



2017 Southern Conference Basketball Championship

presented by General Shale



No. 6 Samford 67, No. 3 ETSU 64
March 2, 2017

Samford Bulldogs

Coach Mike Morris

Opening statement

"I'm glad the game wasn't 41 minutes, but I am really pleased with our team's effort. I thought we were really defensive. We didn't give up many offensive transition buckets. We only had nine turnovers. I'm really pleased with our approach coming into the tournament. We had our ups and downs, particularly in conference play, for them to come in and regroup and play the way they did. Credit to our players and our program. I'm really pleased with how our team competed and hung in there to make two big plays."

On the atmosphere of the huddle

"We knew they would come back, being a good team. For the most part, we were playing some good defense and it still wasn't good enough. The huddle was kind of chaotic. We lost our composure a little bit. I thought Brittany (Stevens) did a great job of turning it around. The flow of that game, the way it was going, we could have easily lost that game."

On Samford freshman forward Samantha Fitzgerald

"She's a heck of a player. She's definitely shown that throughout the season. I think she can create a matchup problem because she can shoot the 3, she can play on the floor, and she's quick enough to get by people. I'm very glad she's just a freshman, and I'm looking forward to her next game, at least, as a sophomore."

Samford freshman forward Samantha Fitzgerald

On the team's composure during the game as ETSU was coming back

"We really had to help each other out staying composed and hold each other accountable. We had a couple of times where we'd have someone freaking out, but we had each other's backs. [When the final buzzer went off] The feeling was unbelievable. We came in as the underdog, but we took advantage of what we have."

ETSU Bucs

Coach Brittney Ezell

Opening statement

"A heartbreaking way to end the year for us. It's kind of a microcosm of how the year has gone for us. We started way too flat. I give credit to Samford, they hit shots early. Tianna (Tarter) picking up her second foul in the first half made it tough to keep it going. If anybody doubts who the best player in the conference is, she's sitting right here (Tianna Tarter). She had 39 and 10. She single-handedly put that team on her back. It was an amazing individual performance to watch. With that being said, we have got some work to do with our younger ones. We matched Samford statistic-for-statistic with the exception of free throws, which is a testament to our kids, but it's a disappointing way to end the season."

On being down in the first half

"What we always say is, 'How do you eat an elephant but one bite at a time?' You can't do it all in one shot, possession, or even in one quarter. They believed in that. I don't think this team ever doubted what we were

doing. They may have had a little self-doubt. At 40-19, I just stopped looking at the scoreboard. At that point, you have to coach morale, because coaching the scoreboard is not going to work. Truthfully, that's not how you're supposed to play. You're supposed to play to the best of your ability regardless of the scoreboard, and we were not doing that. When we did start doing that, it's funny how the score changed."

ETSU junior guard Tianna Tarter

On the carrying the team through a comeback

"I'd say I did it for my teammates. They said I needed to take over and that's what I did. I had to take over.

On her final shot being blocked as time expired

"I'd say that was a bad shot on me, but I had to shoot it."

On the team's demeanor

"We were down in the first half, but we had to play defense, get stops, and score to come back."