These tournaments are big time, they can definitely help you get into the NCAA Tournament with some quality wins. Arizona’s a quality basketball team. We’ve got to play well in order to win these games.

Clarence Jackson said. “Sticks turn into blanks. Snails turn into donkeys.”

Starting center Morris Udeze turned in his best game of the season on Friday, against Arizona (No. 41) and Michigan (No. 3) are both in the top-50, according to the metric.

“I’m excited about the challenge,” head coach Isaac Brown said. “These tournaments are big time, they can definitely help you get into the NCAA Tournament with some quality wins. Arizona’s a quality basketball team. We’ve got to play well in order to win these games.”

The Shockers have not yet faced a top-100 opponent in KenPom this season, but that will change after this weekend. Arizona (No. 41) and Michigan (No. 3) are both in the top-50, according to the metric.

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The Shockers offense has had its growing pains through the first three wins, especially during first halves. WSU is currently shooting 35% during the first 20 minutes, but WSU’s offense clicked the final 20 minutes ahead of the trip to Vegas.

In the second half against Tarleton State, the Shockers shot 52% from the field and 43% from three. “I think anytime you can see the ball go through the net, I think that gives you confidence,” Brown said. “Now those guys know we can make shots, when we take good shots and drive the basketball, try to create for a teammate. We’ve got to do that to beat these teams.”

WSU’s defense looked ready for its biggest test of the season on Friday. The Shockers forced five shot-clock violations in the first half and held the Texans (0-3) to 38.3% shooting (18-47) and 3-16 from three.

The Shockers utilized a three-quarters court press to help take a lead late in the first half. They trailed 20-19 and forced four straight turnovers to go up 23-20. Three more Texans turnovers allowed the Shockers to go up 29-20.

“We know we’re very athletic,” Clarence Jackson said. “Steals turn into baskets. Steals turn into dunks.”

Clarence Jackson takes a jumpshot point during the game against South Alabama on Nov. 13 inside Charles Koch Arena.