

University of Kentucky Basketball Media Conference

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Coach John Calipari

Press Conference



JOHN CALIPARI: First of all, let me just say, man, did they play hard, and did they compete. They out-rebounded us. We missed a bunch of lay-ups. With any body-to-body contact, we missed. It's all the stuff I've been talking about. We had three players play really well.

Our leading rebounder was Cason Wallace. That's why he's going to play and play a lot. Even though he missed two lay-ups, deal with it. Missed some jumpers, his right hand, hurt his fingers. Deal with it because of how he defends, what he does.

Hopefully Sahvir will be okay. He hurt his knee. Probably that same knee I think it was about 10 days ago, a week ago.

Yes?

Q. Do you have any indication on Sahvir and what the severity of it --

JOHN CALIPARI: No, I don't. Not at this point. But he had it -- he had to be out a couple days of practice, probably a week ago, I think. He was not in at Pikeville, either. It was the same knee. Like a twisted. It's not a -- yes?

Q. In a tweet earlier today you laid out some points of emphasis, I guess, rebounding, defense and sprinting. Obviously the rebounding didn't go how you wanted --

JOHN CALIPARI: Well, I'm going to watch the tape. We defended fairly well and scrambled pretty good, and I thought we were good enough. But you can't play offensively like we are in that game.

We can say whatever we want. We had guys that when the game got physical were not making baskets.

The other thing is a shot goes up, you can accept being blocked out or don't accept it because what they said is if you don't block out, you're going to get dunked on. So they went back and we just put two hands in the guy's back or

chest in his back, instead of going around, go get a ball and going at people.

The sprinting I thought was pretty good, but again, they're graded. So when the grading comes out we'll have a better idea. I just have to watch -- they did a great job of packing it in. We were too wide to start drives. You can't -- you've got to be tighter.

But it's good to play a team and have done what they did to us. But I thought we did a pretty good job of guarding.

Then second half I think they had one offensive rebound, but at halftime they had a bunch.

Q. I know we think CJ is going to be one of those special stories throughout the year. Not being able to play --

JOHN CALIPARI: Year and a half.

Q. Year and a half, college basketball game, I know he's had the scrimmages in the Bahamas but to see him out there and continuing to show that he can hit from the perimeter and just what you saw from him.

JOHN CALIPARI: Yeah, but the other things he does, he moves his team, he plays so hard, he talks on defense. Did you see him push Jacob to a man and then he went and guarded the other man? I mean, it's nice when you have older guys that really know what they're doing out there.

He's special. Now, Antonio didn't shoot the ball well today. But what I said to these guys, when you're not shooting the ball well, you've just got to do everything else. Go get rebounds. Go create for your teammates. Play through bumps. Make something happen that way. How about make your free throws?

There's other ways to help the team.

I thought that Ugonna played like none of us -- like I knew, but he had five blocks. I also thought Adou played well. Adou with the ball, and now he's playing without the ball, and defensively you're seeing, like he's been challenged.

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That bar has been raised. You've got to play off the ball. You see him get that rebound and then drive it up the court?

I thought those guys and CJ, they gave it, but you've got to have a team full of guys -- how many lay-ups? Sahvir probably missed four, and those are usually shots he makes. But give them credit; they held a pretty good team to 58 points. Was it 58 or 56? 56 points. We're trying to play fast and we're flying up and down the court.

Yes?

Q. You were pretty tough on them in the blue-and-white game defensively. Sometimes when you do that they slide a little bit on the other end. Did you feel like that may be what the offense, the attention to defense --

JOHN CALIPARI: We can say that. But I think that team played us physical. You would think at one point they'd go away, and they didn't. They didn't. They played until the horn went. They just kept coming.

It was a physical -- like on drives, we got bumped. I got on the official -- I said, they threw a ball and you called foul on us, and every drive we've taken they're chesting and bodying, but I'm glad he played it that way so I can show it on the tape. You get bumped and miss a lay-up.

Q. You had mentioned that the offense was ahead of the defense previously --

JOHN CALIPARI: Did I say that?

Q. You did say that.

JOHN CALIPARI: I misspoke.

Q. Just watching them tonight and seeing the energy and enthusiasm they put into the defensive side of the ball as a collective unit, how far have they come since you challenged them on that side of the ball, and how far do you think you guys have to go on that side?

