

# University of Kentucky Basketball Media Conference

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## John Calipari

### Press Conference



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**Q. How do you take away from that 22 point down at halftime, but then you obviously showed some of the fight you've been looking for in the second half, just what's your kind of overall take away?**

JOHN CALIPARI: We'll watch the tape. We have a couple guys that are not playing to where they need to play, fight, competitive spirit, coming up with balls, toughness, rebounding. What happened in the first half, we had a guy that broke off the game plan. I mean, we spent a couple days on it because we had time and he walked in the game and ran the wrong way, ran the wrong way, ran the wrong way, they got 12 points.

Then all of a sudden the rim is like an ocean. That's what happened to us with Georgia Tech. And so all I said at halftime is, Let's win the second half. Let's just worry about winning the second half.

And again, I like Terrence at point guard, I like having his hands on the ball. Four turnovers, he left his feet and he knew it and I told him -- we have been working on it -- but I like him at point. Davion and Devin, got to shoot balls. They passed up seven wide open shots. And then what it ends up doing, it runs you into turnovers.

Now, again, in this game, all the work we have done, 11 turnovers and four by our point guard. Olivier was terrific. I thought Jacob showed some effort and I think Isaiah's better than he's playing, but it was -- look, there's hope now. If that's who we are those 20 minutes, there's hope. All right, now we got to play 40. If some guys shouldn't be starting, they won't start. You can't start, man, you fumble balls, you don't come up with it -- no.

And then if somebody's got to play less minutes, they're playing less. This isn't -- it is what it is.

But I liked the fact that we came back and we toughed and we did some good stuff.

**Q. Did you guys get what you wanted in that last shot?**

JOHN CALIPARI: We fumbled the ball. We didn't fumble the ball, we would have had the weak side rebound tip-in. So we had a guy over there for a reason. It was either, you take it, you quickly get it to him, he's going to shoot it, one of you two shoot, we'll have weak side rebound, so we'll have time.

By fumbling it, by the time he got it off and Olivier was, you know, took it hard, but I'm like, Dude, we're not even in the game without you. We got all these guys that have no toughness, drive to the rim and just throw balls. I mean, you gave us a presence and got us open threes because we were able to throw it to him.

**Q. Was there anybody in particular the second half that you were really pleased with and you think well maybe the light bulb kind of came on for him there?**

JOHN CALIPARI: I think the whole group. And again, we had to pick up and play, I didn't want to play early in the game that way, maybe we should have, I'm still learning about this team. And you say, well why didn't you? Because I didn't want the court to be spaced and them to get easy baskets. I wanted them to work and then we had breakdowns. We had guys that didn't follow the script. Never have followed the script. So all of a sudden there's open three, open three, open three. What in the world?

And so second half, we played the guys that were playing the script. And I took some guys out and we made a little run. They believed. So but this is, again, the Kansas game, four-point game with five minutes to go we're up and just make terrible mistakes. They went six straight possessions without a basket and we come down and I think turned it over twice and took two bad shots or three or missed wide open shots. I mean, okay, you want to be tough? Those got to go down.

**Q. How was that half, that second half a difference of your guys buying in more or were they just making more plays?**

JOHN CALIPARI: We picked up and pressed and we



became the aggressor. That's what happened. Do we have to play the whole game? Yeah, let's get in great shape and let's do it. We're not taking chances. But we're picking up and making them play. Getting into their legs a little bit. Maybe that's who we are. And there were times where they dragged a big man to screen my guard and my other big man's at the top of the key letting the guards play full court. Are you kidding me? Like getting them to be up there, come on, you come up too.

But there was good stuff in the second half. I just can't -- I hate losing, you got to win some games, this was a game down 22 we had no business even being in. But that shows you what I keep saying, you just keep playing. Keep fighting. They're not going to keep making shots.

So this is all new to them. Like I said, Terrence came down and left his feet and turned it over, it was a close game now, and ran back, head back, like he was mad at himself and his guy went and shot a layup. You can't win then. It isn't about you turning it over. It's about us winning. If you turn it over, get it back on the other end. They don't know that. It was only six months ago they were playing AAU and they had another game tonight.

And so I can't -- we're fighting and battling, they get off tomorrow, we go back to camp, three sessions a day, and probably do -- I think we're going to do Christmas with families, we'll do it a little bit different instead of -- we may do it this week or we'll do it when we come back from Cleveland, but kind of excited, I talked to them about that we take care of 10 or 12 families.

But, look, guys, I wanted it to look different, boy, it did in the first half, didn't it? But when I tell you what happened, one guy broke down four times and gave them four wide open threes and they made them. And I told them at halftime it would be a 10-, 9-point game. And now, second half, we don't have those breakdowns, we don't give them those, we pick up and we're the aggressor and we fight. The guys that didn't fight I took out of the game. You don't fight, you're out. And that means come up with balls. You can't fumble every ball. Well he grabbed my arm. You can't go after balls with one hand. You can't. We got to bring in balls.

