

University of Kentucky Basketball Media Conference

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Lexington, Kentucky, USA

John Calipari

Press Conference



Gonzaga Bulldogs - 88, Kentucky Wildcats - 72

THE MODERATOR: Start with questions for coach.

Q. What do you think about what Jacob said about some guys --

JOHN CALIPARI: Well, we missed every shot. So you can say what you want. We missed every shot. You don't have to make 'em all. You just can't miss 'em all, and expect to be in the game with a good team.

And Gonzaga played well. They played well. We only had 11 turnovers. You want to know, though? When we got the game to four, there were two of them right then. What? And we gave up a three and we fouled, and all of a sudden it's back to nine. What in the world just happened?

I had to change how we were playing offensively at halftime. What did you see, if you know basketball? What did I do? So most of you really don't know. I couldn't get Oscar to run the plays right. You know why? He hasn't been practicing with us. So I said, Go to the baseline. We're going to play dribble drive around you. And that's what we did the whole second half. I ran two plays. That were pass, pass, make a play. Couldn't run a play. Told 'em, man, you know, we got to practice and get together as a team and get better.

Offensively in the first half it was so embarrassing that we couldn't even run a play. Couldn't run a play. Not one. And it wasn't just Oscar. It was our guards too.

But here's the great thing. We come back and get it to four or five and have our chance to win the game and that's when I want to see who can step up and make plays. I got to watch the tape and see where the breakdowns happened because we, that would have been one of the great wins of all time.

But I think we only had a few people thinking we were going to win that game. Didn't have enough on the bench, like, you know, let's go. We got this. And they played well.

Q. Is that something you see, though, coming into this game, that possibly, that --

JOHN CALIPARI: Well they lost, they --

Q. -- that they're not ready to run it through Oscar, that maybe you're going to have to do something else?

JOHN CALIPARI: Well, again, Oscar's practiced like twice. And we're a different team without him and now we just got to figure it out. And I say all that, and he ends up with 20 points and 15 rebounds. Think about what we just said. He still got 20 points and 15 rebounds.

So I mean, we're a ways away. He took too much time to shoot balls in the first half, so he had two turnovers. There were balls just ripped from him. But, again, we missed, you can't miss every open shot. Missed a layup. I think Oscar may have grabbed that and dunked it. I can't remember.

Most of the time, like I say, guys, I got to watch the tape.

But give Gonzaga credit because when we came back in that environment, it was a great environment by the way, in that environment, we had a chance to win that game. And we let go of the rope and they finished us off. So you got to give them credit.

Q. All those missed shots, did you think your guys were rushing it? Was it shot selection?

JOHN CALIPARI: Just didn't make 'em. They're not machines and robots. But like I said, we had some guys, like miss like almost every shot. Can't be that guy. And we had guys play a lot of minutes and miss almost every shot.

We got the game close and that's why I wasn't subbing. I tried to put Ugonna in and his man dunked one on him. We're learning. I would like to have played Chris more, but what I ended up doing is we needed a bunch of shooters out there to get back in the game. So that's what I did. I put shooters out there.

Q. When you spot them the first 8 points within the

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first 12, how difficult is that having to play from behind against a team with that kind of offense?

JOHN CALIPARI: It's early. Start the game. It's early. Sometimes that's the worst thing that can happen to you. You're up 22 and all of a sudden at halftime you're up six. So, early in the game, I'm not that worried. I was a little worried that they were imposing their will on us instead of us -- we talked about it for two days. We have to impose our will on them or you won't win this game. And we didn't do it. We just didn't.

Q. Does that worry you that you didn't impose will? Like Jacob said, there was no fight from anyone.

JOHN CALIPARI: I'll just play different guys, whoever wants to fight. I'm going to play different guys. We got enough guys. I let those guys get in there and fight and understand, when you're into your own head about how you're playing instead of just play for us, and we're training every day about playing a certain way, play that way.

And we got -- look, I wouldn't trade my team for any team in the country. I wouldn't. I wouldn't. I'm not happy right now. We lost the game that we start awful, can't make a shot, get back in the game, and then when you do all that, you finish those off. It shows we're not ready. It was Michigan State. We had a chance to finish people off and we, you get up five and six and all of a sudden you miss a layup, you miss a free throw, all that stuff is coming back to haunt us.

But it's a long season. Like I said, it's November. They're good. They played great teams. We've had our share of games and now it just keeps going. We still got a bunch of really good teams and our league is real good too.

Q. I know the Oscar effect is a huge deal, but you were talking about we weren't ready. How can that be with so many old --

JOHN CALIPARI: I don't think it was -- no, it wasn't that we weren't ready. They imposed their will on us instead of the other way around. It wasn't that they weren't ready.

The biggest thing happened to us offensively is we couldn't run anything because we had one or two guys, we haven't practiced enough. So we were trying to run stuff, and I'll just be honest with you, the first play of the game, prior to the game, I did it in the huddle, I did it before they walked on the court, the guy went the wrong way. Like what just happened?

So we have to demand the execution of what we're trying to do. But to be honest, dribble drive may be the best way

for us to play. Stand on that baseline, get open, we'll try to throw it to you. Run in transition, we can post it. Short of that, we're going to play this way. And I think we can play that way some, and other games you got to screen, you got to make hard cuts. You got to, you know.

But like I said, I wouldn't trade this team. We're good. I shortened the rotation in the second half because I was trying to win the game. Just I didn't play a whole lot of people. I was like let's get out of here and try to win.

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