

University of Kentucky Basketball Media Conference

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John Calipari

Press Conference



Kentucky 82, LSU 69

THE MODERATOR: We'll get started with questions.

Q. This is three straight games you've held the opponent in the 60s. Do you think defense is to the point where if you just play good offense, not great, maybe you can turn this thing around?

JOHN CALIPARI: Well, we've been saying the biggest thing is turnovers. You may get mad about shot clock violations. What don't they get off of shot clock violations?

Q. They don't get a possession on the other side.

JOHN CALIPARI: They don't get a breakaway layup, like Georgia. I'd rather have a shot clock violation than the kind of turnovers we had.

So today we had nine turnovers, and probably four of them or three of them were shot clock violations. I'm still all over guys to shoot balls. Guys won't shoot 'em. They have a shot, they pass up a shot, and they dribble into a harder shot. Why would you do that?

Shoot the ball. If you go 0-10, that's on me for leaving you in, not on you. If anybody asks you, say you should have taken me out because he told me keep shooting. Couldn't hit the side of a barn. That's okay.

Not to shoot in these situations is being selfish. Shoot the open shots. You know what, there's three things that can happen. You may make one. May be unusual, but you may make one. You may miss it, and we offensive rebound it because we're big and long. Or you may miss it and they get it, but we're in a good position to get back so they can't score on us.

These turnovers, unforced, what? A wing pass, a pass to the top, a cross-court skipper when the guy is right near you. We just keep continuing to talk about it. We're hoping. I've never done this on the board. Let's have 10 to 12 turnovers. On the board, we never have that on the

board. We'll have rebounds, field goal percentage, assists. Now we're saying I want 10 to 12 turnovers. We just don't want 19.

So, I mean, defensively, look, there's a lot of people that don't want to see us get going because of how we defend and how long we are. You're right, assists today, 15. We had 13 at halftime, whatever. Again, you know why? We had open shots. Why you wouldn't shoot it? Maybe afraid he wouldn't make it. I don't know. But we passed up good shots, then took a tougher one, which is why the assists were second half where they were.

Hopefully we're going to get this down to where if you shoot it, shoot it. If you don't have a shot, that means you're swinging it or driving it to get someone else a shot. Not you, you chose not to shoot it, so now you're not going to shoot, you're either going to pass or drive.

We've just got to get them in that mode.

Q. I would imagine when the season started in your mind you figured that BJ and Terrence and Keion would probably drive this bus. All three of those guys for various reasons kind of didn't or weren't able to give you what you expected. Is Terrence, we haven't asked you for an update on him for a while. What's his status?

JOHN CALIPARI: I don't believe he'll play this week. I don't believe so. But he is now being able to run around. He hadn't been in practice. He's been at practice but hasn't practiced. Hopefully he will be an addition that will help us.

What I've said to him, What can you add to this team? Don't tell me what you want to do. Look at us. Where do we have deficiencies and where can you help us? What do you add to this team? He's been great.

I mean, how about Isaiah today? Isaiah rebounding, got every ball. How about Olivier getting a little bit rough, which is okay to be that guy. I told him before the game, he's got to get anywhere from 12 to 15 points a game for us. You have to, I don't care how you do it, you get 12 to 15. We now score at a clip that we can hold that other

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team down.

Then the other thing I keep saying, When you're open, shoot the ball. We started the second half, we go air ball, miss. C'mon. I was really aggressive and I told them why. We had a 9, 10, 11 point lead. I was on guys. It wasn't going to go back to four and I was going to see missed shots, free throws, out-of-bounds play. Not this game.

Like, I was aggressive today saying, Look, will you finish this off?

Q. How much have you missed having a guy who can beat somebody off the bounce? Is that the thing Terrence can give to you?

JOHN CALIPARI: How about he guards the ball? He really guards the ball. You can put him and Jacob out there, you have two guys. Most guys are not going to have five drivers, they're going to have two. You put those two on, now all of a sudden it's a little different. If we switch with his size, 6'7", he can still guard that big guy. So yeah. But he's got to be healthy.

What happened? I was trying to play him at 70%. Killed us. Kept guys out of the game that needed to be in the game.

Again, when he comes back, we're going to petition the NCAA to add 20 more minutes to the game so we have time for everybody. The typical 200, we're going to see if we can petition for 220.

Q. What do you think the odds are of getting that extra 20?

JOHN CALIPARI: I got better luck asking my wife for 20 than them giving us 20. When I ask her for 20, she says, You're 20 dollaring me to death.

I said, You're kidding me, right?

