has done it over and over throughout his career. You look down his line and my goodness, he gets 31 when it matters most in the SoCon Tournament. It says a lot about who he is. But he has to get some rest because I expect it from him tomorrow night, too."

On halftime adjustments

"We spent the majority of our halftime talking about things that were going on defensively. I thought our ball screen defense was poor. I thought our transition defense was poor at times. Offensively, we talked about finding our rhythm a little bit. I thought we did a better job of executing in the second half."

On getting to the NCAA Tournament

"When you win the regular season, you think that should be it and you should just go to the tournament. When you finish second, you like this 'crazy system' because you still have a chance. We don't spend a lot of time talking about anything but the moment. We approached this week that we had one game. If we can figure out how to have some success on Saturday, maybe they'll let us stick around."

Senior guard Francis Alonso

On coming back from being down by 12 points at halftime

"I'm constantly thinking about giving it all. We're in a great league and we play against great competition every single day. We knew this was going to be a tough game. When we came out in the second half, it was about getting stops. We just had to take it one possession at a time - that's UNCG basketball."

On feeling pressure late in the game

"I'm probably the wrong guy to ask that question. I love it. I'm usually the guy that when pressure comes, I want that moment. Playing with this type of players, at this type of level, it's a blessing."

Samford Bulldogs

Head coach Scott Padgett

Opening statement

"I thought we came out and really executed our game plan in the first half. The ball moved. We attacked the lane. The defensive effort was just phenomenal. One of the things we talked about if we wanted to give ourselves a chance in this game was that we were going to have to battle them on the boards. So we ended up giving ourselves a chance because we tied with them on the boards. They hurt us in both games on the boards. Then taking care of the ball, we had 11 turnovers. I thought we did a good job with that. A couple of those came late when you're trying to force something because you got down but what I love about them is we ran out of gas a little bit and we haven't had the deepest team this year. We haven't had a lot of depth obviously playing yesterday is a little bit of it but they had a lot of depth. They kept running different guys at us and you see late in the game their legs on the shots just aren't there but what I love about these guys is that they fight. I think there was a point where we missed seven or eight shots in a row but we're still fighting to get a stop and get that extra rebound. Sometimes you get that offensive rebound and you try to force it back up right away when maybe you should kick it out but you're fighting. This year we learned all about fight."

On how he's grown as a coach

"It's a work in progress but I'm trying to be a lot more positive. I'm working on it. I've always been that guy that's a perfectionist. I coach every play. I think the hardest part about being a coach is having been a player. Because if there's something going on out there that you think you can do, you don't understand sometimes why. And that's what I've been trying to get out of my head for the last ten years."

Freshman forward Robert Allen

On the top four teams in the conference (Wofford, UNCG, Furman, ETSU)

"I think that they are all really good teams. All four of them are. I have no doubt they are really good teams. And I think that in order to be able to beat teams like that you have to have a dog in you. You can't have a puppy. There's no way you can have a puppy in you. Having a dog in you can beat any talent, any hardworking skills that will be put in front of you because the fight that we have can take someone a long way. That's why I feel like coach has taught me so well because although I don't have the skills or the talent, I have the dog in me."

Redshirt senior center Ruben Guerrero

On the top four teams in the conference (Wofford, UNCG, Furman, ETSU)

"I can't agree with him (Allen) more. Those four teams raise the level of the conference a lot, but like Rob said, if you want to beat the best teams you've got to play like the best and you've got to fight. Like he said, we might not be as talented or as deep but we're going to fight. We're going to fight until the end and we're going to try our best. We've shown what we've just shown with this game and we're going to keep going next year. I'm leaving but the team will be in good hands."