

Southeastern Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 13, 2025

Nashville, Tennessee, USA

Bridgestone Arena

Arkansas Razorbacks

Coach John Calipari

Karter Knox

Jonas Aidoo

Postgame Press Conference



KARTER KNOX: Wow, I didn't know it was my best statistical game. I missed a lot of shots.

Just putting in the work, working out at the practice, coming in late at night, just shooting the ball with confidence and playing hard on defense.

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

Q. When you're down to a seven-man rotation, with the injuries you have, how difficult is it to deal with the foul trouble that you ended up having?

JOHN CALIPARI: Well, we ended up with five on the floor and played well. When you play with limited numbers, the limited numbers are usually really happy. So I think they'd rather play and even be a little tired or have some foul trouble.

But we made a pretty good run with a small team.

Q. Trevon has played a lot better as of late. Do you say anything to him or you just let that go after the free throws?

JOHN CALIPARI: No, I told him in front of the team, Look at me. That did not cost us the game. The reason we were in the game is because of you. That's why we were in the game. You have gotten so much better.

I mean, you can look at different things when you're in a close game like that. This turnover, that missed rebound, that foul near the basket to give them and-ones. It was all kind of stuff.

This is what I say. Our kids never stop. They haven't stopped all year. Early in the game, I didn't realize we were down 15 at some point. These kids didn't stop.

Karter was a little bit of a child in the first half, but he grew up. I told him after the game in front of his team that will be a life lesson for him the rest of his career, playing, and even life. You act like a child, and all of a sudden you grew

Ole Miss 83, Arkansas 80

THE MODERATOR: We're ready to continue with Arkansas. We'll ask Coach Calipari for a couple thoughts on the game, take questions.

JOHN CALIPARI: Good college game. Hard-fought. Probably fun to watch. I didn't like the ending. But the kids fought. They battled. For a minute it looked like we would get bum-rushed by 30. The kids kept playing. Proud of 'em.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Karter, you and Billy started to take over there at the end. What was working for the two of you? How much of an emphasis was it to get you the ball?

KARTER KNOX: We were just falling back on our training, going hard. In the workouts go hard, practice. Just translate it to the game. We went out there and fought. Didn't get the outcome. Have a bigger tournament to worry about.

Q. Jonas, I know you fouled out today. Is it in the back of your mind, with you having a seven-man rotation, how important it is for you to be on the floor?

JONAS AIDOO: Of course it is. Obviously when I'm on the court, I don't think I'm fouling. I've been doing the same thing the past four years I've been in this league. It's just hard. It's just hard, to be honest.

Q. Karter, this is your best statistical game in a minute. What has your mindset been of late?



up, defensively, rebounding, making shots.

We were like fighting each other a little early in the game. I wasn't used to it because we hadn't done that all year. I don't know if it got to them a little bit. I was trying to keep 'em loose throughout, but...

Q. Big Z didn't play much at all in the second half. Was that performance-based?

JOHN CALIPARI: Yeah. He hurt his wrist. I probably shouldn't have started him. Probably just spotted him. But if you look at the plus-minus, you know what I'm saying?

Look, when you're in these situations, you ride who's playing well. Doesn't mean you don't like somebody or you don't think they can play. Maybe it's not their day.

For us to advance in this next tournament, he's got to be on this team playing. I shouldn't say that because we don't even know if we're in, so... Hopefully we're in.

Q. You ended today with 15 turnovers.

JOHN CALIPARI: That hurt us. The couple when we were up. Guard the guard pass, fall down on the floor. That hurt us. We're a team that usually turns it over 11 or 12 times. Those three turnovers ended up being baskets down the other end. In a game like this, it ends up costing you.

But you're talking about guys that played 35 minutes, 32 minutes, 38 minutes, 30 minutes. The only reason Jonas didn't play 35 minutes is because he fouled out.

Q. I know your singular focus has been on Ole Miss. You alluded to the tournament. Do you have any idea if you will do anything on Sunday at all, maybe at your house?

JOHN CALIPARI: We'll possibly do something. Hopefully we've done enough and done enough in this league. You're playing the 1 ranked, 2 ranked. You're doing the things that we've done. I think we've proven it.

I'm not in the room. I don't know what's happening around the country because I haven't watched. I don't have any idea who's doing what right now. I was focusing on this game.

Q. You have two freshmen playing significant minutes. Tough way to lose the game. How important do you think this experience was to show these guys how quickly things can change in a single-elimination tournament?

JOHN CALIPARI: We've been through this all year. Same kind of deal. Either we're up and they come back or we're down and we come back. We've had two games that were duds, literally two games that were duds.

In non-conference, we played probably four or five or six teams that will be in the NCAA tournament out of those 13. Then the games we played against this league, I mean, you tell me how many of these teams are going to be in.

This team has proven it all year. They've made me proud. I told 'em, this is one of the most rewarding years that I've had. Some of 'em may get mad, What about this year? What about that year?

I'm talking for me as a coach. All that we were up against, these kids never stopped, they just kept coming. It was great to see.

Q. If this team does get in, how much confidence do you have that maybe you can go on a little bit of a run with the talent that you have?

JOHN CALIPARI: Well, you hope so. But you don't know who you're playing and where you're playing, all that stuff.

My whole thing is just let's keep playing how we're playing. Just so you know, the last game we played, I think with 13 or 14 minutes to go, I said, Cut it off, the rest of that wasn't my team. I know what my team is. It's like the South Carolina game. I threw the tape out. Burn the tape. That ain't my team. So if we play the way we're capable of, we'll have fun.

Again, you think about what this team as a group has been through with injuries, individual players, guys struggling, really struggling. Guys are continuing to play and do it together, then all of a sudden two of your best players go down, and you're still...

I thought we were winning that game. I'm still a little stunned that we didn't. So my hope is we go in there and we're feeling great 'cause these guys got up after South Carolina. We're 0-17 now. We were down 30, maybe more, 36. How many were we down?

Q. (No microphone.)

JOHN CALIPARI: We were down 35. They came back the next day and were in a great frame of mind. I think they're disappointed. They wanted to win this game. But we will see.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

JOHN CALIPARI: Thanks.

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