

National Invitation Tournament: Tulsa vs Auburn

Sunday, April 5, 2026
Indianapolis, Indiana, USA
Gainbridge Fieldhouse

Tulsa Golden Hurricane

Erik Konkol

David Green

Tylen Riley

Final Postgame Press Conference



Auburn 92, Tulsa 86

ERIC KONKOL: It's hard to articulate all the feelings and emotions. Certainly congratulations to Auburn for a hard-fought game and win the Championship. And as I told our team, this is a tremendous group. Very deserving of being champions and fell just a little bit short today.

However, as I told them, I thought the way that this game went, if they could harness one thing, it's just the total belief in perseverance, passion, having great grit, never backing down, keep going. This group showed not just today but so much all year long. I'm proud to say that I was their coach, as I reflect and look back on this season at some point.

But hard way to lose to end the season but I couldn't be prouder of this group for the type of resolve that they showed today and putting ourselves in position to get this one.

Q. What caused that game to flip back in your favor? Because they were controlling everything for about the first ten minutes.

DAVID GREEN: I would say our just like energy and our attitude of how we were going about the game. I think we didn't match their physicality and how they came ready to play out of the gate, and we didn't and we fell in a hole.

And like Coach said, we've been in situations like this, not many times but we've been in situations like this. So we know how to react, and we got our act together and that's why.

Q. I know you have not been healthy for the last two

months, I guess. Did you feel like as you guys were making a run in the second half that you felt maybe as good or better than you'd felt in a long time?

DAVID GREEN: To be honest, I don't even really focus on how I feel in a game. I'm trying to just win a game. Like if I go down, I go down. But like I'm not focused on all this, that and the third. I'm just trying to win the game, respectfully.

Q. Defensively you held them to two points over the stretch when you made your run. What were you doing defensively to keep them off the board?

TYLEN RILEY: Just really making an adjustment at halftime. They were having whatever they wanted and we just have to come together as a team to see how bad we really wanted. We just put together some stops and played our game of basketball.

Q. Down the stretch there, if you could, just talk me through that final sequence with Auburn when they were able to force the five second and get into overtime. What did you guys see on that play?

DAVID GREEN: I think they ran that play a couple different times throughout the game. I would have to look on film to see exactly what happened, but we let a good shooter get a good shot off, and that's just not acceptable.

TYLEN RILEY: Just to piggyback off what he said, we just let him get a good luck. There was some things we could have did differently before that. But it's over now, and the only thing we can do is learn from it so it won't happen again in the future in whatever scenario that is. And that's really all we can do. So we can just look at it as a learning experience.

Q. You spent a lot of time around Coach. What does he mean to you?

DAVID GREEN: This guy right here, I have good memories with him. He's my favorite coach I've ever had in

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my life. He's so positive and so upbeat all the time. I don't even now how he does it.

It's a testament to him and his character and what he's about, and there's no doubt about why he's going to have success in the future and now because he's just a good person.

Q. What has it meant to be part of this program and this group? Obviously still another year to go, but as reflect on this season, if you can put into words what this meant to you?

TYLEN RILEY: It can go a lot of ways. Starting with the coaches coming here, I had a lot of growing up to do that I didn't even know; and they did that, whether it was easy or it was hard to where they had to pull my hair for me to listen.

I did a lot of growing with the guys, and it was just a special group of guys from 1 to 15. It was just a special group of guys and I just learned so much from each and every guy, especially this guy right here as one of our leaders. As you can see when we were down, it was the turning point. It was evident for everybody who was watching, and we all piggybacked off that and he did what a leader should, and I just learned from that.

And I just learned from my teammates on how like nobody looks shaken up, even though we was down by a large margin. It could just go a lot of ways but I just learned so much from these guys each and every day, and I'm just very thankful and grateful to be here and around them every day.

Q. When they got out to that big lead, you called a time-out after one made basket when they stretched the lead out a little bit, and from our vantage, you looked rather demonstrative. Any special words that you said? Because it wasn't long after that that you started to show some life.

ERIC KONKOL: That's probably one time that I wasn't so positive, as DG said. I tried reminding the guys that a number of things that we had experienced this year. They needed a reminder of just how good they are; how talented they are; how strong they are; how physical they have been before. Because we weren't doing any of those things.

So I was just trying to really almost put pads to the chest, if you will, and just shock them into reminding them of how we needed to play. We got down 21 points, and you'll see some of these types of scores in tournament play. Teams will get very, very good leads and it's just hard to get back

into it.

Says a lot about our group. Of course we didn't want that. But hopefully they can take away just those types of things because they were good enough. We just fell a bit short.

Q. On that inbound right before Auburn sent the game to overtime, were you trying to get a time-out there? Were you confident of the guys' ability to find an inbound there? What were you seeing on that sequence?

ERIC KONKOL: You know, I've got to ask, ask our guys. We normally ask for a hard count. We had two time-outs. You know, they had permission to use it, too. I tried to get one. I guess I was just a little bit late. It went by fast, you know, and we had run that and gotten it in pretty easily. Got to look at it exactly where we fell short in some of our breaks.

But I've typically liked to hang on to my time-outs for those reasons, and we just weren't able to get one.

Q. In that situation, after the turnover, did you consider calling for a foul prior to Auburn's inbound rather than allowing the three? What's your philosophy on that? Do you go by time, if it's a certain amount of seconds left, you will foul, a certain amount of seconds, you won't foul?

ERIC KONKOL: Yes, we have a philosophy. Typically, we would do it in the backcourt. Especially now, more than ever with the new continuation rules, Overton was able to get a catch. If we tried to foul him on the catch, he's shooting and maybe we prevent him from making the three but he's getting three free throws.

So baseline out-of-bounds is a very challenging thing to foul, unless they throw the ball and a guy catches it with his back to the basket way out of the scoring area, but I think it's very challenging to foul in that situation.

Thank you, everybody and I will say thank you to the NIT Championship. This was first class, the whole thing: Here, Hinkle, all the rounds, Andy, thank you, everybody involved, very, very first class. Any time you want to invite us, we'll be there. Thank you.

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