

University of Kentucky Basketball Media Conference

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John Calipari

Press Conference



Florida Gators 71, Kentucky Wildcats 67

Q. Obviously y'all started well offensively, scored a bunch of points, were playing fast. What did Florida do to change that?

COACH JOHN CALIPARI: They did their little press and I could not -- after Jacob walked, I couldn't get anybody to drive to the middle of the court, which is what we've always done to that, or, get our point guard to get a screen and then create something for somebody.

So we end up using 15 seconds. And then it was what it was. At that point, it was like, guys -- they spread the court. We should be playing faster. But guys got tentative.

We had some bad play, individual bad play today, and that happens. They are not machines. They are not robots. We had a couple guys play one of their worst games, no energy. And you know, we still had our chance to win.

We leave their best three-point shooter, just, you know, what are we doing, why would you do that? And I don't have an answer. You know, we've got to get ready for a flipped-around game. We have to practice tomorrow, watch the tape.

But I would imagine if Mississippi watches this, they play zone, anyway; they will probably play 40 minutes of zone. We looked out of whack. No hard cuts.

Normally, you guys that have listened to me, historically when a team plays zone, I like it because you have to pass the ball. They are in a zone. We didn't pass it again. Whoever caught it, held it. I'm making the play.

Okay. Now you're going against -- the ball moves, it's posted. We don't throw any skips that we had worked on for three days over the top. But give them credit. Florida did what they had to. We're up one, we got our chances, here we go, let's win this thing, and you know, we don't. No daggers, shots that were available to us, we missed. Take a bad shot, instead of trying to get fouled I'm just

going to throw one, that's losing basketball. Losing basketball. So we'll be able to look at the tape and hopefully get better.

Q. Keion, even when he's not scoring it or shooting it great, has been pretty reliable in terms of being an energy guy and the guy who will go do did all the other stuff. How surprising was today from Keion?

COACH JOHN CALIPARI: Really surprising. I have no idea. I mean, he lost one ball and then did not sprint back and let them dunk a ball, when the guy was three steps behind him when they both took off.

But I'm going to say this: I love him. He's played great for us. They are not machines and they are not robots. He wasn't very good today. But let's see if the next game he comes back and he's better next game.

Q. Did you consider adding a game this last week when you realized Texas A&M wasn't going to be played?

COACH JOHN CALIPARI: Yes.

Q. And will you add a non-conference game moving forward since you won't get it made up or just these last two?

COACH JOHN CALIPARI: Probably not now. But we had a top team, a top-ranked team that we had discussed, thinking about playing Thursday. And we had another team that we had discussed playing on Thursday.

But you know what, let us just build some confidence. You know, South Carolina, who we have to play Saturday just won by 30. Mississippi is obviously playing really well. So we are going to have a tough go of it with what we have, but obviously we've got a road game and a home game and then we go to our tournament.

Q. How frustrating is it for you to still this late in the season that your team hits so many of these offensive droughts where either you can't make a shot or give the shot that you want, no matter what?



COACH JOHN CALIPARI: Yeah, it was disappointing, and again, they got tentative. I put Dante in and what I basically said is, "Find him."

Guess what? They didn't even look at him. I said, "Get him shots."

"Are you ready?"

"Yes."

They didn't; I'm getting mine.

I don't know what it was but we were not connected today like we've been, and me saying that, like as bad as I thought we played in the first half, we're up one.

Now all of a sudden we couldn't get anything and we're up one with three -- I mean, it shows you that we can do this and not play well and still do this.

But somebody's got to have to make a dagger, a shot, a play, a block. How about B.J.'s rebound under the goal? It's a one-bucket game. You don't come up with that. You let him jerk it out of your hand? Then we lose the game.

So there were so many plays like that, that I look and I'm like, if you want to win, that doesn't happen. You don't drive, you know, Jacob and just throw the ball and fall on the floor. You don't do that. You're getting fouled or don't shoot it.

So there was, you know, again, we're still -- like I said, we got work to do and it was disappointing. I was hoping we could get this one. I thought we were getting it all the way. We're up one.

As bad as we were playing, I thought we could still get it and then all the sudden we leave a guy and leave a three-point shooter open and come down and took a throw shot, they make them and all of a sudden you're like, what in the world just happened. Come on, man, we got to have basketball sense.

And you know what, I'll say it again: They are not robots, they are in the machines, they don't play great, they don't make every shot. But the disappointing thing is this team fought to get themselves in a good position, in a good position that something good could happen for us and we kind of just had a couple guys not show up. Like what -- what? Was it anxiety that wore you out, the anxiety of the game? The anxiety of worrying about the game? I don't know.

But we weren't the same team today.

Q. How much do you think maybe the layoff, the week off without a game, a mid-week game, maybe contributed to being out of rhythm or out of the routine, and where do you assess your NCAA chances at this point?

COACH JOHN CALIPARI: We're worried about Mississippi. I'm not worried about that other stuff. We've got to take one game and let's try to get better.

It wasn't -- it was their zone, that 3-2 zone, and that zone press that got us out of sync. It wasn't taking a couple days off. I mean, I don't believe that. I believe that we had three great days of practice. We had a great shoot around this morning. They went zone. We got confused. You know, we don't have that guy out there that takes the ball and says, "I'm going to make this stuff happen."

When your point is a little bit shaky because of how they are playing, then the rest of us are shaky. You know, we've had that guy that would just go get a basket or go create something or go get a lob or go, we're not having that right now.

But I say it again, normally when you're playing the zone, normally teams pass, pass, pass, pass. We were like pass-hold, pass-hold, pass-hold, pass-bounce, point, come-and-screen. I mean, it was, you know -- when we ran it up the court, we weren't bad. When we got in the halfcourt, we held the ball.

Q. You've already talked about the zone and zone press that got you out of sync, however, you got double-digits turnovers for the first time in a while. Could you explain why that might have happened today?

COACH JOHN CALIPARI: Probably because we got back to, "I'm going to make my play" versus "I'm going to make a play for my teammate." We probably reverted a little bit.

But they had 16 turnovers. I mean, we had 15. They had 16. When you look at the numbers, what happened to us, you miss every shot; it's hard to win, and we still had a chance. We were 1-for-11 in the second half from the three and I'm going to guess five of them were wide open and we missed them all. The only one to make one was Jacob.

Q. You were talking about having that point guard that can go make that play. When a team doesn't have that, how do they compensate for that issue?

COACH JOHN CALIPARI: You hope you have another

guy that can do it, that can go, you can give it to him and he can create some offense. And for us, where were we throwing the ball? What were we doing? We were throwing it pot post.

Today our post would not throw that skip pass. The first one that was thrown was thrown so high over B.J.'s head, and no one was on B.J. There was no reason for that. Again let me say this, guys. Today, again, we had 15 turnovers but we had 7 other bad passes that took away jumpshots for us. Just threw it by the guy's ankle. Threw it over his head. Threw it outside of his -- why would you do that? There's no one between you and him.

And so again, when you're -- when you are trusting and you're believing and you're into your team, those kind of plays don't happen, and we have been so good, so good as of late, and then today, you know, not so good.

And again, what was their dagger shot? Man, step back, little two-pointer. That was a dagger. And he made it. And then he made those last two free throws. But that was a dagger. We had ours. We missed them all.

So back to the drawing board.

Thanks, guys.

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