

HEAD COACH VIC SCHAEFER

Opening statement...

“Welcome to the Hump, where 7,000 sounds like 70,000. It’s a great day to be a Bulldog, and I appreciate the opportunity to be here to talk about our team and our program. We’ve been working hard; our kids have been working extremely hard. It’s been fun being here on a new floor, which is beautiful. We appreciate those that made it happen. Ben was a big part of that. Our kids have been practicing since October 3 full time. We’ve been working for five days a week, and I’ve tried to give them the weekends off. I think we worked out on one Saturday, and that was over the Auburn football game weekend. They’ve had weekends off, but we’ve gone hard Monday through Friday. We have a Maroon and White game tonight (Wednesday) here in the Hump, and we play UCLA, which should be a Top 5 team, in a closed-door scrimmage on Sunday in Dallas. I am excited about Maroon Madness Friday night. I appreciate our marketing team and administration for putting it together. Anytime you can have an event in here and have 5,000 to 7,000 people, it’s great for basketball. I expect us to have those crowd numbers again this year. We have tried to do this event at other venues, and it’s just not the same. There’s nothing like being in here and celebrating both of our programs, the men’s and the women’s. I am certainly excited about that, and I look forward to Friday night. I think it’s a great experience for our kids. We talk about the student-athlete experience, and Maroon Madness is another student-athlete experience in basketball that other sports do not have the opportunity to experience. When you can provide such a situation for our students, it really makes it special. Last year we had a special experience in here with the event, and I am looking forward to Friday.”

On getting non-conference teams to come play in the Hump...

“Four years ago, everyone and their dog wanted to come in here and play. Now, it’s really been a challenge. We are going to play Texas here Nov. 20 live on national television. We are excited about that, but we won’t be back at home until Dec. 20 for another non-conference game. We are on the road a bunch, but the flip side is this time next year we’ll have Southern Miss and UALR (coming to Starkville). We will have Oklahoma State from the Big 12 coming back in the SEC/ Big 12 challenge, so those three are already penciled in before we ever start on the rest of it. That’s the good piece about it. If there’s ever a team that I’ve had, this team is ready to go out on the road and play some good people, and I really believe this team is excited about that. They want to play somebody, and quite frankly, I do too. I want to see how they respond in those ballgames early and often because I think it will pay off for us down the line in the SEC.”

On Dominique Dillingham and Victoria Vivians improving their shooting percentages...

“Dom [Dillingham] was a 32 percent shooter a year ago. I would like to see her at 36 or 37 percent. Victoria [Vivians] has to get to the 40s somehow. She was a 35 percent shooter last year, and I’ve got to get her to 42 percent. That’s a big jump, but if I could just get her to 40 percent, that would be a nice jump for both of those kids. Dom needs to average 10 points a game. That’s hard, but Dominique Dillingham played more minutes than any other player in the SEC last year. That’s an amazing stat. When you are on the floor, if you are going to play that long, I need her to be a little more productive on the offensive end. We all know what she brings to the table, but I need her to score a bit more and do it efficiently. Right now, those two are on the path to complete those goals, and I am excited about what they are doing in practice.”

On the development of Jazzmun Holmes in leading the team...

“I think a positive of Morgan [William] being out and having the surgery in the off-season is it put Jazzmun [Holmes] in a position where she may have been a bit more uncomfortable, but that is where we grow. I think for her, she has responded in a very positive way. Morgan is back and back to her old

self. She is fast, quick and explosive. We need both of those kids to be ready to play, and I feel really good about that right now.”

On this year’s senior class...

“I can’t believe they’re seniors. That was the first class we signed. I knew we needed to sign them before we played a game or we might not get them. They believed in us. They trusted us and believed in our vision. Their parents entrusted us with their daughters, and I think we have fulfilled our promise. Those kids have developed both as student-athletes and young women. I am really proud of that group. I am excited about their senior year. It is hard for me to believe it’s been four years with those kids. Dominique Dillingham has a story like Dak Prescott’s, very under-recruited. You just can’t measure what is inside that breastplate of certain kids. I think for her, Dak and those kinds of players, that’s the intangible that you don’t really realize what you have until you have it. She’s the ultimate competitor. She’s not coming off of the floor. She’s going to compete, and she is going to make you play her. Breanna [Richardson] and Ketara [Chapel] both have started off and on in their career. They are best friends competing at the same position. You talk about highly unusual, but they are. They are ultimate competitors, yet they are best friends off the floor. That’s a real unique situation. Then with Chinwe [Okorie], you guys are not going to recognize her after she has been working with Coach (Johnnie) Harris. She’s really come on. She is going to graduate this May with a double major in business. Again, you talk about proud. I am really proud of her and what she has given up to be here. She hasn’t seen her mom in six years. I tell you, when I was 18, there was no way I could have done that, nor would I have done that regardless of the motivation. That is a real mature thing for that kid and what she has been able to accomplish and do. It speaks volumes about her.”