I would say no. That means it's going to put the best guys. Cream rises to the top. I've always said it. You want guys to play comfortable. Let me say this, you're responsible for your performance. Your stats are your stats. The film doesn't lie. Now maybe the competition in practice doesn't.

I put Davion on the second unit. I wasn't going to start him. You should have seen him in practice. Unbelievable. Fight, fire, desperation. I said, If that's who you are, I'm going to start you, but that's not who you have been.

You know what I did with BJ? I said this. Dontaie came and we talked. I told him, You just got to let it go. You're

now feeling the weight of the world. You can't be that guy.

Coach, probably for the team and me, I'd be better coming off the bench, letting me just let it go.

I said, That's good. But you got to know and be honest with yourself: How can I play the way this team needs me to play so we win?

Again, we did some good things. Devin was better. You're noticing I'm trying to play him less. He's way better with less minutes. When he gets over that 24, 25 minute mark, there's real diminishing returns. It's both physical and mental because he plays so hard and he runs so hard. We just got to keep his minutes down.

Q. Brandon said after the game he was in a really good place. Seems like when he's in a really good place, you're probably going to be in a real good place.

JOHN CALIPARI: Me personally or our team?

Q. Maybe both, I would guess.

JOHN CALIPARI: Again, did you see the one flip he had in the first half?

Q. Yes.

JOHN CALIPARI: I went crazy. You're not going back to that guy. That guy has left the building. You're going to be the guy that we keep training you to be. That's who you are. And now downhill runner, create fouls, get to the rim. All of a sudden you look like one of the best players in the country. The flipsy-doodles that get nothing except a layup down the other end? We're not having that any more.

When he flipped it, I went crazy. It was one on two. Dontaie was open. He did a flipsy. I did a backflip, said, We're not going back to that.

Again, I'm trying to hold these guys accountable. Thank goodness I could do it while we're winning. You lose a game, it's hard. My postgame talks to them on those games, I'm saying, Hurry up, get your stuff, let's get on the bus. When they win or when they're playing better, now I can really make a point of things.

Q. You made five of your first eight three-point shots. Did that have a momentum factor to get everybody in a groove?

JOHN CALIPARI: Yeah, but what if we had gone like 1 for 8, which we have done? Now, let me explain. Because of how they play, our game plan was you're going to be

shooting more threes this game than you've shot. Shoot them. If you go 0-10, that's on me. You shoot that ball.

We also wanted to play a little bit faster. At the end let's try, if you can't get it, get one for somebody else. That's kind of how we played.

Any time you make shots, it's contagious. Any time you miss a bunch of shots, that's contagious.

Q. You mentioned the nine turnovers. What do you think was the difference in that area tonight? Why were you able to cut down on them?

JOHN CALIPARI: Because everybody was playing for each other instead of themselves. When you're out there trying to make heroes plays, you're turning it over. When you're out there not setting a great screen, not getting open with timing, the play is not yours so you go half speed. You're playing for you instead of us. There are going to be turnovers.

We show them on the tape, we're in practice, the emphasis, if you turn it over, we're running. Everybody on the line. Let's go, we're running. Enough of these turnovers for no reason.

Again, most of it is I have a guy there, but I got to show you this. The reason is I missed three shots so I got to do something fabulous. We're just starting to crack those habits. This game, we needed to win a game. I mean, I'm still disgusted over the last couple, literally disgusted. But we needed to win this.

Now we're going and playing the best team in our league, and playing them down there. They beat us here. We broke down, they played well. They beat us here. Now we go down there.

One of the players was asking me the score. He couldn't see it. You know, they're good. They're a top-10 team. They deserve to be. You know what? For us, I told them about this game. These are the games you want to play to where you know you're not supposed to win the game. Now you go and it gets you going, you play. Instead of playing not to lose you play to win. You don't look at the scoreboard.

I'll be honest with you, I didn't look at the scoreboard the whole first half. Didn't look at it at all.

I'm just trying to get these guys to play together, to be better with the ball, to execute when it's not your play. It's kind of like the wishbone. What if only two guys that knew they were getting to play did it? You can't run it. You got

to execute when it's not for you. We're getting better that way.

Q. You had six or seven lobs in the first half alone. Was that a point of emphasis or was that a product of LSU pressing you a little bit?

JOHN CALIPARI: It was their press and their 1-3-1. Again, we had talked about this is what you're going to find. Again, look, they're one of the best teams in our league. They're the leading scoring team in our league. So let's keep taking pride in our defense, see where this goes.

Thanks, guys.

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