

March 7, 2013



Vanderbilt – 53
Missouri – 40

An interview with:

**COACH MELANIE BALCOMB
CHRISTINA FOGGIE
JASMINE LISTER**

THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and get started. We are joined by Vanderbilt head coach Melanie Balcomb, and student athletes Christina Foggie and Jasmine Lister. Coach, we'll take an opening comment from you and open it up for questions.

COACH BALCOMB: Obviously I'm really pleased with our defense and the ability to continue to defend when shooting probably the poorest I've ever had a team shoot in the first half.

The ability to just play through it is very difficult. I thought we showed a lot of maturity with a combination of some upperclassmen but a lot of underclassmen.

Then Foggie came in and hit the big threes she needed to do, which is also difficult being out as long as she has been. And Jazz being the leader in keeping everybody focused, calm, getting the ball to the right people.

I'm proud of the defense and the comeback and the resilience that we showed as a team in the second half.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Jasmine, how nice is it to have Foggie back on the court with you?

JASMINE LISTER: It's great. There's definitely not as much pressure to shoot or score. I've always been comfortable playing with Foggie, that she'll knock a shot down. There's more energy on the court when she's out there, so...

Q. You played against Kentucky earlier this season and it ended up being the worst loss. What is the mindset coming into the game tomorrow night?

CHRISTINA FOGGIE: Definitely protecting the ball and being more aggressive, not letting them put us on our heels and basically protecting the ball and being strong with it, being aggressive.

JASMINE LISTER: And playing free. We played really tight against them last time. Our goal is just to come out there and play tough like we know how to play.

Q. What do you think it was that enabled you to turn the corner in the second half after such a slow start?

JASMINE LISTER: Probably just the acceptance of, Okay, that was their run, but now we really need to focus and like do what we need to do, convert our defense into our offense, not just get stops but be able to execute our offense, as well.

CHRISTINA FOGGIE: I agree. I think getting transition helped us. We were defending the whole game, but getting the offense from our defense really gets energy for us. That really made a run for us.

COACH BALCOMB: Just like I drew it up (laughter).

Q. Do you want to talk on the offensive glass, you had 20 to their nine rebounds. How were you able to do that?

JASMINE LISTER: I mean, our freshman, Morgan Batey, she's always been a great rebounder for us. She was fearless on the boards. She just kept going and going.

CHRISTINA FOGGIE: Yeah, just basically finding the gap. Playing zone, you can find gaps. Morgan and Tiff did a really good job of staying with it, with their hands on it, coming out with it. Those were big for us.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions

for coach.

Q. Coach, what did you see as the key from the time you went from being down 6 to taking the lead?

COACH BALCOMB: I definitely think what they were talking about. We tried to create some offense off our defense, not just stop them, make them take tough shots, but get in transition on offense and put them on their heels and get some looks into Tiff, get her on the block.

To do that, we just had to get in transition. It was tough to get it into her when we were in a 2-3.

I also think Foggie being able to hit some shots and then all of a sudden the rim was open, it was like there was a lid on it, a lid on it. As soon as she hit two threes, then we all started to relax and realize, We can make shots, the rim is open.

So much of it has to do with relaxing on offense. Once you're really locked in the way we were defensively, it really helped our offense. That consistent defense is what caused that to happen.

Q. A'dia Mathies scored a season high 28 points against you last time. How do you go about defending her this time? Are you going to do anything differently?

COACH BALCOMB: God, I hope so (laughter).

We haven't sat down and gotten a game plan together yet for Kentucky. We didn't take Missouri lightly because they've been knocking off people. We're taking it one game at a time.

We'll come up with a game plan tonight. She's going to get her points. She's a tremendous player, has a lot of accolades in this conference with the experience. So obviously we want to do a better job on her to start with. That will be a focus.

And I won't tell you my secrets then either (laughter).

Q. How encouraging is it to have a defensive performance the way you did after starting off so poorly on offense?

COACH BALCOMB: It was real important because of the consistency. I've had teams in the past, you watch teams like this all the time, because they're not making shots, all of a sudden they can't defend.

I think because of the injuries, because of losing Steph, then Christina was a main scorer for us, Kady had her moments. We scored 92 points against Mississippi State. He told me after the

game we were a pro team and could score at every position, to going to a team that needed to hold people in the 40s and 50s to win I think says a lot for this team and where they've come.

Not just the freshmen stepping up, but everybody understanding what we needed to do to win games. It wasn't going to be on offense. Our offense now obviously came when we needed it in the second half. But we are the best defensive team and rebounding team that I've had at Vanderbilt.

I think that showed tonight. To be consistent, I'm not saying we won the SEC in the 40s against LSU one year, but the consistency we showed when we weren't making shots to continue to defend was impressive. Really proud of that. That shows a lot of heart and a lot of guts.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much.

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An interview with:

**COACH ROBIN PINGETON
MORGAN EYE
LIZ SMITH**

THE MODERATOR: Joining us now from Missouri is head coach Robin Pingeton and Morgan Eye and Liz Smith. We'll take an opening comment from coach.