JOHN CALIPARI: They were better. Now, again, you have to reward great defensive play by scoring down the other end. You have to reward great defensive play by rebounding and not giving up offensive rebounds, which we did, and we gave up -- they got 10 offensive rebounds.

You can't give them that -- you're doing too much good stuff. A bunch of them were balls that bounced out. Well, where are our guards? You don't need to run under the basket. You need to be near those elbows.

But like I said, this was good for us, and then playing a team that could -- they all know, they're in there. They know. We got out-rebounded. We had eight offensive rebounds.

Now, we missed a ton of shots, too. We got eight offensive. We accepted being blocked out, or if I run in there, it's going to get rough. So I'll kind of act like I'm going in, but I ain't going in there.

Well, we need Cason Wallaces on the floor. Did you see that last rebound? He jerked out with the guy's arms? That's how you've got to -- this thing is a man's game. It really is.

Q. You coached against three guys that learned from you. Did they live up to what you expected?

JOHN CALIPARI: Well, they did better than me if you watched the game, and I was proud of all three of them. I told Will, you know what's great, you get a job and you reach back and you take care a couple of guys that want to get into coaching and do it. They love Will, and when you hire people, the number one thing is they've got to love you. All the other stuff, I'll teach.

So he figured that out, and he's done a great job. He's got long hair, got crazy socks. I would do that, but I just wore crazy shoes today. I usually don't do that.

Yes?

Q. I was actually going to ask about Will. He spoke very highly of you and the program when he came out here, got a little emotional. I don't know if you can say anything about his contributions to your early success here, being a part of that National Championship team.

JOHN CALIPARI: Yeah, he was a great teammate. You have guys around the program that keep an eye on these kids because I'm not going to be there and our staff -- but he was one that really -- the players loved him. You saw Daniel was there. You saw Darius was there. I told Darius about -- he says, I can't come, I've got this, my kids, but I'm going to be at that, and Darius's mom and dad, we all appreciate him. What he's done here and the mark he's left, and on top of that he's a heck of a coach. Heck of a coach.

Q. These secret scrimmages, charity exhibitions have been talked about a lot lately. Have you given any thought to maybe one of those at preseason?

JOHN CALIPARI: Yeah, we're all reading, and we had

talked about it more, and again, administrative decision because obviously a closed scrimmage where you can get work against another high-level Division I program helps you, but I understand it here because financially it's a big deal to play two games. It just is.

That money goes to other sports, so now you start taking that money away that will go to other sports. We played the blue-white in Pikeville. That was a big deal because we need this program -- it's for all the other programs. I get it. But I think we're going to have to address it now because it's become so prevalent.

But yeah, we have to address it. Now it's probably at that point where, yeah, we've got to do like everybody else and play a scrimmage and figure out who it is and close the doors down and let's go.

I was just with Bill Self in Cincy, and they played Illinois, talking about how they played.

Now, I will say, this game was good for us. It was.

Now, the one thing I like about playing these games is taking care of some Division II people. Like playing Kentucky State, that's a big deal for them. So I like doing those things.

But I also like this program probably more than doing that, so that needs to be addressed. We will.

Q. Obviously things are different are Oscar out just in terms of personnel, but from a lineup combination standpoint, you tried a lot of different things tonight.

JOHN CALIPARI: I did.

Q. Was there anything that caught your eye, either positively or negatively from those combinations you put out there?

JOHN CALIPARI: When I watch the tape, I'll probably have a better idea, but I just know if you're not going to be rough and tumble, if you're not going to be physical, you're not going to win in our league. CJ tonight making shots, it may be Antonio next game. But my point comes back to forget about all that. Defend like crazy. We need you to block a shot or two and then rebound. You can't give up offensive rebounds and then not make shots.

But I'll see. I'll watch the tape. Again, when you look, you want to know like assist to turnover. Why? Did it get physical and we lose the ball? Then we've got to do drills. Every time you drive we're going to have to grab and hold and do all that stuff.

But again, credit to Missouri Western; they did a great job. Proud of Will, proud of John, proud of Perry, and their team should feel good walking away from this, to play us the way they did. Seems like they're pointed to a pretty good season.

Thanks, folks.

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