

GEICO Players Era Men's Championship

Tuesday, November 25, 2025

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

MGM Grand Garden Arena

UNLV Rebels

Coach Josh Pastner

Postgame Press Conference

Alabama 115, UNLV 76

JOSH PASTNER: A couple things. First of all, Alabama is really good. As limited as we are and as small as we are right now without our front court guys, it was going to be an uphill battle from the start.

They made some great shots, and of course we struggled to score. We just don't really have an inside presence right now. Tyrin is a freshman playing our 5 spot. He's really a 3/4, and doing that against an SEC team, one of the best teams in the country makes it a little bit tough.

So we've just got to get healthy. That's the bottom line. We've got to put this behind us. We play Rutgers Thursday at 1:30 and hopefully we get some rest and put this behind us and be ready to go against a very good Rutgers team.

Bottom line, credit to Alabama. They're really good. Made some great threes. I just felt like we looked small out there compared to them and compared to an SEC team, and then it kind of avalanched a little bit here and there, and just one of those nights.

Q. Can you recall a time during your entire coaching career where you've had to deal with as many injuries in as short a span as you have with this group?

JOSH PASTNER: Never. Never. This is the first time I've ever had to deal with the amount of injuries that I've had, and then the amount of injuries we've had and to get guys back, like Issac, who he's not in the condition that he needs to be in because he's missed so much time, Ladji, the same thing. It's just guys that we've missed a lot, a lot of time.

Then when you're not having -- I recruited Myles Che to be our starting point guard. It's hard to play without a true



point guard. I recruited Emmanuel Stephen to be a starting center. Those things are hurt. Jacob was playing great. You look at our three bigs, and I think it's so important to have rim protection, post presence, and we just -- with our injuries, it's tough, and then not having a true point guard on the floor at all times makes it really tough, too.

But that's where I keep going back to. The only way we're going to get healthy is through time.

Q. As you discuss with your medical people the situation, what is the realistic timetable that you're sensing that you could get at least the majority of these guys back?

JOSH PASTNER: I think the realistic expectation is I'm hoping for December 20th when we open up league play versus Fresno State. That's less than a month away, and we've kind of targeted that as the particular date, hopefully, that we get -- one, the guys are no longer on restricted minutes, we can do more things, they can practice fully. Even the guys like Ladji, they don't want to practice right now certain days just because of his foot. Issac is just trying to get back, and there's times where he can't practice.

I'm hoping by the time we get to December turns around, we're able to get more in a routine, and then by December 20th we have our full roster set.

I'm hoping Che is right there, either right around that time or sometime after Christmas, in that time period. That's what we're hoping for, as long as the foot heals properly. The guy has a fracture -- this is just our luck. In our first opening game, he's our starting point guard, and we looked really good. And then Sunday night, no contact, steps on it and refractured the same exact spot. God bless how that happened. I don't know.

Q. How much time do you spend reviewing film of a game like this, or can that be counterproductive?

JOSH PASTNER: I mean, I'm going to watch the film. I always watch the film. But Alabama is really good. They just stretch you so much defensively. You've got to have a rim protector. Even our zone -- I just thought we looked small. We were small. We were small compared to them. That's a big-time SEC team, and when you're playing



against a big-time SEC team, you've got to have some size, and I just thought we were small.

They made some tough threes. They're really, really good. They've got multiple NBA guys on their team, and they made NBA type of shots.

Q. Talking about turning the corner with injuries, how do you turn the corner with the fouls?

JOSH PASTNER: No, that's been an issue. We've got to defend without fouling. You know, the game yesterday is the one you're thinking, yeah, you're going to -- we had a lead. And then after you look back at the film, we just had multiple times we should have extended the lead, and we didn't. We were up six and eight multiple times, and we should have got to double digits, and we didn't.

Today had nothing to do with it other than they just made some great shots. We fouled too much, but in the end, they were the better team tonight. There's no doubt. And we were just -- without our full complement, it was just really, really hard just based on our lack of size.

Q. The players that are playing right now, the hustle you're seeing from them, the adversity your team is facing right now, what can you say about the guys playing right now?

JOSH PASTNER: Yeah, our guys are competing and they're giving everything they can, and I think they're worn out a little bit because we're putting a lot on them to do a lot, and to play different positions.

Like, I actually think we have a big team when we're healthy. You could put like a Tyrin Jones at the 3 spot or the 4 spot and Kimani at the 3 and Emmanuel Stephen at the 5, then you're big on the front line, and I think we could have a really good front line.

But we've got to get healthy. I keep saying, we've just got to get to conference play. I really believe this. Our team is going to be good. I really like our team. When we get to Mountain West play and we're healthy, I think we're going to be a good basketball team. And the more minutes Tyrin plays and Issac and all these guys, Dra, they're going to get better, and the more better we get will be the better time we get to -- in conference.

But this one, obviously they punched us. I'm just telling you, Alabama is really good, and they made a -- they can really shoot it. They've got some really, really good perimeter players. Really good perimeter players. But there's a reason, whether it's through the portal or through the high school rankings, as they were ranked as the best

of the best, and they proved it tonight.

Q. Your pace in the first half, did you feel like you were playing your game or kind of keeping up with them?

JOSH PASTNER: No, I thought we had good pace, we just couldn't make as many threes as they were. They made some great shots and tough shots. They do a great job of moving the ball.

Look, it's the players' game. They've got really good players, and we have good players, too, we're just small right now. We need to get healthy. That's the biggest thing.

We'll fight and scrap, but there comes a time where the size and not having -- and you get spread out and they're making the threes. We took a couple threes, I felt, early in the clock, and they kind of bait you into that, and then they come down full speed and knock a couple threes down.

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