COACH PINGETON: Well, obviously disappointed. I felt like we put ourselves in a pretty good position despite the fact we gave up too many offensive rebounds in that first half. We were able to get up 7 in the second half. Felt like we had a breakdown in our defensive assignments, then I sensed a lot of deflation on our team.

We just had a hard time regrouping from that point. You saw a very experienced veteran Vandy team who obviously there's a reason they've been to the NCAA tournament I think the last 11 years. They were pretty steady. They weathered the storm through the good and the bad.

They've got a first-team all conference player who is pretty good in Clarke and a strong supporting cast.

We're just not quite there yet. We'll just have to continue to learn, grow and get better. Hopefully we'll have a chance to get to that post-season in the WNIT, get a few more games under our belt and get more experience.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Liz, you had 16 and 8 after the game. What is it like putting it all out on the floor in a game like this?

LIZ SMITH: Before the game we were all preparing. My mindset in this game is this is the last game of my career, I'm going to put it all out there no matter what. Tomorrow is never guaranteed. That was my mindset and I was going to go out fighting.

I know we're going to keep going that way.

Q. If you want to talk about that turning point in the game. You had a 7-point lead, then they went on an 18-0 run. Talk about that.

MORGAN EYE: I know myself personally, I let No. 10, who is an excellent shooter, I held in on the post when I should have stayed out on her. I know I had a few mistakes. I drove in the lane once, took a bad shot, then I drove in the lane again, bad pass to Bri. I think those were back-to-back possessions that were just bad possession for us and we weren't able to get any points from it.

LIZ SMITH: Yeah, at that point I think we could have stayed more true to our offense, setting more screens for our guards, which is on me. Just getting in the flow of things. I think at that point they really dug in on the post and they were hopping off a lot. It was hard to get an in.

Yeah, they had a run in there that we should have taken care of.

THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and take questions for coach.

Q. It seemed like the back-to-back threes was the turning point. Can you talk about those and how it seemed to shift the momentum.

COACH PINGETON: Yeah, I agree with you. I think that was absolutely the turning point. I just don't think we responded very well to that. They were spot up good looks at the basket. We just absolutely had a breakdown in our defensive assignments and didn't weather that very well.

In tournament games this time of the year, it's going to be a game of runs, highs, lows, but you got to continue to play in the present and not allow that kind of deflation to set in.

I really felt like it got the best of us and we just did not respond or regroup from that point on.

Q. Talk about the first half with Vanderbilt getting the offensive rebounds that they were. You couldn't get your hands on it. But they only went 6 for 35. Do you feel rebounding was a big issue there?

COACH PINGETON: Something that we've been pretty solid with all year long is our transition. When you give up second- and third-shot opportunities, I think there's a little bit of deflation that sets in.

But I think really what hurt us tonight more than anything, it's kind of been our Achilles' heel all year long, they had 20 points off our turnovers. I liked our defensive game plan coming in. We had a couple breakdowns. Just felt like we had some good looks. The ball wasn't falling for us tonight.

Gosh, every possession is big, especially when you're not shooting the ball very well. I think they ended up having 11 more possessions than we did, but 20 points off your turnovers, that's going to come back to hurt you.

Q. Can you talk about the matchup zone. Seemed like it really kind of caused them a lot of problems. What did you see going into the game?

COACH PINGETON: No doubt about it. They've got some tremendous basketball players on the perimeter and with Clarke on the inside. We just really felt like, you know, not knowing what Foggie's status was going to be going into the game, if she was going to play or not, we could pass around their shooters and really be conscientious of their inside game.

We felt like offensively they weren't quite as explosive in their motion sets as they were their man sets that would allow us to help inside a little bit more with Clarke, who is such a tremendous player for them.

So, you know, I liked our game plan. I really did. I felt like it was a good game plan. We didn't box out very well out of it.

Even in the second half, we lost our shooters a couple times. But I think I'd do it the same way all over again, to be honest with you. We had a hard time knocking down shots today. Didn't get to the free-throw line as much as we

would have liked. When we had good looks, we didn't convert.

Again, give them credit. They played well defensively. Switched on a lot of screens. Even when they had their little point guard on Liz, she battled, played with a lot of toughness. Made it hard for Liz to get deep post-ups. Give Vandy a lot of credit.

Q. If you just want to mention in short your experience first year in the SEC now that it's all over.

COACH PINGETON: Well, I've got a tremendous respect for this league. A lot of people think it's the best league in the country, and I'm certainly one of those people.

It's hard when you change leagues, especially compiled with a very young and inexperienced team. I think it makes it really challenging.

Playing in new venues against new personnel, no matter how much tape you watch, I think until you go through it in person, it's really hard to get a feel for.

Personnel and systems and style of play. You know, first time you go to Tennessee, we've talked about this, awestruck. Playing at Vandy, tough venue to play in if you haven't been there before. There's certainly been some challenges.

We're really looking forward to it. We've got a lot of work to do ahead of us. We've got a lot of areas that we need to improve on. But I think the first year in a new league with a young team, I'm proud of our young ladies. We're looking forward to really getting after it in the off-season and improving as a team.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much.

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