

# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: Regional Semifinal - Arkansas vs Texas Tech

Thursday, March 27, 2025

San Francisco, California, USA

Chase Center

**Arkansas Razorbacks**

**Coach John Calipari**

**Johnell Davis**

**Karter Knox**

Sweet 16 Postgame Media Conference

Texas Tech - 85, Arkansas - 83 (OT)

JOHN CALIPARI: Hard game. Two teams went at it. Slugfest. We're all disappointed here. But I told them, there's nothing them individually or my team could do to disappoint me because of what they've done this year. I'm so proud of them and proud of these two. But I'm proud of all the guys.

Aidoo tried to play today. Boogie was still not there. But they all wanted to play to try to help their team.

But give Texas Tech credit. They made plays down the stretch that gave them a chance and they won the game.

**Q. Johnell, you were up by so much at the end and the offense just dried up. Was there something that Texas Tech did? What happened to prevent you guys from executing down the stretch? What did Texas Tech do, or what did you struggle offensively with down the stretch?**

JOHNELL DAVIS: I think we both played hard and they just came out with the win today.

**Q. Texas Tech ended up getting 22 offensive rebounds in this game. Was there anything that you guys feel should have been better on the offensive glass? Or how did they kind of take advantage of that?**

KARTER KNOX: We should have boxed out. That's how



you have offensive rebounds. We just didn't get no rebounds, we didn't have nobody.

**Q. You were the last double-digit seed playing. Just from the start of your conference season to now, are you able to reflect a little bit on what this team accomplished and getting this far, given the way things went early on?**

JOHNELL DAVIS: Just shows the togetherness we had as a unit going 0-5, and the grit. We wanted to come back and just try to get here.

KARTER KNOX: Definitely shows our chemistry, how much of a brotherhood are we. Like what Nelly said, we started out 0-5 and we came to the Sweet 16.

**Q. You talked a lot about how your first season at Arkansas is going to be about building a foundation and building the culture. To reach the Sweet 16 in year one, what do you think it says about the foundation and culture that you started to build?**

JOHN CALIPARI: Well, I come back to a will to win. I mean, like today we gave up a lead but we did that a bunch this year. Up 15 and all of a sudden you turn around and it's a two-point game.

But they had a will to win. And even this game. I mean TB's 3, the way we started the half, the way we ended the half, and then the way we executed coming out. They did all the right stuff except we didn't rebound. And that was a big difference in this game.

But when you talk about how we guarded them, pretty good. They're a good team. Field goal percentage, 3-point field goal percentage, our free-throw percentage, there was a lot of stuff -- it was one of our Achilles' heels, offensive rebounding against us.

Last game it was 28 offensive rebounds. I thought TB down the stretch came up with rebounds. We miss a free throw that made it a 3-point game. Now you're, like, okay, it's 12 seconds. A little too early to foul. A kid that was 1-for-9 makes it. And it was contested.

I mean, sometimes that stuff is stuff that happens in these



games.

**Q. What happened offensively maybe down the stretch that -- did Texas Tech do anything, or why do you think you guys dried up a little bit scoring the last five minutes?**

JOHN CALIPARI: We missed a shot and kicked it out. It was a new shot clock and we shot a 3, which, again, we had open shots, tried to drive and took tough shots. We had a couple of those.

But to be honest with you, you know, I'll have to think back, but we were trying to run things to maybe drive the ball more. That's what we were doing.

When we did drive it, we looked pretty good. But you're right, we missed some shots. We missed some free throws or one one-on-one. Like I said, I'm not in the frame of mind to go back play-by-play.

**Q. The last possession there in overtime, any consideration to calling a timeout there?**

JOHN CALIPARI: Yeah, but in my career, I let that go, let the guy get to the rim. They're not going to foul you. With that kind of time, just me, you call a timeout, now you've got to worry about what he's doing, how he's playing, the inbound, what are you doing.

So I usually let that go. Now, because it ended the way it did, yeah, I wish I would have called a timeout. But 99 percent of the time, I let that go because now I know what they're doing, they know what we're doing. That's why we did it. The end of the half we wanted to go at one guy, and we did. He made a hard bump on D.J. that got him kind of off balance on the shot. But it was what we wanted.

**Q. Just curious what this group has meant to you in year one and what kind of separated them from maybe other groups you've had in the past.**

JOHN CALIPARI: And I come back to, not just only losing games -- we were 0-5, but they were also in a dark place individually, that they overcame it. And I just kept talking. The first battle you have is the one with yourself. Don't worry about battling anybody else. Battle yourself. How do you keep a good attitude? How do you understand there's only one way to do this is work your way through it. Get in the gym. Spend more time.

Second thing is, you're so worried about yourself, you can't play for us. And then the game's really hard. They became one heartbeat and the game became easier for each of them. Each of them did some good stuff. Every

one of them played better, grew as a player, grew as a person, that's what made it so rewarding for me because there was a chance they could have let go of the rope.

I think I was asked that question, will they let go of the rope, you're 0-5? And I said, no, I don't believe it because of who they are and what they stand for. And I'll say it again. Aidoo probably shouldn't have even tried to play today, and Boogie still wasn't fully there, but he wanted to play. It tells you all about them and their love for their teammates and their team.

**Q. What legacy, what message do you think that this team leaves behind?**

JOHN CALIPARI: Well, they wrote their own story. They didn't let somebody else write it. They wrote it. We started so bad but we were beat up and injured and we just -- we didn't talk about it. We just said let's keep playing, let's go, next man up.

And you think about what TB did with the minutes he got, Jonas coming back from injury and all of a sudden doing what he did, what Billy Richmond did with his minutes, what Karter Knox did with more minutes, the next man up, they took advantage of it.

Hopefully the legacy will be this team was one of the favorites because of what they went through and how they stuck together.

**Q. After a loss like this, just what do you tell your guys? And also kind of looking ahead to next season, how long do you kind of -- with the portal already full go, how long do you give yourself until you start looking forward to that?**

JOHN CALIPARI: First of all, I told them how proud I was of them and there's nothing they could do to disappointment me. Yeah, there were plays I wish they had done different or made, but these kids gave everything, even in this game they gave everything they had to try to win the game.

The other stuff, you know, I need to sit down with these guys, but you really think tonight's the night or tomorrow morning? We're all kind of raw right now. I mean, I think they had visions of us continuing to play, and so did I. But there's only going to be one team standing. And there's a point where we need to sit down and talk about, again, returning. We've got some freshmen, and what do we do in the portal.

We had names of guys out there, but I haven't done anything, haven't made a call. And I won't until I speak to



my guys, who's coming back, who is it? I think a couple guys will put their name in the draft. I think a couple guys are done, their eligibility is done. So you're talking four or five guys. Let me sit down with them and see what that is. But I'm going to say it again for everybody, for me, this was as rewarding a year -- and I feel like crap right now -- but this was as rewarding a year as I've had in all my years.

Now, I've had teams that were better and finished better and national champions and all that stuff, this was a different reward. Different reward. And for me as a coach, we had to adjust and learn, and it was an experience for me to learn. Like, okay, how do I hold them accountable but not bury them? How do I lift them up, yet challenge them? How do I make them uncomfortable so they can learn to be comfortable in those situations?

That was an interesting path for me and my staff. And my staff was outstanding. Never wavered. Never splintered, nothing. They stayed the course. They worked with the kids, they met them, watched tape with them, talked to them, built them up. But they were good kids.

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