

# Southeastern Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Saturday March 10, 2018

## Mike Anderson Daniel Gafford Jaylen Barford Arkansas

Arkansas - 80, Florida - 72

MIKE ANDERSON: First of all, it wasn't one of those games where they walk it up and pass it around 15 times. We had a couple of shot clock violations, but other than that, I thought it was an up tempo game by two teams that were really getting after each other. I was proud of these guys and the effort defensively.

I thought in the first half we did a really good job of getting back in the game and took a lead at halftime. Second half, I thought we came out with that great intensity. I thought we came out with a focus on defense and doing the little things, the details of rebounding the basketball and getting to the three-point shooters.

They had seven threes in the first half. We know they're a great three-point shooting team. Everything goes through Chiozza. And I thought we did a good job of building the wall there and making it difficult for those guys to get the good shots.

Our defense, our bench came in and played really, really well.

Barford, this guy is capable of just going off, just going on runs by himself. That's the beauty of this team here. I always tell those guys, they don't have to go get the game. It will come to them. They know when to take advantage of that moment.

And Daniel, walking over here, I didn't know he quietly had a double-double as well, and Jaylen did as well. I was proud of the bench coming in and giving us quality minutes. Darious Hall. Arlando Cook, a guy that's from here. I was proud of all our guys and their effort.

Mike has a tremendous team, and they'll be a great representative in the NCAA. They got guys that can shoot the basketball. Again, tremendous effort in this



setting.

Survive and advance.

**Q. This is for both players. Jaylen, we talked about it last night. Arkansas lost eight in a row. Daniel, I don't know if you knew that. For both you guys, how great was it to break the losing streak to Florida, and how much fun was it?**

JAYLEN BARFORD: It was fun out there. We was into it, defensively and offensively. It was a great game to play. I know the fans were excited. We were excited. It was a great environment.

DANIEL GAFFORD: From what I've been hearing, the excitement from the seniors, it was a real big win for the guys. This was a win that we really needed. So we just came out and handled our business.

**Q. For both of you really. 8 out of 10 you guys have won. What's the confidence level like on this team? Has it grown the last few weeks? How far do you think you can go?**

DANIEL GAFFORD: Our confidence has shot through the roof because we've become a team to where we play together. It's not he gets his shots off and the other guy gets his shots off. It's like team basketball, where we move the ball and get certain things with, like, our defense and our offense.

JAYLEN BARFORD: I think our confidence is great right now as a team. We came together, and I think everybody knows what their task is right now. It's game time, and everybody's just ready to play every night.

**Q. This is for both you guys as well. What do you need to do to get ready to play again in 12, 15 hours?**

JAYLEN BARFORD: Just stay off our legs and eat and go to sleep. That's about it.

DANIEL GAFFORD: You notice he said eat first.

JAYLEN BARFORD: I'm hungry. In the last three minutes, I was starving actually.

DANIEL GAFFORD: The main thing with me is get some sleep. I'm real tired right now. That's pretty

much it.

**Q. Florida, I think it was Stone hit a three and tied it. Then you guys went on a 20-4 run. What was the key to that run?**

JAYLEN BARFORD: Just the defensive standpoint, it was just locking in because we wanted that game bad. We want to win bad. So we want to make it to Sunday as well. Just have to lock in on defense and stop the three-point shooter.

DANIEL GAFFORD: We just had a defensive mindset. We had to keep them from shooting all the threes how they did from the first time we played them. We just maintained the effort from the three-point line, and all we had to do was rebound them because I said every game we rebound a team, we win the game, and that's what we did.

**Q. I know it was a couple months ago, but what do you guys remember about the Tennessee game in Fayetteville?**

JAYLEN BARFORD: The Tennessee game was crazy. The last thing I remember is Daniel dunked the ball, and the crowd went crazy. It was crazy that day.

DANIEL GAFFORD: The atmosphere when we played Tennessee, that was our first SEC Conference game. It was a sold out crowd. It was an early game. Everybody was there. It's like I go into gym seeing that many people, my eyes were just wide open. I was a little nervous at the first point, but I came out the second half, and I did what I had to do. I'm pretty much more comfortable playing this team.

**Q. This is for Daniel. Mike said you had a pretty quiet double-double. I thought that was pretty loud myself, especially that windmill dunk at the end with like 30 -- how did you feel about putting an exclamation point on the win? Just describe that play.**

DANIEL GAFFORD: From the mouth of Arlando Cook, that was the icing on the cake, from his perspective. But the time I caught the ball, in my mind, I was ready to go pretty much and throw it down. So I went ahead and windmilled it to put some flash on it.

