

LSU vs. Mississippi State
January 7, 2017

MISSISSIPPI STATE HEAD COACH BEN HOWLAND

Opening statement...

"That was a great win and a great performance by our team. We really responded well after a disappointing loss at home against Alabama to open up SEC play. I thought offensively today we were much better in terms of being patient and making the extra pass. To score 95 points on 64-percent shooting was phenomenal. We're a good three-point shooting team. Last game we were 1-of-14 in the first half and we really rushed it. We learned from that. Our players had a great practice on Thursday. They did a phenomenal job. I think a big part of it is we ran way more motion, which spread the floor and created space. Both of these guys (Quinn-Dary Weatherspoon and Lamar Peters), along with I.J. (Ready) can penetrate. I think Mario (Kegler) did an incredible job. Our bench was fantastic. E.J. Datcher and Eli Wright played fantastic along with I.J. We're playing 10 deep. I thought 'Zay' (Xavian Stapleton) gave us good minutes and we were concerned with how he would play. I didn't put him in in the second half with a 20-point lead for most of the half, so I didn't want him to tweak it. We need him ready to go for Arkansas. I thought he made a really positive step today. Give them credit too, we had a nice lead and they never gave up. They fought back and cut it to 11 or 12 if I remember correctly in the second half. What I remember is they were down against Vanderbilt big and cut it to a two-point loss. We're excited about the win."

On the play of Lamar Peters in his first game back in Louisiana..

"I was really proud for Lamar. To play in front of family and friends, he had at least 20 people here including his mother. In the first half he played 15 minutes and had four assists and zero turnovers and was really dominating at both ends of the floor. I was really excited for him and I'm excited for our whole team."

On his team's play...

"This is actually their first true road game of the year. It benefited us, as it did for Alabama last week, to not have students here, because you probably don't have as much a boisterous crowd. I remember a year ago this place was rocking here with students in session. That's one of the tough parts about being out for the semester. I look at Aric Holman's numbers and I think he had a great game. I thought Schnider (Herard) had his best game of the year in terms of being effective. I like what Eli Wright brought when you look at his game. He had nine points and didn't miss a shot in 11 minutes and played really solid defensively. E.J. Datcher's four points and two blocks were huge. By playing our bench more and keeping the minutes down for our guys, I thought that was very effective in terms of it made us better defensively. That's me, and I have to do that and that's what we're going to continue to do. We're going to continue to play all ten of those guys every game."

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FRESHMAN GUARD LAMAR PETERS

On how he approached the game given that he is from Louisiana...

"I wanted to approach the game like I approached all of the other games. I needed to be patient, run the sets that coach says to, get everyone involved and to make plays when they're there."

On how his trip was to Louisiana...

"It was an adventure. We went through a lot of adversity and had to keep making changes. I'm glad we were able to respond positively today and came out and got a good win. We had nice preparation going into the game by watching film from the Alabama game. We saw that we took a lot of quick shots. We knew today we needed to come out, move the ball, get some open looks, make more than five passes and just be solid."

SOPHOMORE GUARD QUINNDARY WEATHERSPOON

On how it felt to take a big lead in this game given that they hadn't done that to this point in the season...

"I think it was really good for our team especially heading into our next road game. Also for the younger guys to get some experience because they hadn't gotten a lot of chances, but this was a good win for us."

On how he felt about the game overall...

"I thought it was good. I really just tried to play within myself and tried to get my teammates involved."

FRESHMAN FORWARD SCHNIDER HERARD

On how they were able to defend LSU so well...

"Coach said it's all about defense. We know they're a really good team, and when we came out here, we knew we'd have to stop them. We knew we needed to do the best we could on defense."

On how they were able to be successful in shooting three-pointers...

"We just knew that we needed to stick to smart shots. The guys today were open, and since they were, we didn't have to force anything."

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FRESHMAN GUARD SKYLAR MAYS

On what caused the Tigers to struggle ...

“Points off of turnovers were a big thing.”

On what LSU has to do on defense in the future ...

“We have to take care of the ball, run the offense more efficiently, get better shots. Ultimately, it’s just taking care of the ball.”

On the slow starts ...

“We have to find a way to come out with better intensity so that we are not starting slow. We have been a second half team this year, but we are trying to find ways to become a first and second half team.”

On the biggest issue for LSU on defense ...

“It’s really communication. Our coaches get on us a lot about talking and pointing, and we are not doing a great job of that right now. We have to go back to the drawing board, just keep grinding at it, and things will click. We will get better at it.”

SOPHOMORE GUARD ANTONIO BLAKENEY

On the slow start to the first half ...

“We just didn’t play well early. I don’t know why we didn’t get off to a good start early. I think it was 12-12 to start the game, but it didn’t end up well. We went in at halftime down a lot.”

On Mississippi State’s defensive play causing the offensive issues for LSU ...

“It was more of us. We turned the ball over, and (Mississippi State) got out and got even for it. When you turn the ball over you have to try your best to get back and make a couple of passes. We were turning it over, and they were getting their one-pass layup, straight to the rim layup. We created offense for them with our bad offense.”

On what happens when the team trails in the first half ...

“When we get behind, everyone is trying hard to fight back, maybe when we get the ball or even on defense. They are trying to do whatever they think it takes to win, which is fine, but we shouldn’t be putting ourselves in the situation to be down like that all of the time.”

JUNIOR FORWARD DUOP REATH

On the defensive effort ...

“We just have to get better. We have to look at the team on our scouting report, listen to our coaches and trust what they are saying.”

HEAD COACH JOHNNY JONES

Opening statement ...

“Obviously, we are disappointed in having another setback at home in conference play. We understand the importance of winning at home, especially when you have a tight and tough conference race. Your balance is being able to go on the road and win some games but certainly making sure that you do a great job of holding serve at home. Starting off the season 0-2 at home does not sit well with us. We have to make some corrections, identify those problems and make sure that we are getting better. We have to make sure that we do that quickly. We have to credit Mississippi State and the way they came in. I thought they did a good job of coming in and making plays, especially there in the first half and taking the lead. We went a stretch without scoring for about three minutes. We have to do a much better job on the defensive end when those things happen, making sure that we get stops and not allowing people to get comfortable. They got in their comfort zone and made plays. We have given up 94, 95 points against a couple of opponents here at home, and that is not a good recipe. We have to make sure that we make the adjustments to get better.”

On Mississippi State ...

“They made plays, but at the end of the day they scored 25 points off of our turnovers. They did a good job there. They got to the free-throw line, as well, and they were able to hit open shots. They were shooting the ball extremely well in the first half, shooting about 54 percent. They got looks, made plays. We wanted to make sure that we did a good job on their guards. At times, they had easy plays at the basket. Their post guys had a couple of easy scoring opportunities. It’s about attitude and adjustments. As a group, we have to make sure that we get in position where we hate losing more than we love winning. Until we can to that point, it’s tough. That’s for both ends of the floor.”

On making the adjustments to win games ...

“We have guys in positions right now who are not used to having to make a lot of plays from that spot. They are put in position where they have to play a lot of minutes. We have to do a better job of putting people in the right places that are capable of making those plays. We may have to play a little smaller than we would like. Put the guys who are better ball-handlers and decision-makers out there on the floor. We have to make sure that we can identify and fix that problem soon because we can’t allow those type of turnovers to lead to easy scoring opportunities for our opponents.”