

Southeastern Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Friday, March 14, 2025

Nashville, Tennessee, USA

Bridgestone Arena

Kentucky Wildcats

Coach Mark Pope

Andrew Carr

Amari Williams

Postgame Press Conference

Alabama 99, Kentucky 70

MARK POPE: Congratulations to Alabama, they played a great game tonight. Were aggressive tonight. Played well. Had a good pace. We were frustrated with our performance tonight. We'll take questions.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for players.

Q. Andrew, Amari, two of the leaders on this team. When you suffer a loss like this on the conference tournament, you still have big goals going into next week. What is the message in the locker room?

ANDREW CARR: We didn't come this far to just come this far. We're looking in the mirror, try to continue to get better and focus on the NCAA tournament.

Q. How much did not having Lamont out there affect what you were able to do offensively and defensively?

AMARI WILLIAMS: Lamont is a big piece to our team. We did miss him out there. It's not like we haven't played that team before without Lamont. I don't really feel like that's why the outcome was the way it was.

ANDREW CARR: No, I agree with Amari. I second what he said.

Q. Amari, just from your perspective, Coach Oats was talking about they wanted to pressure the ball, pressure the perimeter. You're a unique perimeter player. What did that look like to you, the pressure that Alabama brought there?

AMARI WILLIAMS: I mean, it's not nothing I haven't seen



all season. A lot of teams have pressured me from the top. Was still able to get into our action. Obviously I didn't get the guards shots and get them open. It's not nothing I haven't seen before, so...

Q. When Otega went down in the first half, at what point mentally are you like, Oh, no, this has happened again? What kind of went through your minds at that time? What was it like when he was able to come back?

ANDREW CARR: Yeah, I'd just say that's what we've done all season. We faced a lot of adversity and we just continue to try to be fresh every single play, every possession.

Nothing new for us. We were trying to make sure we turned inwards, towards each other, in that moment.

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, you may leave. We'll continue with questions for Coach Pope.

Q. It sounded like you had a pretty positive update on Lamont from this morning. Can you elaborate any more on him? Sounds like he's probably going to play next week.

MARK POPE: Yeah, so totally different, unique injury. The imaging was perfect. So we're hopeful that he'll be back in action - I was hoping the second half, but didn't quite make it there.

Q. How hard is it to just flush tonight and start anew now that the NCAAs are right around the corner?

MARK POPE: I hope it's really hard 'cause this is not okay for us. I hope it's really hard. But we're here to do hard things. Like, that's why we're here. That's what we're chasing, is hard things.

I hope it's really hard and I hope we do it.

Q. The turnovers, do you think it had more to do with what they were doing defensively or what you were not

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doing offensively?

MARK POPE: Always give credit to the opponent, for sure. They played a great game. I was disappointed. The whole night we were a little stagnant in terms of playing in the character of the way that we play.

Tons of credit to Alabama. Some disappointment in our response to the moment.

Q. 30 minutes for Travis Perry tonight. Is this you got to get him as much experience as you can with the Lamont situation?

MARK POPE: I thought Travis competed hard. He's probably our next best option at the point to just give us some options to have any type of play calling or diversity to what we do at all right now.

There weren't a ton of options there. I thought he competed really hard.

Q. 5-19 on threes. Obviously low on both attempts and makes. Why was it so difficult? Seemed like not a whole lot of open looks either.

MARK POPE: Yeah, again, we've talked about it all year long. Our capacity to earn shots for each other. It would have taken a Herculean focus on that tonight. We just didn't have it.

I thought we competed. I thought we had a good competitive spirit in the first half. I thought it was really challenging for us in the second half.

Q. The craziest SEC we've ever season. How does that prepare you more for the NCAA as opposed to this has been a typical conference year?

MARK POPE: We talked with it since the beginning. It's either going to tear you to shreds or it's going to make you better. I think either team is going to decide which is going to be their path.

If you had the fortitude and togetherness to make it, it can make you better. So that's the challenge.

Q. A night after Otega had the game that he had, tonight with five turnovers and eight points, how important is he and how different are you guys when he doesn't play to the level he did last night?

MARK POPE: Yeah, every guy on this team is really important. We need great efforts. When we're good, we have everybody playing well.

Otega battled through a bunch of stuff tonight. He's one of the guys that we really rely on. We rely on every single guy on our team.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, coach.

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