

Atlantic Coast Conference Basketball Tipoff Media Day

Wednesday, October 8, 2025

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Louisville Cardinals
Coach Pat Kelsey
Ryan Conwell
J'Vonne Hadley
Men's Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Questions for Coach.

Q. You talked about the revival team of last year. I know it's still preseason, but is there maybe like a one-word theme to describe this current group that you have?

PAT KELSEY: I said it in an article or an interview a while ago, that I usually come up with some sort of tagline throughout my career, whether we are at Winthrop and we said "Rock the Hill" because of Rock Hill, South Carolina. We said "Our City" in Charleston to embrace the city. Last year the "The Revival" made so much sense.

To be honest with you, my 100,000% focus is getting this team on the same page, moving in the same direction, give it the best chance to be special. So my marketing acumen has gone down a little bit, but hopefully my coaching and motivation acumen has gone up.

No, I don't have one. At Louisville we have some of the smartest, brightest, funniest, wittiest marketing people in the country, and if they come up with something, we'll go to it. But the biggest thing for me is being great in tomorrow's practice.

Q. I was wondering if you had an update on Kasean Pryor's rehab since we last spoke to you over the summer, and do you expect him to suit up for these two games coming up against Kansas and Bucknell?

PAT KELSEY: So I can't speak to that. I will tell you that his rehab has gone great. He's attacked it with everything he's got. Katie Creznic, our director of sports medicine, our trainer, I think she's the best in the country. Came with us from Charleston. We call her KTG, Kate the Great. I love you, Katie. She's been working hand in hand with Kasean.

He's had a great mentality, even when he's been out. I think these guys could speak to that. He's leaning forward, and in every huddle as we implement things, as we put in set plays, baseline out of bounds, he's asking questions and champing at the bit to get out there full go.

When that time comes, it will come. We don't want to rush

PAT KELSEY: For me as a coach, all these years being a head coach doing media day at the various conferences I've been in, this is really it in the kickoff. My juices are always flowing as a coach. Many of you know me and know I've been described as making coffee nervous. When I walk into this hotel or any hotel throughout the years and I see the other players from the other teams, I see the other coaches. I walk by Brad out there. I see Jon out there. My juices go flowing to a whole other level.

Quickly I want to get the crap out of here as fast as I can and run back to campus and get back to practice and coach my guys harder than I ever have. Really, that's what this day does for me every year.

I can't tell you how excited I am to coach this team this year. People talk a lot about the revival team last year. That's last year. This group has a chance to be special, a special makeup of young men both from an experience standpoint, talent standpoint, leadership standpoint.

You're going to hear from two of them in a second.

We say 25 strong in our program. That's everybody in our organization doing their job at the highest level possible, and everybody's job is valued. There's a group of young men back on campus in what we call Fellowship Hall, which is kind of the little cafe/cafeteria in our practice facility, and I know that every one of those guys, managers, GAs are sitting at that table watching this TV, and I want those guys to know how much I love them because they will not get the social media hits and pictures, but those guys make our organization go, so shout-out to those guys back on campus. I love you.

Open for questions.



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it. We want him to come back when he is fully healthy. Once you are fully healthy, it takes time to get back in rhythm after not playing for the better part of a year. I'm excited about where he's at and how he's working.

Q. The word "family" we hear a lot, but not just a word, a lifestyle at Louisville. I know Peyton Siva as well as Russ Smith have been honored recently. We've seen community outreach. You've done videos promoting other programs, like Louisville's men's soccer team taking down No. 1 in the country. Just what that "family" word means to you and how you live it at Louisville.

PAT KELSEY: I think from a department standpoint it starts with our department leadership, and that's Josh Heird, our athletic director. That's one of the things he told me from moment one when we had our first discussion about me becoming the head coach at the University of Louisville, is the family aspect of our athletic department and coaches pouring into each other, coaches, you know, investing in each other's programs.

We say all the time that we are a "yes" program. I tell everybody on our staff we are a "yes" program. If anybody in our organization, any coach, any athlete, anybody at university athletics has something, the answer is yes, and then it's what's the question? What can we do for you? There's a department that feel the same way.

We meet with recruits for each other. We cheer on each other at each other's games. The funny thing is Josh's mentality about that family atmosphere fits perfectly with my philosophy and our culture. If you boil down what's most important to us, it's the power of the unit. It's the uncommon commitment to the guy next to you.

In today's day and age when people are about playing time and statistics and NIL money and things like that, we ask those guys to love the player next to them with everything they got and to sacrifice and be more about the success of the guy next to you than yourself.

So there is great alignment there from day one with Josh's philosophy and our philosophy, and two young men that will come up here and talk in a few minutes embody that as well as anybody I've ever coached.

Q. What have you done with your players and coaching staff to kind of ignore -- not ignore, but put last season behind you, because a lot of people have you all as national title contenders this year coming up. How do you block out that noise?

