

# University of Kentucky Basketball Media Conference

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## Coach John Calipari

### Press Conference



LSU 66, Kentucky 71

**Q. You have been saying all year that you need Bryce, so did you see that coming tonight?**

JOHN CALIPARI: Well, all I been talking about is preparing for an opportunity. I showed them a video to the team, and really it would hit Daimion and him a little bit harder, but every one of you at some point in your career will be in this boat, that you're not playing as much as you think, you're not getting the shots that you think, so now you don't work.

And then you get an opportunity and you don't take advantage. Now, you can listen to everybody tell you it's everybody else or it's the coach or why is he doing this to him and not him to you and this, or you could say, When I get my chance, I'm going to do what the team needs me to do.

What he did today is he rebounded and he went to the offensive glass, he tried to guard, he was involved in everything, made a stick back, makes a 15-footer. But there was nothing like crazy-crazy, but we're all talking about him because he did what the team needed him to do.

He did it because I said I'm playing guys that are going to fight. If you're not fighting, I'm not playing you. And I went with him. The team was so happy for him and so was I.

**Q. I wondered if you guys, I guess it's obvious, but the messy final two minutes, and you didn't have much of a fast break today, did you miss the point guards?**

JOHN CALIPARI: Yeah, here is a pressing team, and we have 12 turnovers and -- but we only have three assists. But this was a game that we talked about you have to drive them, because they're switching everything. You got to make really hard cuts.

The first half we didn't. I walked in at half time and said, We're down four baskets, and you know what? If you will

start cutting and driving, you will get what you want.

And that's all we did in the second half that was different. We talked about it, we spent two days working on it, and we didn't do; then in the second half we did it.

**Q. From a psychological standpoint for the team heading into March are you better off having to win these two games when you're shorthanded or if everything had been rolling smoothly?**

JOHN CALIPARI: Oh, you're better of winning at any point. Especially when a guy like Bryce, I think we're going to need Bryson or NCAA tournament run. I've said it to you guys from day one. Some of it is he fought it. You know, he fought it. He was behind some guys. They were playing well and you had some opportunities; you didn't take advantage.

But he's practiced, he's being coached, he's coming in the gym, spending extra time. That was big. Our guards, you know, you're playing guys 40 minutes. You know what I'm saying? Then the end of game I should have gone to what I did with Oscar right way. Just throw it up in the air to him and make him foul it. You know you're getting it in.

I tried to tell the guys we got in three timeouts. Call them; they still threw them in. Like call a time out. We're fine.

You know, there were things that we did down the stretch trying to dribble through two guys, all you do is pass the ball now, just pass it. Why did you do that? He grabbed me. You didn't even need do to that.

So we did some things dumb down the stretch, but the reality of it is you're up ten or twelve with a couple minutes to go, you know, it's a good win.

**Q. You mentioned showing them a clip. Somebody said Alabama, Nick Saban. I assume you mean the Saban video you showed them, and what specifically was that video? How did you come across it?**

JOHN CALIPARI: Someone sent it to me, but basically what he said is that you have guys that are result-driven, minutes, shots, and the people around them absolutely that



way, versus I'm going to really grow into a well-rounded player at my position.

And instead I'm not playing so I'm not going to work. I'm get getting in anyway so I don't work. Then you get your chance to play and you can't perform to the level that the team needs you because of all that stuff prior to.

You missed out on the grind. You didn't learn all the stuff you have to learn to really reach your potential, which it's a grind. It's living in the gym. It's like Jacob. He's living in the gym. Last year he didn't. Jacob was like 12 years old. Everything was funny and laughing. Now he understands. He's in the gym. He's in the gym all the time building his own confidence, and he's working in practice.

So that was what the message was.

**Q. As a follow up...**

JOHN CALIPARI: And now, if you're not ready and you don't perform, you got to take responsibility.

**Q. As a follow up to that, now that you've had Lance have a game like this and game I have Daimion and Bryce have a game like this, I know you want to play full strength, but how much more confidence does it give you that sort of come what may, somebody is gonna...**

JOHN CALIPARI: We have five guys that have scored 25 pins in a game. I would like to get one more guy to do that so we have six, because you're going to get in a game and someone may need to make baskets for you to separate. Either they're making sorts and you're going to have to score some baskets to separate.

