

# Southeastern Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Friday, March 14, 2025

Nashville, Tennessee, USA

Bridgestone Arena

## Oklahoma Sooners Coach Porter Moser Jeremiah Fears Jalon Moore

Postgame Press Conference



Kentucky 85, Oklahoma 84

THE MODERATOR: We'll go straight to questions.

**Q. Jeremiah, you had a comeback there in the last minute of this game. What is the message with the team as it pertained to being able to build your way back into this?**

JEREMIAH FEARS: Really continue to keep our heads up and keep fighting. More basketball for us to play. Really just staying together through it all, so...

**Q. Jalon, a lot of deflections. Hard to get two steals when you need it. What about you guys was well-suited to be able to force those turnovers?**

JALON MOORE: I think just us being in the situations before, us continuing to be resilient, stay connected throughout the whole game, throughout the run. Even when we were down 12, being resilient and stay connected. That's why we were able to get those deflections.

**Q. Jeremiah, you got off to a slow start shooting the ball. Was there something that just clicked for you? Was it their defense changing?**

JEREMIAH FEARS: My team and the coaches did a great job of making sure I stayed confident throughout the whole game, whether the ball is going in or not. I just want to thank you, to them, to the coaches and players as well. I think they helped a lot.

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, you're dismissed. We'll continue with questions for coach.

**Q. Last five seconds of the game, a lot of emotional swings. What was the plan to try to make Kentucky shoot the hardest shot possible? How did things break down?**

PORTER MOSER: First of all, I want to say how incredibly resilient our guys have been. Not just tonight. For weeks now. These guys have fought through adversity. We constantly talk to our guys about that proverb: fall seven, rise eight. We lost two heartbreakers to Kentucky and Ole Miss on a last-second shot. How do we respond to that? Three straight quad one wins.

The opening was a storm. I mean, the fan base, the atmosphere, how they started, that was a storm. How we handled that has been how our team has been all year: resilient.

We went on a 19-6 run to end the game up until that last two points. That is resiliency. Never quit, never die, staying together.

That last play, obviously emotional, we were going to be in a 1-2-2 trap, trap 'em. You had the sideline and two players. We let it get around the corner. We knew where they were going. We were going to try to bottle 'em up and trap 'em. The trap was ineffective. Once he turned the corner, you just knew. He puts his head down. It's hard to take a charge, do anything. He's as fast and powerful in the country.

The problem was we were putting him in a box, in a trap, and he turned a corner.

**Q. You mentioned the atmosphere. Basically a Kentucky home game it feels like. When you guys get down with double-digits as late in the game as it was, what is the message to your players to keep everybody still confident enough to be able to make the comeback?**

PORTER MOSER: I'm sorry, what was the question?



**Q. The message to the team.**

PORTER MOSER: Right now or during the game?

**Q. During the game when you get down 12.**

PORTER MOSER: We were pressing. We were trying to get two or three traps before fouling. You saw me get upset one time. We fouled with like 50 seconds. We were trying to get traps without fouling.

The guys kept being resilient. We ran a back play for Fears to get that three. He knocked it down. The guys were just scrambling and playing defense. Fears made a great play at the end. We didn't have a timeout left. I probably wouldn't have called it anyways. I would have rather called it against the press.

He made a great play to come back and take the lead. Resilient toughness. My message at the time was we were trying to trap without fouling until they got across halfcourt at the end. We were trying to get two, three traps to keep going.

That was our plan. We got two steals with it. We got one earlier. Kobe got one on the press. We got three steals against the press.

I'm heartbroken for those guys because everything we've asked these guys to do, when people counted us out, just kept on every day coming to practice, our staff, just believing. You guys, there's a path. There's a path.

We beat Mississippi State, we come back, lose heartbreakers for Ole Miss and Kentucky, then we beat Missouri at Texas, Georgia, three quad one wins. Not easy to do with the schedule we've had.

I'm happy and I'm excited that we're not done playing. I'm excited to go to battle with these guys again in the tournament.

**Q. Obviously a tough finish. What were your impressions of Kentucky after playing them twice, specifically Otega?**

PORTER MOSER: I coached Otega, so I know my impression of him. He's very, very good.

In terms of Kentucky's team, they got a lot of weapons. They've got two really good passing bigs. They have some elite shooters. They have Carr. Almost all of them can knock down threes. Everybody can shoot. It's tough to pick your poison when you're spaced out with Otega going downhill the way he does.

I think they can make a long run. They got some older guys, veterans, winners. I believe their offense is hard to guard. So I think getting in this tournament, people are going to have to adjust, five out. Not too many teams have two bigs that can pass like they do. They run excellent stuff at that five out. I think they're going to be a hard out.

**Q. In what ways do you feel they were different when Lamont Butler got injured?**

PORTER MOSER: I mean, Lamont's a Final Four point guard. He's done great things for them this whole year. He gives you an elite defender, he gives you a confident leader at the point. He's a terrific player. Got a lot of respect for him.

**Q. What, if anything, can you say to a young guy like Jeremiah Fears who really seemed distressed and heartbroken?**

PORTER MOSER: Because he's such a competitive kid, it wasn't about him scoring points or making that last shot, it was about winning the game. We really came in here one game at a time to advance in this tournament.

What it says a lot about him is he didn't let his offense missing shots early in the game affect what he was doing. Maybe earlier on a couple months ago... That's growth. If he wasn't scoring, in the beginning of the SEC run, if people were getting on him -- because Otega was all over him. He wouldn't have reacted. He kept on fighting through, fighting through. You could just see his growth when things weren't going his way, missing some shots. He started turning it, getting guys involved. He had five assists. I think all those assists might have been the second half.

I think the second half we had nine assists, three turnovers. Much better in the second half with that. But I saw his growth. Maybe earlier on, missing the shots, might have affected the rest of his game. He was still in tune, leading, wasn't letting that bring him down. That's growth.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you.

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