

2025 Southern Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Game 1 – Mercer vs. Western Carolina

Mercer

Head coach Ryan Ridder – We challenged these guys about two weeks ago and said we've got to get back to playing with edge. And I think our group has done that. ... It's not always pretty in March, but it's gritty, and that's a fun group that they can continue to play and win. Based on the effort and togetherness, obviously, these two guys right here (Ahmad Robinson and Alex Holt) were elite tonight. ... I know what we got sitting next to us and proud that these guys get a chance to play tomorrow against a really good Chattanooga team. ... Give Western Carolina credit, they just kept battling, kept making timely shots. And ultimately, with four minutes to go, we talked about getting a kill – three stops in a row. Our guys found a way to get stops and ultimately execute offensively down the stretch on a night that we couldn't throw the ball in the bucket. ... (Ahmad) is an elite decision maker, and people see that he scores points, but at the end of the day, he knows how to play basketball. And so obviously, we were trying to get the ball in his hands (on the last play) and let him pick how they're going to guard him.

Student-athlete Alex Holt – Confidence, of course, is a big thing for me, especially. Who am I to not have confidence in myself? So that the people behind me have confidence in me and themselves. So when they get on the court, they're ready to go. I mean, that's the biggest thing, just being a leader from that standpoint. I might not be the most vocal, but I can set a good example for the people behind me.

Student-athlete Ahmad Robinson – It was really fun to be out there, for sure. You know, we are always saying in practices, 'have fun with it, just keep going hard.' It felt like another day in the office, but just a little bit more on the line this time.

Western Carolina

Head coach Tim Craft – I loved the way our guys kind of battled back to get back in the game and take the lead. We had some different guys step up to help us do that. Hats off to Mercer. Robinson and Holt were terrific for the whole game. Robinson just did a great job of controlling the pace and scoring or dumping it off to Holt for layups – and that's what it ended up being at the end. We just struggled to guard (Robinson) throughout the night.

Student-athlete Bernard Pelote – Cullowhee is always going to be my home. I'm thankful for everybody I met over the past three years. Thankful for my teammates past and present. It's just been fun. It sucks it had to end this way, but (this) has put me in a position to be successful on the court and off the court for the future?

Student-athlete Ice Emery – I think that Coach Craft really made me buy into being tough, and I can't be soft at any time, especially me being a small guard. So I think that's probably like the biggest thing I'll take with me – just toughness. And that's not even on the basketball court, just in life. Nothing's easy, nothing's going to be given to you.