

# Southeastern Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Friday, March 15, 2024

## Texas A&M Aggies

Nashville, Tennessee, USA

Bridgestone Arena

## Coach Buzz Williams

## Manny Obaseki

## Andersson Garcia

## Postgame Press Conference



Don't matter if we play at home, if we play on the road, we're just trying to hear -- like we say without a microphone, we're just going to hear whatever our coach say. We don't really worry about who we play against. Give credit to any team we play against, but we just listen to our Coach.

THE MODERATOR: We'll excuse you fellas and continue with questions for Coach.

**Q. What is it about Wade that he seems to late in the season rise to the occasion, pulls some energy from the situation?**

BUZZ WILLIAMS: He just has an elite level IQ off the floor, but he has just as high of an IQ as a player. He understands time, score and momentum arguably as well as anybody I've ever been around.

He obviously has the ability to score. He kind of has a vibe for should I score, should I shoot, is now the right time for Texas A&M to shoot.

I think that's how he was raised. Had a lot of good coaches. I think it's hard to say it in words. I think that is an innate gift. Arguably as talented as he is offensively, that may be his best gift. I know he can score, but he can really control the game, particularly with somebody that has the ball. Getting the ball on time, on target to the right person at the right time. That's not in the stat sheet, but obviously it's very important to our group.

**Q. Y'all have had some big wins this year, but have y'all ever played a better game than that one this season, in your opinion?**

BUZZ WILLIAMS: I don't know. Obviously I'm exhausted after two games in two days. Incredibly thankful that we have a chance to play again tomorrow. Grateful for the synergy and the connectedness of our guys, not just the five games in March, but I think the five-game losing streak in February, for them to stay connected, speaks to who they are.

Texas A&M 97, Kentucky 87

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Texas A&M. We'll go straight to questions for the two student-athletes.

**Q. Manny, how were y'all able to consistently drive inside and sorry on Kentucky with all that length they had inside?**

MANNY OBASEKI: We work on it every day. We've been doing that for the past 27 weeks. It's starting to come to life. We have dogs on our team that are willing to work every day and make sure that comes to life. That's what we did tonight.

**Q. I think it was 14 layups. Did you see something on film from Kentucky that you knew you were going to be able to exploit them in the paint there?**

ANDERSSON GARCIA: I'll say we were just trying to, like, follow the plan that they just had. Try to trust my teammates. I would just give credit to Boots and Mo and Wade. We just knew what we was doing.

MANNY OBASEKI: I will piggyback off of what Andy said. The bigs have been doing really good for us. They don't get enough credit for how good of sealers they are. Boots and Wade, elite players. The way they're able to finish at the rim is high level, so credit to them.

**Q. Andy, pretty loud environment. Is that something that fed y'all a little bit, helped you produce energy?**

ANDERSSON GARCIA: I would say we don't really worry about the crowd. We just have a group we call 10 plus-one. We try to stay connected and stay together.



We're thankful for the right, for sure, excited. It's fun. All of the things that I'm supposed to say. But I also think that it's scarring our heart in a good way to overcome a lot of what's transpired.

When you lose five in a row, a lot of things are revealed. To be able to flip that to five wins in a row, it doesn't take away the wins, but you're probably in a different place in regards to the maturity of what we saw transpire during the five-game losing streak. I hope that we can continue to handle the five-game winning streak in the right way.

**Q. A lot of times sometimes the way y'all play isn't necessarily pretty but it gets the job done. Is it built for this time of year when you have shortened games, fewer possessions?**

BUZZ WILLIAMS: We can't play the way Kentucky plays. Coach is a Hall of Fame coach and still coaching. Probably has another decade left. Kentucky is arguably the best job at any level in college basketball. It's arguable that they have the most talented roster.

For us to try to play the way they play, we have zero probability of winning. But in truth - you know this because you've watched so many games - if we're just trying to base it on talent, let's just play how the opponent plays, we have a very low chance of success.

In different ways, whatever that may be, our coaches have done a good job of identifying how can we bend it our way. It's never aesthetically pleasing to the public, but it's very identifiable to us.

