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Tulane 69

An interview with:

## USF

THE MODERATOR: Joining us from USF is head coach Jose Fernandez, we will open for questions while we wait for Alisia Jenkins, Courtney Williams. Coach, comments?

COACH FERNANDEZ: I told our kids, you know, last Monday to get an opportunity to play for a conference championship we needed to get through two nights. I thought yesterday we played with incredible energy in the first half and got to rest and play a lot of guys. Tonight I wasn't pleased with our defensive effort. I thought Lisa and Tulane's basketball team did an amazing job. They showed on national TV why they picked up some very good quality, non-conference wins. I've been on that wrong side of the NCAA bubble four times and it's not fun, but I think how they played up here in three days and how they played against us, you know, there are four, five, six teams vying for the final three, four spots for the NCAA Tournament and they proved they are NCAA at-large worthy with the other teams that are being considered.

We will be thinking about them on Selection Monday.

**Q. Courtney, it's a tie game, you hit a 3-pointer at the buzzer, and then you hit a two and then you come down and make a defensive play. Do you think that's who you are, your team is in a tough spot, playing for a title, you want to step up and make those plays?**

COURTNEY WILLIAMS: Yes, sir, definitely I think I've proven that I can take that shot, so coach trusts me to take that shot and has confidence in me and draws the play up for me to be able to win it.

**Q. Big difference between yesterday and today. What was the difference for you?**

COURTNEY WILLIAMS: I think just staying focused or trying to stay focused.

I think Alisia got us going, because without her we definitely wouldn't have been in the spot that we was in to even win that game.

**Q. Alisia, this is two big games inside where you have taken charge and done things. Now, I know that you want to enjoy the victory but can you talk about the size that UConn is going to present inside and how you go about taking on something like that with the rebounding and things that you do so well?**

ALISIA JENKINS: Truthfully I'm going to have to believe in myself and hit hard and fight for rebounds like I normally do. Just do all the small things.

THE MODERATOR: Ladies, you're free to leave.

**Q. Coach, you're facing an utter juggernaut in UConn, they beat East Carolina by 50 today in one of the best first halves I've seen, how do you plan to slow them down on both their aggressiveness on offense and defense?**

COACH FERNANDEZ: They were at 82-percent shooting before the half and missed shots at the end dropped their field goal percentage to 78-percent shooting. I thought last Monday night, that's what happened to us in the first half.

I thought they shot a big number and we turned the ball over and in the second half we got in the flow and we defended a lot better and we made shots.

They're just too good offensively, you got five, six guys shooting over 50-percent, and they're too good to get wide-open looks.

So we have to make sure that every shot they take is challenged and had if they make those shots and there is a solid, good contest, we have to inbound it and go answer. That's our plan.

We're excited, we're playing for a Conference Championship, right?

**Q. Coach you mentioned how yesterday you were able to rest the team and I'm sure that will help, but you had to get 40 out of Alisia and Courtney today. Does that concern you trying to get past them?**

COACH FERNANDEZ: At this time of the year everybody is tired. We played a lot of basketball. Maybe that wasn't the best for them not to be rested, to be honest with you. We hadn't played since Monday against the No. 1 team in the country. We looked very sluggish today, we looked out of rhythm.

Laura Ferreira, we haven't had one kid foul out all year and she fouled out today. She doesn't defend hard enough to foul out, seriously. We didn't contain the dribble, we were leaving our feet, we went under flares, we were uncharacteristic today. If we do that tomorrow it will be the same scenario that happened up at Gampel and that won't be fun on national TV.

**THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Coach.**

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