

# University of Kentucky Basketball Media Conference

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## John Calipari

### Press Conference



South Carolina - 71, Kentucky - 68

JOHN CALIPARI: Offensively we looked better. But, you know -- and in the end a loose ball we don't get. We do a great job of guarding 'em and a guy runs in and gets a tip. We didn't block him out.

Those are winning plays. Those are the difference between win and losing. And making some free throws. But it's just -- you know, this is a long season. It's a marathon. Am I happy? No, I'm not happy. I hate losing. We were undermanned, but it doesn't matter. You're still playing to win.

The first half I was just like, You know, come on. And look, this team, I got to be a little bit of everything with this team. First of all, I got to build 'em up. But I still got to hold 'em accountable. And you're looking at guys, like going nuts on people right now is not the answer. It's just not the answer.

Now can I be tougher on 'em in practice and all that? Yeah, I can. But, you know, again, there were things today that I look at and I just say, We're better than that.

Now, for me, this is a marathon. I still think this team could be good. Got to have a full roster and then we got to go.

I thought offensively we did some good stuff today. But defensively, you know, again, you have six turnovers in a game and you lose the game. I've not heard that before. But, again, you know, they outrebound us. So questions?

**Q. You say it's a long season, but is there a sense of urgency that there comes a point, Hey, we got to get this thing turned around?**

JOHN CALIPARI: Today. Today was a sense of urgency. So now we got the next one. It's a hard game up at Tennessee. They're really good. All right, let's go. Let's see where we are. You just keep marching.

You got teams that will play us that have nothing to lose and all of a sudden they're making shots and banking and

doing things that they're not normally doing.

But let me give South Carolina credit, they played well. In the first half, their start and the plays they made, some straight-line drives. I mean everybody's going at Oscar so we got to figure out some stuff. We're trying to do it different ways but we're going to have to see what we do to keep people from running downhill. Because that's not, we're going to have to figure it out.

**Q. Four three-point attempts in the first 35 minutes. How did it get to that point? How does that happen?**

JOHN CALIPARI: They didn't trap as much on Oscar where you could get more off. We were running some things to get threes, but they were running us off the three-point line and we were taking twos.

We shot almost 51 percent for the game. We took 10. We only made three. And the guys that were supposed to shoot 'em were shooting 'em.

**Q. Right before the Michigan State game you put out a statement and said that this team's going to take time, that they had some issues that you were seeing. Are you still seeing those same issues this far in the season or is it a new set of things that this team's just kind of evolved into?**

JOHN CALIPARI: I thought that we would be a hell of a defensive team and we've got to shore that up, because that's the basis of what we do.

Again, having the right guys on the court -- because we can play with guards and, again, undermanned without Cason, without Jacob. But now Chris gives you a toughness that we need. So they're going to have to carve up time.

**Q. You talk about some of the fans piling on players and they're piling on you big time. What do you say to the fan base at this point?**

JOHN CALIPARI: Stick with these kids. If you want to get on me, that's fine. I'm the coach. If we weren't ready to play, then I got to look at me and say, Well, what, why,

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where were we mentally.

And I was trying things today to get them in a positive mindset. Because it's hard. It's hard here. I mean, I always say, this isn't for everybody. Including coaches. It's not for everybody.

When things go bad like this, there's, you know. So if you want to be mad, be mad at me. These kids, they're trying. We're still not quite in sync.

Again, talking about three, I thought we passed up some, but we're not in a pick and roll with a point guard that's going to launch threes like some of the teams we're playing. That's not who we are.

But we got to be better. We got to be better than this. And that's on me. Got to be better.

I'm on a mission. I was into the game today. I was being as enthusiastic as I could be watching some of the stuff. Because, you know, just like you're going to get mad, I get mad. These kids need me to keep teaching and keep working with 'em and keep believing in 'em. That's what they need from me.

I don't listen to any of the clutter. None of it has any affect on me coaching these players. And are fans mad? They should be. We lost at home. We don't lose at home. We lost at home. And we were down 10 at half. I expect fans to be mad.

And we have the best fans. And I love our fans. I know they may be mad at me right now, but I've been here a long time teaching and working and having our fans be a big part of this. And all I'm saying is, Just be with these kids. They need you now more than they need you when they're 4-0. They need you.

And like I said, I'm going to keep working, keep fighting. The kids are going to keep fighting. Are we all disappointed? Yeah, you should be in there. We're all disappointed. But this happened in the first half.

And really when we got it close and some things happened in the second half that it went back to, like, What in the world? Miss this, miss -- I mean, there were things that like you want to shake your head. But listen, I'm coaching a team. I just had to keep being positive. We can do this. Let's go.

And we had our chances. It would have been -- I would have liked to have won the game, but we didn't deserve to win it, but let's try to steal one anyway. That's what that would have been.

#### **Q. What is the situation with Cason?**

JOHN CALIPARI: Said he had back spasms. I just, when I saw him in the locker room. What was up? He said, Back spasms.

#### **Q. Had it happened before?**

JOHN CALIPARI: He's had the issue at times.

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