I think that the words of our staff and the words of our players, not that you can hear it, but they know when the intangible things are present. We probably spend less time on the tactical stuff and more time on the things that we know are vital for us to even have a chance.

**Q. How, if at all, did what y'all went through as a program after the SEC tournament two years ago galvanize you as a program? Are there any lessons for the vets who were a part of that team to apply over the next few days?**

BUZZ WILLIAMS: Yeah, I think what I would say on that is we just don't pay attention to any of it. That's not to be condescending to you. In that same year, we started 4-0 in conference play, then we lost eight games in a row. Six of those games were decided by two possessions or less.

The four young men on our team that were a part of that have also been a part of 72 wins now since they've been here. The eight-game losing streak in that particular

season, the five-game losing streak here, I've got to do a better job coaching. Good coaches don't lose that many games in a row.

I do think that there's been some wisdom 22 months later in the approach of how we handled the five-game losing streak and what has transpired since then.

There hasn't been much talk within our group on, Well, they say this, and if we do this, if we do that. In truth, whatever it is, we have to do more, right? If you go 9-9 in the SEC, for Texas A&M that's not good enough, right? If you play 13 quad one and quad two games, that's not enough if you're at Texas A&M.

There's always going to be something that you have to do more. So we're bankrupt from all of the things that we can't control. We try to give all of our emotion and energy to the things that we can.

**Q. John Calipari said Texas A&M has done enough to be in the NCAA tournament. If you shoot like you shot tonight, you'll win some games. Do you have any reaction?**

BUZZ WILLIAMS: No, sir.

**Q. I know this is an unusual question.**

BUZZ WILLIAMS: Where did you say you're from?

**Q. Rivals. I notice your shirt, I saw the 'blessing' on it. It stuck out.**

BUZZ WILLIAMS: It's good, you want to read it?

**Q. You're always giving your team messages.**

BUZZ WILLIAMS: Thanks for asking. It's the only time I wear a quote shirt. I turn them into a quilt. This is our 10th year in a row doing it. 12 quote shirts a year. This was year five, quote shirt number 10. It's awesome, isn't it?

We gave it to them on the Friday, the first Friday of the year. We played at Ohio State. The presence of the blessing. We're very grateful. We're very thankful.

But that's not the absence of the pressure, right? You have to beat Ole Miss. Then when you beat Ole Miss, you're still not in. You have to beat Kentucky. Then the next question is, Do you think that you're in?

It's not the absence of the pressure. The presence of the blessing is not the absence of pressure, nor the requirement of production. What's the response? We're

grateful, we're thankful, we have joy. What do we have to do? We have to go wake up and do more work. Each day with our work, can we get a little bit better?

Thanks for asking.

**Q. I know you're in the moment, just finished the game, but this tournament next year, two more teams are coming in, two more games in this tournament.**

BUZZ WILLIAMS: Isn't that something?

**Q. Have you had any time to think about how much tougher this conference and this event is about to become?**

BUZZ WILLIAMS: No, ma'am. But thanks for reminding me because I think it's incredibly tough right now (smiling).

I think in my five years, in the pandemic year we didn't play a game in February, so the numbers are a little out of sorts. I think in year two we only played 10 games.

With each passing year, almost within each passing week, I think the margin within the league has almost become invisible. I think last year we were 15-3 and finished second, but yet this year, if you were 15-3, you would have won the league, right? This year we were 9-9, and we happened to finish alone in seventh place.

If you looked at just the five seasons that I've been here, that's what I can speak to, you can see how is the bottom progressing, is the middle progressing? I don't know. Our quad three losses, other than Memphis, they lost a really good player to injury, but our quad three losses are within our league at the buzzer by one. That's within our league.

I know every coach says their league is the best. I don't want to necessarily say that. But I think with each passing year, there's evidence and data that suggests this league is continuing to become more and more difficult. Can't you tell how I've aged in the five years, or you didn't know me then (smiling)?

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

BUZZ WILLIAMS: Thank you.

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