

# Southeastern Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Wednesday, March 9, 2022

## Georgia Bulldogs

Tampa, Florida, USA

Amalie Arena

## Tom Crean

## Braelen Bridges

## Kario Oquendo

### Postgame Press Conference

Vanderbilt 86, Georgia 51.

TOM CREAN: I'll talk after these guys are done so they can go, so go ahead.

**Q. For both guys, it looked like you guys really had some good effort and intensity on the defensive end. I think you had eight -- y'all always talk about stops and had eight in a row stops on them, but just couldn't get it to go offensively. To what do you blame the offensive woes that you had tonight?**

BRAELEN BRIDGES: I would say we just focused on getting to the rim. I felt like we got in the bonus just attacking the rim getting to the free-throw line. We're shooting in a gym that we don't shoot in a lot, so just getting a feel for the gym and seeing the ball go in in close-range shots and free-throws, that's would have got us getting.

KARIO OQUENDO: We started off good on defense, but towards the end of the first half, we started losing our guys a lot and things like that. We weren't hitting shots tonight.

**Q. Braelen, just you came here from a long ways away. Came back to Georgia. Can you just describe what the year has been like? Obviously, nobody wants to lose 26 games and not be played in the postseason. Can you just talk about the effects you've seen that have also on your coach?**

BRAELEN BRIDGES: I just appreciate the opportunity that Coach Crean and the coaching staff gave me, believing in me from UIC and blessing me with a scholarship to play at this university. Just taking it one day at a time, working hard every day. It's just unfortunate that we didn't come



out winning.

TOM CREAN: I think the biggest thing that hurt us was our lack of scoring early, which has hurt us throughout the year at times. When we don't score, we're not quite the same on the defensive end. And the game changed on us in the sense we weren't making any outside shots, but we still have to be in the game. Get the ball inside, get to the rim, work to get to the foul line. We got to the foul line a little too late in the first half. Once we did, we got there quickly, but just took too long to get to that place, and then we just -- our lack of offense I think really affected us in a lot of ways. And, frankly, that affected our game plan defense at times.

They're a hard team to guard, and there are certain things you have to guard certain ways, and our communication went down big-time. And I think a lot of that is you got to be a really, really strong team mentally and individually to overcome when you're not making shots, and we've had that issue throughout the year.

Then I think the other big thing was the points off the turnovers. That's been a problem for us all year, so a lot of the things that hurt us throughout the year hurt us today. Our shooting was not good at all. But, again, you got to figure out a way to score and getting to the rim, getting the ball into the post, getting to the foul line were those ways for us. But too many turnovers, too many open threes, too much miscommunication, and too much losing our spirit when we're not scoring points.

**Q. Coach, did you feel like your team was distracted at all about your situation?**

TOM CREAN: I'm not sure. We didn't play well. I'm not sure. We just didn't play well. We played hard, but then we didn't play well, and there were times it didn't look like we played very hard. I'm not certain on that. I'm really not, but I think us not making baskets had a lot more to do with that than anything else, unfortunately.

**Q. The season is over now. What are your immediate plans? How are you going to address the next few days?**



TOM CREAN: I don't have any. I'll watch this tape when I get back to the hotel. Other than that, I don't have any plans. We'll leave in the morning. I know that. That's part of the plan.

**Q. Coach, did you address the reports with your team and players?**

TOM CREAN: Anything with my situation, it just has to go to the athletic department, right? That's not a thing that I spend a lot of time on, and I just coach my team every day. That's where my focus is.

Thank you.

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