Second thing you want a full team because the more players, more room for error. We had a couple guys not play well today. Well, you're not playing as much. No big deal. Be ready for the next game. Somebody may get hurt like what just happened. Someone may be in foul trouble. You got to play the game anyway, so you want a full roster.

Now, I've done it with five when I was at UMass. We played five guys 38 minutes, 39 minutes, and had a chance to win a national title.

You know what? We dodged some many bullets, including against Baylor where Marcus Camby went down -- no that was Anthony Davis went down. I forgot. But Marcus went down in a game and it was like, okay, we got to learn to do this without him, and we did. And we did.

So, you know, I would rather of a full team which we have.

I'm proud of these guys. We get the other guys back, we'll see how this works at what point they come back. They may not be ready in two days. We may have the same team going down to Arkansas.

**Q. The way this team responds now to deficits compared to the way they did earlier in the season, how much have you seen them grow in that department and just not flinching no matter what the deficit is?**

JOHN CALIPARI: Well, they're playing to win versus not to lose. I've told you guys, my whole mindset is always on how are we going to win this. It's never like, We could lose this. My mind doesn't flip to that.

I'm trying to tell them, you play to win. If you don't win, you don't win, but you play to win. Playing not to lose, gets you to lose. Play to win. Play to stretch it out. You may use clock. You may massage the ball a little bit, massage the clock, and then make a basket.

If you don't, you don't, but you are playing to win, not playing like I got make these. No. You don't.

**Q. John, you preached it and preached it about taking advantage of opportunity, but how much does it matter to you to have a close-knit team that holds guys accountable so they'll buy in again to what you're talking about?**

JOHN CALIPARI: Well here is what I said to them yesterday: A good team has good players. A great team has great teammates. These guys are terrific teammates. They're great teammates. That gives us a chance.

And we are talented.

But when you're great teammates people watch the game and you know what they say? Man, are they fun to watch. Man, do they cover for each other. They make the game easy. Look how hard they play and fight for each other.

When you're into your own thing you pout. Things don't go your way, you hang your head and you pout. That's when you're into your own thing. If you're into the team you just keep fighting.

You know what we shot from the three-point line? John, what did you think we shot?

**Q. Not good. I don't have the stats in front of me.**

JOHN CALIPARI: Did you watch the game at all?

**Q. Yes. I watched it.**

JOHN CALIPARI: Okay. It was 2 for 12. Kellan was 0 for 5. Davion was 1 for -- did they hang their head? Just keep playing. I'm not making shots today but I'm going to do everything else, or you hang your head and you pout and you're looking for someone to blame with how you're playing.

This is the kind of team that doesn't do that. You got a bunch of guys that are for each other. I mean, that whole bench was cheering for Bryce. They were so happy for him, just like they were for Daimion down at Alabama.

**Q. You talk a lot about trying to be able to win games different ways. Saturday was more a shootout and tonight more defensive style. How impressive is it to you to see team, especially shorthanded, be able to win two very different games?**

JOHN CALIPARI: No, it's good. It's good. You know, they did some stuff pressing that we're going to have to work on, but, you know, we got -- again, you press when we got our full complement of guards and you stretch the court out on us, good luck. I mean, we're shorthanded. You can go do some of this stuff and mush us a little bit, but, yeah, we -- different teams doing different things is really good for us.

**Q. Just talk a little bit more about Kellan and Davion, what they've had to do the last two games how they have accepted different roles and how you've felt they have played and especially how they have taken care of the ball?**

JOHN CALIPARI: No, I said and doing it for 40 minutes, not subbing them, think about that. And I felt I needed to save those timeouts this game because of late, and I was -- thank goodness I was right.

Normally I would've called some along the way to give them a break, but knowing how this team presses, knowing how we were shorthanded, I thought we needed those at the end.

But they played good. I mean, you talk about both of them. They have five turnovers together and they play how many minutes?

38 and 40? Come on. And Davion defended the whole game. He could have played another ten minutes. Defended the whole game.

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