



# 2017 Southern Conference Basketball Championship

presented by General Shale



**No. 9 The Citadel 78, No. 8 Western Carolina 72**  
March 3, 2017

## **The Citadel Bulldogs**

### **Coach Duggar Baucom**

#### *Opening statement*

“Credit Western Carolina because they gave us everything they had. [Western Carolina’s Haboubacar] Mutombo came into that game as a 29-percent 3-point shooter, and he goes 5-for-10 from 3s, so credit him for really stepping his game up. I thought [WCU’s Marc] Gosselin has been playing at a really high level the last four games, averaging a double-double. Credit those guys. Coach [Larry] Hunter is the senior statesman of the league, and he is as good of a coach as there is in this league. To get a conference tournament win against him is a credit to my guys. I thought they played hard. Preston Parks showed tonight why he is the Freshman of the Year. Zane [Najdawi] played good minutes in the second half as Ezekiel [Balogun] did, too. I could not be any more proud of our guys. We went through an 11-game losing streak just a week ago, and since that day, they have reeled off three wins: one on the road, one at home and a tournament win.”

#### *On his team’s character*

“I think our kids have amazing character just to go through what they go through day-to-day [at The Citadel]. It’s a pretty difficult thing day-in and day-out. We have three seniors, and this is the most wins that they have ever experienced in a season. We want the season to continue for them. We do not have any juniors. Most of the guys we play are freshman and sophomores, and I always joke that they are too young to know what they don’t know. And they just kept fighting, and kept coming to practice every day. A more mature team may have been a bit more [deflated]. I’ve been a head coach for now 14 years, and this is certainly the most resilient team I’ve ever had.”

#### *On his team not giving up*

“We tried to stay real positive with [the team], even when we had some turnovers that we were less than happy with. But that is what happens with a young team. You just have to play through that. They look at you with wide eyes, wanting you to give them some advice. As long as you stay positive with them, they certainly try to please you. Even when we were losing, they were pleasing us in a lot of areas, just not on the scoreboard. Your reward for beating a tough WCU team is that you get to play the No. 1 seed, but I will take that.”

## **Western Carolina Catamounts**

### **Coach Larry Hunter**

#### *Opening statement*

“Congratulations to The Citadel. I thought it was a hard-fought ball game. I thought they did a great job of opening with that four- to six-point lead. Got to the foul line the second half and they made their free throws. I thought that was key to the lead. We had a lot of opportunity, in both halves. A lot of rebounding and execution, we just could not finish a lot of those shots. Our guys battled. We played really hard, but they did a better job in the second half than we did. Haboubacar Mutombo, late in the game, hit a bunch of shots. He stepped up big for us, with the right mindset to keep us in the game.”

*On the experience of the young team*

"I thought we got better. We still have a long way to go. We're going to have a great offseason. I thought my two juniors here (Devin Peterson and Haboubacar Mutombo) have stepped up in the last 12 or so ball games. That changed their games a little and their mentality. We had pretty good games where they've given us some stability. I'm very proud of their progress. We have the pieces to the puzzle. We have some players coming in that can help us. We just have to get better, mentally and physically."

**Western Carolina junior guard Devin Peterson**

*On self-development and team development*

"Last year, I came into a leadership role with the help of four seniors. I didn't really have that much pressure. This year, I stepped into a larger role where I had to be more focused. Early on, I don't think I was doing that well, but as the year progressed, I started getting better and getting a feel for how things would go. I'm looking forward to next year. I think our team can bounce back even stronger."

**Western Carolina redshirt junior guard Haboubacar Mutombo**

*On finding his outside rhythm*

"I just tried to stay aggressive as the game went on. Even though we were down towards the end, we still kept trying to push. I think we lacked defensively, trying to stop them from transitioning."

*On self-development and team development*

"I was more of a reserve last year. This year, a lot of things were still new to me and I had to take the leadership role, along with Devin (Peterson). It was much different, but as the year went on, we adjusted."