

# American Conference Men's Basketball Championship

Friday, March 13, 2026

Birmingham, Alabama, USA

Legacy Arena At The BJCC

## UAB Blazers

## Andy Kennedy

## Chance Westry

### Postgame Press Conference



Charlotte 83, UAB 78

ANDY KENNEDY: Yeah, first off, disappointed that our season ends in our own city so early. We've been four straight conference tournament championship games, and that obviously comes to a screeching halt today. Disappointed in that.

But all credit to Charlotte. They were good in the second half. I just passed Coach Fearne in the hallway and I said, tomorrow I would just tell the refs let's skip the first half and let's just get right to the second.

They shoot 77 percent; they make 14 threes. When you give up 77 percent on defense and your opponent makes 14 threes, you're typically not going to like the outcome.

Guys played hard, battled. I thought we had a great lift off our bench by Quaran McPherson. We only made four threes. We come into this game at 358th in the country, the worst three-point shooting, and that holds true even in the conference tournament.

But Q I thought really helped us hit that big three, and here you go, maybe you can find a way to get it to the finish line.

But Charlotte wouldn't allow it. Credit to them. Every time we challenged they stepped up and made a play.

**Q. They had a stretch where they made 14 straight shots in the second half. What was going wrong during that stretch, and how could you have maybe stopped that?**

ANDY KENNEDY: Everything was going wrong. We're a team that switches our defenses and I'm sitting here looking because we have a breakdown of our defenses.

When we were in our 1-3 or 1-3-1, they were three for three. When we were in our 2-3 zone they were 12 for 21. When we were in our 3-2 zone they were four for four. When we were in our man-to-man they were 14 for 22.

So everything was going wrong. I kept challenging our group in time-outs because really, they were staying in the game because they were offensive rebounding the ball and then Mingo was just carrying them. We were allowing Mingo to continue to carry them.

We're trying to be more aware, make somebody else make a shot, and then when we finally got the ball out of his hands. His teammates really stepped up and made big plays.

**Q. Andy, they seemed like they had several unbothered threes maybe. Do you agree with that --**

ANDY KENNEDY: They bothered me. Yeah, they were non-disrupted. We weren't very disruptive defensively. Again, you look at the stats, they shoot 77 percent from the floor, they got 21 assists, only nine turnovers. They beat us on the glass; they beat us to 50/50 balls. It was really amazing.

We came into this tournament as a 4 seed, earned by these guys, out of 18 league games of which we won 11. We trailed for 60 percent of those total minutes. So you're thinking, how did you win 11? Because we win games like this. We kind of hung in there, hung in there, hung in there, and found a way to make a spurt.

Today we hung in there, hung in there, and we could not stop them. Again, Q made that big three and next thing you know, here we go, two minutes to play; we need a stop; and they scored three consecutive time.

Our inability to get stops, credit to them. I thought their ball movement was outstanding, and Dezayne Mingo, definitely the MVP today.

**Q. 32 seconds left you call a time-out to draw up that play. I think you settle for a lay-up. What went into**



that?

ANDY KENNEDY: You know, this group has been -- it's been a struggle sometimes when you put guys out of their spots. We had kind of a disjointed team in, and DA, despite him going 0 for 6, I still thought he should be in some screening action.

Maybe he gets lost and we get a shot. We were trying to run a little bit of a floppy action, screen double screen, and he went the wrong way.

As a result, Chance did what he had to do because we look up and he tried to get downhill and missed the lay-up.

We only had, I think, three team fouls, maybe four. That's why we were saying we've got to steal the ball because we're not going to have time -- even if he would have made that, we're not going to have time to foul, foul, foul.

It was only like seven seconds to play. We end up getting them to spend a time-out then at the end another busted coverage, and next thing you know they're free for a lay-up.

**Q. If I would have told you at halftime you were up two at half, and if I had told you you were getting ready to shoot 60 percent in the second half, would you have felt pretty good about your chances?**

ANDY KENNEDY: I would have. Again, credit to Charlotte. They did it again last night as well. We struggled in the first half. They struggled in the first half tonight. We struggled in the first half.

I've said this before, you've heard me, I think the team in a plays the night before and wins and advances has an advantage over the team that's sitting and waiting. It's just natural.

We come out, it's tournament time, we are a little amped up, we miss shots that typically we would make in the first half. We made those in the second half. Our problem was we couldn't get stops.

Some nights it's offense, some nights it's defense. But I give Charlotte credit. Without seeing the film, the only thing that frustrates me as a coach is we let one guy continue to initiate everything in Mingo, and I know that that was brought up ad nauseam about, hey, man, we got to know where 2 is in our zones and our man, and we just could not get the ball out of his hands.

**Q. Chance, for you as a player to be on the other side of that kind of half where they're shooting -- at one time they're shooting over 80 percent, how frustrating**

**is it, and just kind of how much pressure does it put on you when they're pretty much hitting everything they're throwing up there?**

CHANCE WESTRY: It's very frustrating. Not being able to hit shots. 4 from 19 is very difficult when they're 14 for 29. It's a big difference.

**Q. Andy, you mentioned it earlier. From your perspective, four consecutive seasons, four consecutive conference tournament championship games and winning two of them.**

ANDY KENNEDY: Yeah, it's disappointing, and this one is here and legacy and home-court advantage so to speak and for us not to be able to give ourselves a chance to advance is disappointing. I'm disappointed. I apologized to the commissioner, and I thought we had good fan support today.

It's a noon game on Friday. Not the easiest thing to do when you're working. I felt like we could have built some momentum if we could have advanced.

Again, I'm disappointed because when the season ends, it ends so abruptly. This team did a lot of good things. Actually we'd won 10 games in a row away from Bartow Arena prior to today. That comes to an end, but this thing did a lot of good things.

Charlotte sent us home and they deserve to advance with their ability to make play after play after play. Today it came in the version of making shots.

But again, I'm not sure too many teams in college basketball are going to lose when they go 20 for 26 in a half, 14 big threes as Chance just said, so congratulations to them.

**Q. You mentioned it there, just looking at this year, how do you assess this year, this team, especially this guy next to you has had a great year as well?**

ANDY KENNEDY: Yeah, Chance has been tremendous. I think he's probably one of the most surprising storylines in all of college basketball. If we could have advanced in this tournament, his story could have been broadcast a little longer. He's had a tremendous year. He's led us. We've changed him all over the floor. He's an incredible facilitator today.

Not his best game offensively, and he still ends up with 15 assists. We would be so lost offensively without his ability to facilitate and get guys shots at the basket. Chance has had a tremendous season, for a guy that really this is his



first year not only playing extended minutes but most certainly in the role that we had him.

**Q. Chance, you finished your last three games double digit assists. Overall for the season, you're healthy, but how much of this has just been you getting better and continuing this on hopefully for next season?**

CHANCE WESTRY: I feel like it means a lot to me. I didn't even see myself playing this role at the beginning of the season, being out of shape a little bit. Just turning people's heads with my play-making ability and just listening to Coach.

**Q. Chance, this one is for you. You had a great performance with 15 assists. Tell me a little bit about that and your connection finding Daniel Rivera inside; he had 20. Tell me about your performances.**

CHANCE WESTRY: Just athleticism, being able to finish around the rim, and just telling me, hey, I'm open and just look for me. Just getting him the ball and also Kye on the screens opening everything up so I can see where he's at.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports