

2019 Ingles Southern Conference Basketball Championships presented by General Shale



No. 1 Mercer 66, No. 2 Furman 63
March 10, 2019

Mercer Bears

Head Coach Susie Gardner

Opening statement

"Well, first of all, I have so much respect for Jackie (Carson) and the job she's done at Furman. She's a great coach and they have a great program. Her team played hard. She made great changes within the course of the game. (Taylor) Petty was playing so well and just made great coaching adjustments. It was obviously a back-and-forth game, either team could have won that game, and we just got lucky that the last shot bounced off the rim. But I'm so proud and happy for these five seniors. Keke (Calloway) had to play the point guard for us all year. That's not her natural position. She didn't want to play the point guard but, hey, she got it done and we went undefeated again. And then Amanda (Thompson) is just the glue of this team and she does everything we ask her to do. Just think about what these seniors have done in these last two years. Go undefeated in the regular season and win two championships. That's a lot of winning. And I'm not saying we are the best team to come through the SoCon by any stretch, but these guys, these seniors know how to win. And we got it done tonight somehow."

On addressing the team to finish the game

"I don't know if these two guys will agree. But I try to be Ms. Positive in the huddle. Between the third and the fourth quarter I had to get out of my normal character. But I just looked at them and said, "Y'all, we're seniors. We've been here. We got this." I wasn't sure that we had it, but I had to convince myself and convince them that we had it."

Senior forward Amanda Thompson

On the difference in emotions between this year and last year's title

"I can't even begin to tell you. I think last year it wasn't as down to the wire. Last year there was a little more build up. Today it was like the buzzer went off and it was awesome."

Senior guard Keke Calloway

On her performance today

"First, it's only credit to my teammates for finding me and getting me the ball to get open shots. Also to my coaches for believing in me enough to take those long crazy deep shots and they went in today. I just tried to come in and focus to just lead my team and just be the best I can be because if I'm at my best, then everyone else is at their best and we'll have the best chance to win."

Furman Paladins

Head coach Jackie Carson

Opening statement

"It's a hard one. I'm so unbelievably proud of this team, their fight, their resiliency. A lot of people counted us out. We have 15 players, coaches (and) team managers that never counted us out. (They) gave us every single thing I asked of them this game. At the end, the ball didn't fall in our favor. But I couldn't be more proud than to be the coach of this team."

On the potential game-tying three-point shot at the buzzer

"You could have asked me a million times if I thought we were going to lose this game, I would have said there's no way we're going to lose this game. So I thought every single (shot) was going to go in. It looked like it was on line. It's just one of those things that it wasn't in our favor today."

On Mercer's experience vs. Furman's lack of experience

"Almost every member of that team played in this game last year. We tightened up a little bit. I think that's lack of experience in a game like this. That's a team that has five seniors and they didn't want to go out on a bad note. We have one senior that we really wanted to win it for."

On having 14 players coming back next season

"We had one senior (Kaitlyn Duncan) with two juniors. Out of a roster of 15, 12 are freshmen and sophomores. That speaks volumes where this program is and where it's going."

Redshirt junior guard Taylor Petty

On her performance this season and in the championship game (22 points, 5-of-8 three-pointers)

"It's not hard to fit in with this group. I think I finally found my groove. Coach keeps yelling at me to take more shots and I guess today I just found (my shot)."

Sophomore forward Celena Taborn

On what she and the team achieved this season

"For me personally, I still have a lot of things I need to work on. As a team, we were second in conference and we've never done that. So that's a big accomplishment for us. We just need to finish next time."