

GEICO Players Era Men's Championship

Tuesday, November 25, 2025

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

MGM Grand Garden Arena

Alabama Crimson Tide Coach Nate Oats

Postgame Press Conference

Alabama 115, UNLV 76

NATE OATS: Obviously played a lot better. I was really impressed with our effort on the glass. UNLV is going to be a lot better, Josh, when they get the culture right. He's got some athletes. When they get healthy, they'll be a lot better.

We typically play pretty well after a loss around here. I thought guys answered the bell pretty well. I thought Labaron and Holloway both came out moving the ball like we want them to do, got us a bunch of open shots.

We didn't hit them early. Houston started 0-4 and four great looks. But he's a guy with a lot of confidence, he's just going to keep taking open looks. He came out, the ball feels great, coming off they're going to start dropping, and then after he started 0 for 4, he went 4 for 8. Holloway took the right shots. Wish he would have taken a few more. I thought he passed up some. He ended up going 5 of 6.

But I think it's a career high, season high for Biz with 26, and a career season high with him with 26.

But the rebounding I was most happy with. We were plus 20 on the glass, plus 4 on the offensive boards. Aiden Sherrell had four O-boards, Aiden led us in rebounding with eight in just under 13 minutes. Taylor Bol Bowen got 7. Williamson got 6. Our front court was significantly better than what it had been.

And then our backcourt, I've been challenging our backcourt, they've got to help with rebounds. Baron and Biz both had three defensive rebounds each. They had four rebounds total. Amari Allen got five rebounds. We need those guys to help rebound.

I thought it was a good game to get some of our freshmen



some significant minutes. London and Davion Hannah were both 24, 25 minutes, and I thought got some really good action. Would have been nice to get Davion some shots, but I thought his defense, his effort, we've got to get him in the flow, I think he can be an elite defender.

London has been shooting the ball well out here in Vegas, which will hopefully give him some confidence, because he's got some size, can help with the rebounding if he continues to shoot it that well. I think he can really help us.

Good win against a team that I think, when they get healthy, is going to be good. So I think this will be a pretty good win come March for our resume. Happy. We've got to get the guys off their feet and rested because we've got a tough one against Maryland. Maryland is going to play hard, they're going to be physical, and fortunately for us we were able to rest some of our front court guys tonight a little bit.

Q. Have you seen this production from London in practices the last couple weeks?

NATE OATS: Yeah, I mean, London has been great. Once he kind of figured out how we want him to play in the system, his effort and his attitude have always been good. Not sure I would have predicted 18 points, but I'm also not shocked, either, just because he can shoot it, he can finish at the rim.

Shoot, he missed one of them at the rim. He should have had 20 tonight, and he's probably a little disappointed with himself. I thought he could have lunged the one lay-up he missed. But he's been good. Went to the free-throw line, knocked down free throws. He's been good.

Q. Your team had a good three-point and free-throw percentage through the game. How does that give you guys confidence, and how does that make you feel as a coach?

NATE OATS: Well, on the threes, I think when you move the ball, create good threes, we've got a really good shooting team. I think you saw it tonight. We've got to do a better job consistently moving it like we did tonight.

On the free-throw line, I'd just tell our guys, man, you've got to put the reps in to earn the right to make free throws,



and then you've got to be locked in. When you're locked in, you're locked in. When you're locked in on defense, you earn the right, you go to the line. As long as you put the reps in outside of practice, you're locked in. You're locked into making winning plays, going to the free-throw line. Making free throws is part of being a winning basketball player.

Everybody -- I'm looking at the stat sheet right here. Everybody on the team, minus two guys, was 75 percent or better. Multiple guys at 100 percent. Taylor at 100, and he was locked into playing the right way. Houston is always locked into playing the right way 100 percent. London really locked in tonight, 6 of 7, great. Noah Williamson, season high at rebounding, 2 for 2 from the line.

Go down the list. The guys that are locked into playing the right way typically go to the line and convert at the line as long as they put the reps in outside of practice.

Q. You've had four straight games against ranked teams. Did you feel you'd be able to overwhelm them a little bit, wear them down?

NATE OATS: I hoped we could do something like we did. We didn't know who was going to play, who was out. You never want to overlook a team, so we certainly tried to show our guys what they're capable of because I think, when they're at full strength, they're capable of being a really good team.

Once we got to the game, we realized who was in, who was out, we could focus in on a few of their better scorers. Lawhorn still ends up with 25, and Williamson still ends up with 18. So I didn't think we did a great job on those two, but our guards got to be better defensively.

I thought our depth -- we played 10 guys double digits. Shoot, we played 10 guys, all of them over 17 minutes except for Aiden Sherrell only played 13 minutes but everybody else -- Keitenn Bristow with 12 minutes, so everybody else was over 17 but nobody was over 25, so it was great we got to play a good number of guys. Pretty even minutes.

We don't play until 9:00 tomorrow, so when we played the four straight ranked teams, case in hand why you play good teams. You're testing yourself against the best, and then you get a game like this, I think you're used to playing top-25 teams.

I've got a lot of respect for Coach Pastner. He's in year one here. He's always got great culture around his programs. He's always able to recruit. He's going to get good players. When they get healthy, they'll be

significantly better, but they weren't healthy. He's in his first year.

We were significantly better. If we played the right way, I knew we'd be able to open a lead up. We did. Outside of the start of the second half I thought we had the right mindset. A little disappointed in our first five minutes of the second half. After we got them focused back in on D, we were much better.

Q. What does it say about your team when they play well in tournaments like this?

NATE OATS: Yeah, we're deep. I think we wear people out. We've been locked into playing good teams. A little disappointed with the Gonzaga game, but for a good stretch we were pretty good against them. Just when we had a chance to separate in the first half up six, we didn't do it. Our offense, we weren't moving the ball like we were tonight, so it's good they learned from it.

We got killed on the glass. We did better tonight. Some of the stuff that Gonzaga exposed, we improved it tonight. Now, can we do it against a much more physical, bigger team like Maryland? I hope so because that will be kind of the barometer of have we really learned or are we just fortunate that we -- but I think we play pretty well in these tournaments, at least since we've got this thing going here these last five, six years.

We played well here last year. Charlie went down in that Oregon game or -- shoot, we were still in the game. Oregon was a good team last year. We were able to beat Houston that was a good program.

This event has great teams. We get to play great teams, and we've been fortunate enough to get some pretty good wins here.

Q. What have you learned about playing against a Buzz Williams team?

NATE OATS: Tough, physical, try to kill you on the offensive boards. His players play with a lot of confidence. They play hard. They're going to junk it up on defense a little bit, try to turn you over, try to score off the turnovers.

I have not seen his personnel much. Now, I know they've got some guys that came with him, and those guys have caused us problems in the past. But I've got to get a better read on them. I'll be up pretty late tonight trying to get a really good feel on them so we can be ready to give the scouting report to the players in the morning.

But they always play hard. They're always physical.

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

They're always one of the best offensive rebounding teams in the country. They've got a really good culture over there.

We're going to have to play better than what we did last night for sure to win that game.

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