PAT KELSEY: We just don't talk about it. Who did I hear

talk yesterday? I think it was Ryan Day at Ohio State, and he talked about noise, noise and blocking out the noise. Noise can be good noise in terms of positive, pats on the back,atta boys; or noise can be arrows in your back and people beating you down.

In today's day and age, these guys are so connected to their phones. They are so tied to the opinions of people that don't matter, so we just try to stay in the present, be excellent in the next thing we do.

We don't talk about the past. We don't talk about the future. Our sole focus is excellence in the now. We say the most important thing in the history of our program is the next thing we do, and if we can adhere to that -- and that's hard, that is really, really hard -- I feel very, very confident that the outcome will take care of itself.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you. Questions for Ryan.

Q. I saw on Instagram not long after you signed you posted a picture of you and I think it was your grandpa outside of the Yum! Center when you were really young. Can you just think back to that day, and do you remember what game that was, and can you speak to your childhood, kind of having the city be your second home and what it means to come back now and play for this program?

RYAN CONWELL: Yeah, first and foremost, I just want to give all the glory to God. I'm just thankful to be in this position and just being able to wear this Louisville across my chest. Like you talked about, when I was younger I definitely got to experience that a little bit, just my dad and my grandfather both being from Louisville and just going down there for the holidays and just being able to just experience that love.

And just now, you know, being at Louisville, it's just a dream come true. I'm just very thankful to be in this position and just play for a great team, so...

Q. You just mentioned your faith, and on this journey you've had to have faith in yourself and, like you said, faith in something bigger than you now being at the fourth school in your collegiate career. What was it about Louisville that spoke to you through the portal, and what was it about Coach Kelsey that just really made you feel like this is home?

RYAN CONWELL: Yes, sir. Well, like you said, I definitely have been on my journey this being my fourth school now. I'm just a firm believer that everything happens for a reason and that I'm in this position for a reason, not only for

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myself, but just to impact others.

Just being able to have the opportunity just to be here, to play for such a great coach and just with great players. You know, like PK kind of said, being part of this program, 25-strong, shout-out to all the managers, all the staff, everyone that comes together as one just to get the job done. I'm just so thankful just to be a part of this team.

What drew me here was that, that culture that we have here and just the love and just the respect for everyone. And also being able to play in a great system where I feel like my skill set could show.

THE MODERATOR: Ryan, thank you. Questions for J'Vonne.

Q. J'Vonne, how does Coach Kelsey keep the players focused on the task at hand, but also keep you all humble and not living above yourselves?

J'VONNE HADLEY: Yeah, I mean, just like Ryan said also, I just want to shout out God for letting me be here, letting everybody else be here. That's a big thing that's a part of my life and a lot of people around me.

Yeah, back to the question, yeah, Coach does a great job. The staff does a great job. Everybody does a great job of just keeping us humble, and like Coach touched on, the next thing, that's the most important thing. We live that. We're not worried about the Kansas exhibition. We're worried about tomorrow's practice. If we continue to live like that and just worry about the next practice or whatever the next thing is that next day, it will take care of itself.

Q. You said before I can answer any question, you want to give all glory to God. Just living in that faith and being unapologetic about it and having a coach that lives within that as well.

J'VONNE HADLEY: It's amazing. We do a lot of stuff with our FCA team and guys that come in and preach before games. It feels like home. It feels like an environment that you want to be in, especially, like you said, unapologetic about it. I can come up here, be open about my faith.

I found Him when I was in junior college, so I'm forever grateful about that opportunity and experience. Just continue to uplift anybody that really needs it, but don't push on anybody.

THE MODERATOR: There's an international influx on the squad this year. You've got someone from Egypt, Germany, Greece, and Senegal. What are they teaching you about the world while you're on the basketball court?

J'VONNE HADLEY: Can you repeat that question, please?

THE MODERATOR: You have four international players as teammates -- one from Egypt, one from Germany, one from Greece, one from Senegal. What are they teaching you about the world while you guys are on the court?

J'VONNE HADLEY: I would say off the court anybody can come in and they're human, they're normal. It doesn't matter where you're from that you can come in, fit in it on a team, fit in just on an American basketball team in college. It's not easy at all. It's not easy.

Shout out to those guys for trusting in staff and trusting in the players to come over from those foreign countries. I know that's absolutely not easy... their families being on different time zones, a completely different culture, different play style on the basketball court.

It's not easy, and that's a big kudos to them to embody that and continuing every single day to be the great humans and just great basketball players that they are.

THE MODERATOR: Have they shared any of their food with you? Have they fixed any meals for you?

J'VONNE HADLEY: Yeah, I would say one of our coaches, Jermaine Ukaegbu, he does a good job of the African food. There's some spots Louisville that he knows and he loves, so he continues to share those spots with all of us.

Mouhamed on our team especially, Mo Chicken he goes by, but yeah, he does a great job (laughing).

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