

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - Alabama State vs Auburn

Wednesday, March 19, 2025

Lexington, Kentucky, USA

Rupp Arena

Alabama State Hornets

Amarr Knox

CJ Hines

Media Conference



Q. CJ, you guys played Auburn last season. What do y'all remember about that game?

CJ HINES: Yeah, that game was a good game last year. We played right before Christmas. And we didn't get the outcome that we wanted. I remember us losing. But I'm just excited for the opportunity that we have to play them again.

Q. Both of you, last night was first NCAA Tournament win in the program's history, and I think it notched the first 20-win seasons since -- I want to say it's 2009, if I'm right. What does it mean to be part of such a historic season for this program?

CJ HINES: Yeah, it means a lot to me, coming from NAIA to a D-I, I dreamed of being in this moment, playing in March Madness. Making history for Alabama State, 20-win season, winning the SWAC, it's a blessing to be here right now, and I'm just thankful.

AMARR KNOX: We gotta thank God, for without him we wouldn't be able to achieve this goal that we have been able to achieve. It's just a great group of guys that came together and had one goal, and that's to win. So far that's what we've been doing, and I'm proud of all of 'em.

Q. I know neither of y'all are from the state but is there anything special or kinda cool about playing an in-state opponent, a school that's 45 minutes away from campus?

CJ HINES: I would say it feels like an in-state rival, just because it's so close, two Alabama teams facing off, so it means a lot to us just because it's two teams from the state of Alabama.

AMARR KNOX: Yeah, what he said. Both teams are from Alabama, and for us to be going against the number 1 seed, this will be an incredible opportunity to play against them.

Q. CJ, you have such a short turnaround. You have to face the number 1 seed. What's the prep like knowing the task at hand, and how do you all go about trying to prep for such a big opponent coming off the First Four game?

THE MODERATOR: We are joined now by Alabama State student-athletes Amarr Knox and CJ Hines. Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Amarr, have you all gotten any sleep at all? How tough is it to come down from a moment like that and flip the switch, knowing what's waiting?

AMARR KNOX: Yeah, we got to the hotel a little late. It was about 1:15 when we got there. But our coaches let us get a proper rest. We woke up. I got, like, energy right now. I'm really excited. So I got enough sleep.

Q. Amarr, if you could walk me through that last play of that last game last night. What's going through your head in that moment?

AMARR KNOX: In that moment I knew we had to get the ball down to our most athletic player on the team to get us a three. But I've been in that situation plenty of times where I knew that everybody's hands was going to get on the ball and somebody has to find the basketball and score. Fortunately the ball was in my hand, and I made the layup.

Q. Amarr, another question. What's the reaction been like after that happened last night in terms of messages? Social media? Can you put into perspective what the last 12, 16 hours have been like for you?

AMARR KNOX: It's been incredible. I've had so many people's support, telling me they proud of me and everything, and it just feels amazing. I want to have more games like that. It was an incredible moment.



CJ HINES: The prep doesn't change. We stick to what we do, film, practice, treatment, whatever we do. Just because we're playing the number 1 seed, we're not going to change anything. We're just going to go out there and compete, fight, and give it our all.

Q. How much does Coach Madlock set that tone that it doesn't matter you guys are an S WAC program, this is the SEC seed team, that fight, that competitiveness, that mentality, how much does he infuse in you that provides confidence when you are going against a number one overall seed?

CJ HINES: Coach Madlock, he does a great job encouraging us, just pushing us to be great, be dogs, just be fearless on the court. And that helped us, helped the team. We fed off that, and we was just able to win and be hungry.

AMARR KNOX: Coach Madlock, he definitely installed that into us -- even when he was playing, he was a dog on the court as well, and it's kinda just rubbed off on us, and we come to fight every single day, no matter who we playin', try to do whatever it takes to win the game.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, gentlemen.

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