

University of Kentucky Basketball Media Conference

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Coach John Calipari

Press Conference



Kentucky 85, Georgia 71

JOHN CALIPARI: And then drop back. We can't play that way, and the staff just said stop, just go back and play that tight defense, and we did it.

Play of the game, Antonio stealing a pass and the dunk and-one, play of the game. The most impactful player that the coaches just gave out, do you know Jacob had a double-double, but Oscar was playing a video game and had 36 and 24. So he was the most impactful player.

Great thing I'm going to tell you, the whole second half they're looking at me, keep throwing it to him. Run stuff to him. Throw it to him. Again, free throws, we make them -- if the right guys are shooting free throws, you make free throws.

But CJ leads, man, he just leads. He's smart. Antonio scores baskets. Chris is tough as nails. Jacob is playing better and better, being more aggressive and more confident. Think about where he was before we played Missouri. Think about that.

So we've got to continue to see about getting better. We're off tomorrow.

Again, I told Mike prior to the game, I watched the tape, I was scared to death of this game in that they can beat you seven different ways, and he's done a great job with this team, and it was a good win.

A couple questions because it's like midnight.

Q. Coach, at the 12-minute mark you guys were tied with Georgia and you brought in a line that stayed all the way to the four-minute mark.

JOHN CALIPARI: What was that lineup?

Q. CJ, Antonio, Cason, Jacob and Oscar. What did you see during that eight-minute stretch that led you guys to victory?

JOHN CALIPARI: Well, the only thing I worried about was defensively, and that means you're putting a lot of weight on Jacob to rebound. He did it, so you can play with three guards. If he doesn't do it, you've got to have Chris in there rebounding. You have to.

We also need a sub for Jacob. Today it was Lance. We went to the sub with Ugonna, kind of got muscled a little bit. But why do you think I put him in? Because they were driving for lay-ups. I thought maybe he'll go block a shot and change the complexion of the game. But I loved the dunk. Adou did great again. But the game, whether it was he or Sahvir, the game just dictated to me this is how you've got to play this. It's not brain surgery. We were all watching the same thing.

Q. I think it's after the South Carolina game Oscar kind of called out his teammates. He apologized --

JOHN CALIPARI: You guys, let me say this. I've got to stop you. This kid will say stuff and doesn't really know what that means. Now, he's very intelligent. How many languages? Like six. English is probably No. 6. So he will say, or he told me to put in a -- he never did that. What do you think I would say if he said it? Sometimes he'll do stuff like that, and he'll feel bad, well, I didn't know it meant that. Yeah, that's what it means, so you don't do it.

He's the greatest kid. You saw that he's such a good kid that that's what they did.

Now, they wanted him to get 50. They could have cared less. They want to win the game now. We're not playing for ourselves, we're playing for each other now.

I will tell you that everybody was fine with it. You know why? Because they know him, and they know he does that occasionally, like says stuff, like where did that come from.

Q. I was sensing a rededication in him the last two games.

JOHN CALIPARI: What he's done for two weeks, he's been in the gym. Last year he lived in the gym. For a while he was in the gym but not the same. Someone says



you're criticizing him. No, I'm telling you for the last two weeks, he and Adou have lived in the gym. What does it do for your game? That's how you build your confidence, that's how you build your stamina. You told what I told him? Dunk every ball. Quit laying balls in. Jump up. But he had to get in the gym to be that way.

Now you're seeing him be how he was a year ago. Was he that way two weeks ago? No. That's why I said what I said, not to be disrespectful or talk down on Oscar. I love Oscar. He knows I love coaching him.

Q. How does it change the complexion of this team when Jacob is attacking the boards like he has been here recently, and what --

JOHN CALIPARI: It means you can put a bunch of guards out there if he and Oscar, because Oscar is going to get a bunch of them and he cleans up the rest, but the last game Antonio rebounded, Chris rebounded. Let me say this, I'm sorry. The other play of the game was on the free throw miss. Chris got that ball and threw it out and CJ made the three. That may have been the play of the game. But those are effort plays.

Again, playing to win. I thought Cason was good today, made big shots. We're becoming that team. I'm happy for these kids.

I told them prior to the game, did you like the taste in your mouth 10 days ago or the one after Saturday? Well, then let's get that taste back in our mouth. We came in at halftime, I said, we're down four, three buckets. You know why? We can't make a basket. The only guy that can make a basket is Oscar. You're going to be down. So just play. We'll make shots. We're beating them in the -- that's all I was saying to them.

After the game, I said, when are you going to start believing what I'm telling you, because I believe in these guys. I really do.

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