

# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - Lipscomb vs Iowa State

Thursday, March 20, 2025

Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA

Fiserv Forum

**Iowa State Cyclones**

**Coach T.J. Otzelberger**

Media Conference



THE MODERATOR: We welcome home T.J. Otzelberger, the Iowa State head coach. If you want to make a statement, you can. You don't have to.

T.J. OTZELBERGER: We'll just do questions.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Can you give us an update on Tamin Lipsey and his progress toward returning to the court?**

T.J. OTZELBERGER: Yeah, Tamin has done a tremendous job. Each day has been a significant improvement. He was able to return to practice yesterday, and he looks great. He's moving great. He's feeling great. He's confident. So excited to have him back out there for us.

**Q. T.J., obviously you've got some local ties here yourself. What's it like coming back and playing here?**

T.J. OTZELBERGER: Really fortunate opportunity, experience. Played high school basketball not far down the road from here. Got our butts kicked playing for a state championship at the Mech Arena, now Panther Arena, a couple blocks away my sophomore year against Marquette High.

So Milwaukee is really special for me in my upbringing, my background. The opportunity to be back home is great. So many folks around here invested in me, spent time, helped build the habits and confidence I needed when I was younger.

A lot of gratitude I have to so many here. To be back here for this -- the magnitude of this opportunity in front of us is pretty cool experience.

**Q. With the loss of Keshon, who has stepped up to fill in that void, and how difficult has this been to move forward without him?**

T.J. OTZELBERGER: Well, first, Keshon is a tremendous competitor. He has done so many great things for this program over the last two years. Many of our impactful wins, he's had so much to do with those. So I can't say enough about the young man that he is and the work he's done over the last two years.

At the same time, as we look forward with our team and we look at some of the opportunities we've had late in the season, we've had guys step up for us and take more of an active role; specifically, making plays and offensively.

So Tamin Lipsey is playing the best he has in three seasons. Joshua Jefferson has stepped up in terms of facilitating and making plays. Milan Momcilovic is playing his best basketball. He's getting to the basket, getting to spots in a big way.

We look across the board, on any good team when you have adversity and challenges, it's important, the next-man-up mentality. And you gain strength collectively from the group and pouring into the group. Our team has done a fantastic job of that, and that's allowed them to continue to elevate.

We played really great games at the end of the season against teams that really needed wins. I think having that feeling and knowing what it's like will prepare us for this opportunity.

**Q. T.J., what has been your message to the first-time NCAA guys like Brandon, Dishon, and Nate?**

T.J. OTZELBERGER: More than anything, it's trusting the work you've done, trusting your habits, gaining strength from your teammates, the things we preach every day. We prepare in such a way that when these opportunities present themselves, you know you're ready, you're confident in the work and you count on one another to have each other's back.

That doesn't change for us in this setting, even though this is an exciting opportunity. Those guys will be confident in



the work they do every single day. Now, keeping the mental focus on having that work show up throughout the course of 40 minutes.

**Q. Apologize if you've been asked this already, but any update on Tamin?**

T.J. OTZELBERGER: He's had a great week of practice. Every day, there's been significant improvement. He was great yesterday. We'll have practice again here today. Excited what that presents. So he feels great, is moving great. Excited to attack the opportunity tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Good luck.

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