



**2014 Ohio Valley Conference Women's Basketball Championship
Game 2 – First Round - #6 Jacksonville State 71, #7 SIUE 59
March 5, 2014 – Municipal Auditorium (Nashville, Tenn.)**

Post-Game Quotes

Jacksonville State head coach Rick Pietri

"Obviously, I'm pleased with the outcome; it's hard not to be under these circumstances when its conference tournament time and you have to win to keep playing. But the thing that I'm most pleased about, I thought our effort level was great. SIUE came in this game literally the hottest team in this league having won six-out-of-seven and having been the only team to beat the number one seed in Tennessee-Martin. For us to be able to be to beat them, and not only beat them but to beat them on the glass like we did. They're a great rebounding team and we collected 19 offensive rebounds to their 17 defensive rebounds. That means that we got more on our offensive glass than they got. That shows that we had a higher level of desire to get it than they did. I was really excited about that. I've got a lot of respect for what they've done and accomplished this year as a team, the way they finished the season. As a coach watching them on tape I was scared to death. But our team responded, our players responded – I didn't tell them I was scared to death. But our players responded and our kids all deserve a lot of credit."

On the play of Candace Morton and Destiny McLin

"They get a lot of it. These are kids all year long that are our two leading scorers. They've made tremendous contributions and I think the other thing about these two in particular, when you look at what their output was last year, when you look at what their line was statistically last year and what their line is this year, one doesn't resemble the other. I have a lot of appreciation for the growth that these kids have made as players in this year for us."

Jacksonville State junior Candace Morton

On the turnaround from last season

"Honestly, it's a true blessing and I was just ecstatic. We've been working on taking it one day at a time, one game at a time, and one practice at a time the whole year. So every little step we've taken has built this monument and it's just an amazing feeling."

Jacksonville State sophomore Destany McLin

On the nerves of playing in the conference tournament.

"I've never been a part of this and I don't think that anybody on the team has been to a tournament like this. It feels really good to be here. As a group, we talked about it and we wanted to continue and we did what we had to do to be here. I'm excited as well."

SIUE Head Coach Paula Buscher

"I give a lot of credit to Jacksonville State. I really thought they were very well prepared, executed their game plan and played with high level of energy. For our team, it's frustrating...we've been up and down this season and I thought we fought so hard the last three or four weeks to have this opportunity. I thought we were playing some pretty good basketball and unfortunately today – and I'll give Jacksonville State credit for it as well – but today I don't think we stepped out and had our best performance. I'm not saying we didn't give the effort, but I didn't think we executed and stepped up to make plays like we had been in the last couple weeks."

On the progress the team made this year

"I think that was part of our inconsistency...was our youth early. I think, late, I want to give a lot of credit to our seniors. About three weeks ago, we had a little heart-to-heart after practice and I told them there was really only two directions to go...as a senior class, you leave giving that full effort and showing the underclassmen how hard our expectations are of playing and the style of play...and I really thought they did that, and the younger players stepped up and followed their lead, so I give them a lot of credit because it was them sticking together and really coming together."

On the future

"It's something that I will probably be excited about tomorrow....it's the last game you know. But I think what the seniors have done is help lay that foundation, help lay the expectations of, not only making it down here every year, but we want to get deeper in rounds and we know that."

SIUE Senior Valerie Finnin

"It's been an awesome experience. I don't regret anything...it's been the best experience. It's been fun seeing myself grow over the past four years as well as the underclassmen below me."

SIUE Freshman Micah Jones

"I think I relied on the seniors the most because they guided us and taught us because I did have a lot of questions. I think they molded our team because we were so young."

SIUE Junior Tierny Austin

"The season went pretty good. As coach said, we were inconsistent at times but we played our hardest every time out, so it went pretty good."

Post-Game Notes

JSU improves to 13-17 this season and advances to face Tennessee Tech on Thursday at 2 p.m.

JSU finished with four players scoring in double-figures, the first time five players have finished in double-digits for the Gamecocks since Eastern Kentucky on Feb. 16, 2013.

The Gamecocks win their second straight game against SIUE and cut the series lead to 4-2.

SIUE is now 1-2 all-time in the OVC Tournament.

JSU is now 3-6 all-time in the OVC Tournament.

JSU sophomore Destiny James tied her career high with 10 points.