**Q. Mike, do you feel like coming into this game as a sixth seed that there's something for this team that they feel like there's something to prove, that they maybe are better than what their seed shows?**

MIKE ANDERSON: I don't even necessarily think about the seeds. I think, if you look at the conference race, it was tit for tat for the most part. We started off really slow. So I think we're slowly picking up steam. We're getting better. Our teams normally get better at this time of the year. Some of the performances of guys.

Daniel was a freshman. Just think about his first conference game against Tennessee to where he is now. He's really evolved as a player.

I think our seniors now are starting to step up and take that lead now. I thought Anton Beard was in charge of these last few ball games, and I think guys have fallen asleep, as well as Jaylen Barford and Daryl Macon. Daryl didn't get off to a great start, but I thought he had a great finish in the second half.

But this team is believing in each other. I think that says it best. Defensively and offensively guys are understanding their roles.

I still think we got some really good basketball in us, especially when we come out with that kind of intensity, and I thought we did from the jump.

**Q. Last night lose the rebounding category by double digits. Tonight it's plus 15. Was there a different mindset? I knew it was going to be a point of emphasis, but was that just kind of a matchup with what Florida does?**

MIKE ANDERSON: No, I think with Florida we have a size advantage we could use, but they're an athletic team. We played them last time, I don't know if we rebounded, but we got bombarded at their place. It was just the next game. What areas do we have to get better at? Rebound the basketball. Get multiple stops. Great three-point shooting team, we've got to chase them off the line.

And then also, I want to really see us get up and down the floor. We really got some transition baskets. We got a lot of guys involved. I thought the ball moved with a purpose. I said this team here just keep evolving, getting better.

**Q. Mike, you guys hadn't beaten them since 2013, when you beat No. 2 Florida at your place. How big was it to break the losing streak? And if you talk about the key to that 20-4 run that really put the game in you all's favor.**

MIKE ANDERSON: The way we play and the way Florida plays, a game of runs. We had a lead in the first half, and they ran right back at us. They tied it up. I thought our guys were dialed in, and all of a sudden now, now the defense triggers the offense, and before you know it, our guys come out and get multiple, multiple stops, and we start really attacking them. We start attacking the basket and then start knocking down some shots.

In terms of it's the next game on the schedule, that's all I look at. It's Florida versus Arkansas. What has taken place last year or this year, earlier in the year, they play

well. They had our number. But in terms of this next game to get us to one of the goals that we talk about, winning a conference championship, next game up.

**Q. Yesterday you mentioned needing to contain KeVaughn Allen. What was working for you guys defensively that led to containing him and the rest of their top scorers?**

MIKE ANDERSON: We want to limit some guys. Chiozza obviously is a tremendous talent. We made them work for everything. That was the difference.

Jalen Hudson, he lit us up last time. So our guys made a point of paying special attention to those guys. Hayes has got to score. We saw Stone come in, and he played really, really well for them. You're going to give up something to somebody. You don't want those big guys to really go off the big scores. I thought, from that standpoint, we did a good job of really -- whatever defense we're in -- man, matchup defense, switching out being with those guys -- so therefore, they're not having target practice out there. Because that's how they shoot the basketball.

**Q. How do you prepare your team on such a short turnaround tomorrow, both the TYs and also scouting?**

MIKE ANDERSON: It's going to be a quick turnaround. Tennessee early in the year was an unbelievable game we played against them. It was like a possession game that you win it, and win in overtime. They've gotten better, and I think we've gotten better. So it should be a great matchup.

The Williams kid, Player of the Year in our league. Schofield, the guy is playing really, really well. And their guard play is really, really outstanding.

And Rick, congratulations to him, Coach of the Year. He's done a masterful job of going in there and really creating a culture of we guys. I always talk about we Hogs. He got a bunch of we guys. And I think, when you put those guys together and they play offensively, they play defensively, they do the right things on and off the floor, the results can -- you can start winning because you're developing the kids, you're developing players, you're developing people.

So Tennessee's real good, but the quick turnaround, obviously, it's going to be something that concerns me because we had some guys that played extended amount of minutes tonight. So that's where our bench is really going to have to come into play for us tomorrow. Hopefully, we can continue to play good basketball. I was really impressed with our defense tonight.