Fans were great today too, let me thank the three thousand whoever and the cardboard cutouts and everybody, they were great, they gave us a lift.

**Q. Laszewski hurt you guys obviously in the first half and he only had one basket in the second. What happened there? What changed?**

JOHN CALIPARI: The game plan was the same in the first

half and the second half, I just told you. We had one guy do his own thing and gave them four open threes. Three and then the other one was a fourth by another guy for the same kind of bad rotation. Wasn't doing what we were asking to do.

If you're doing something as a group of five and one guy decides, either I'm not paying attention, come on now, we had days, days to go over this -- I'm not paying attention, or I don't understand it and I'm not asking, that would be like a quarterback going like this (Indicating) -- I think you guys would know -- quarterback going like this and he goes to hand the ball off and the running back goes the other way. You all would see it. But you don't know basketball, that's the problem here. But you would know it in football. Like you went and the quarterback, where the heck? And he does it three straight times.

Now you know, like what in the hell was going on? That's why I grabbed my face. I couldn't believe it. But it gave us a chance to fight in the second half and have our chance to win. If that ball goes in -- we had no business winning the game, but we fought, we learned to fight. And I like Terrence at point guard.

**Q. Two-parter, I guess. You said you liked Terrence at point guard but you have outlined some of the things he did wrong. What did you like, what did you see that gave you some hope about that going forward, him with the ball in his hands and then two, what, how much of a potential make or break moment was it for your guys to be down I think they said this is the largest halftime deficit in Kentucky history at home?**

JOHN CALIPARI: This isn't at home though. Come on, we got no fans.

**Q. Right, but to be down whatever, wherever the concept, to be down 20, that they didn't, as you always say, let go of the rope?**

JOHN CALIPARI: Well here's what I say with Terrence, weren't you more comfortable with him having the ball in his hands? Didn't you know that he could make plays at the rim and score and do things where they got to play him? He can play -- I did not want to put him on No. 3, we were initially going to and I said, no, you can't do it, because you can't ask him to have the ball and also guard the guy that's going to have the ball for 80 percent of the time for them. You can't do it to the kid.

But I thought Davion and Devin did a pretty good job on Hobbs. The last step-back was a breaker, but the kid missed five before that. So I thought we did a pretty good job.

**Q. I think it's maybe one of the last timeouts today, Devin and Terrence were both pleading with you emphatically about something and I was curious what was that all about?**

JOHN CALIPARI: Which timeout?

**Q. 11 seconds to go Devin and Terrence were both pleading with you about something.**

JOHN CALIPARI: Yeah, they're saying, If they're man or zone what do we do? So which way, what are we doing? We were going to do the exact same thing whatever they were doing, man or zone. What I told them was, they have a foul to give, if you drive it and they reach in to foul you, throw it at the rim. Like just run and throw it. He reaches in, pull it and throw it. We didn't.

Do you remember Brandon Knight doing that against Mississippi State? And he threw the three from three quarter court or half court and we shot three free throws and won the game.

He didn't do it the first time and I went nuts. Shoot the ball. Because he did it twice, they grabbed him. And I said, Do you not understand what I'm saying? Shoot it from half court. We had it in the front court when they fouled. So they reach in, you just pull up shoot something. It's a foul and you get two free throws, we win the game.

But again there's so much to teach here and we got the look we wanted, the fumble cost us the weak side rebound, but we'll get, we made strides and now we move on. Look, I said this morning, I told the guys, I woke up this morning and what I said was, Lord, thank you for giving me this opportunity. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to coach here, to coach these young people.

And I know, I told them, Adversity is going to make you tougher, it's what it is, and this comes at you, especially at Kentucky. Losing games in a row here is like a natural disaster. And you know what? I'm not buying it, I don't listen to it, I never have. Whether we're winning games or losing games, my focus is on how do I help these guys get better. And some of them, you got to dig your heels in or someone else plays. Dig your heels in or someone else plays. And every year it's kind of like this, Davion missed every shot, so he didn't shoot a couple. You can't do that. What you should be is in the gym tonight. Go back to the craft, go in the gym and get a manager and put 500 shots up. That's what you do. You don't stop shooting. You go 0-8 and everybody says, That kid can't shoot at all. And you go in the gym and next game you go 8-8. Because you work on yourself mentally and physically. You do that.

So we, like I said, we got a ways to go, but some strides. We played through Olivier today. So guys that are shooting 12 percent from the three and 30 percent from the floor, you're not getting the ball as much. I'm sorry, that ball's going to Olivier. That ball will go to Isaiah, maybe. Maybe we'll go pick and roll.

But like, again, how we're going to play is going to develop now that Terrence is playing point.

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