

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

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Lexington, Kentucky, USA

Rupp Arena

Alabama State Hornets Coach Tony Madlock

Media Conference



expect to get any sleep because of the early game tomorrow. But we are excited about this opportunity and, again, for what it means for Alabama State University.

Q. Tony, does it help the fact that some of the teams you've scheduled, you've played SEC programs, you played Auburn last year, those kind of things, does that help as you try to deal with the win last night, getting this turnaround quickly and refocusing on the task at hand?

TONY MADLOCK: Yeah, I think it does. Because we have to play those money games early in the year, all HBCUs have to do 'em, we're used to playing high major teams. We've done it. Again, we played Auburn last year at their place.

But it's a totally different year, and it's a different environment. Anytime -- because last night, it seemed like the lights were a lot brighter in Dayton Arena. We played all over the country this year. We played at high major programs. And last night it seemed like the lights were brighter in the NCAA Tournament.

But our guys, again, we're just going to have fun with this. We get to the dance, haven't been to the dance at Alabama State since 2011, and we win a game first time in school history. We're just going to enjoy this moment. Nothing is going to damper this moment for us. We're going to have fun, enjoy it, and fly around and have fun.

Q. You mentioned playing at Auburn last season. A lot of the same players from that team are on this team. What do you remember about that game and how Auburn played?

TONY MADLOCK: Really good game. I actually watched that game this morning early. So I got a chance to relive some of that. They're a really good team, again. I think they're better this year than they were last year.

But it's going to be a tough-fought game. These guys are one of the best teams in the country. They play in the best basketball conference in the country. So we understand the task at hand. But, again, like I said a million times, I'm going to continue to say it, we're excited about this opportunity.

THE MODERATOR: At this time we welcome Alabama State Head Coach Tony Madlock. Coach?

TONY MADLOCK: Thank you guys for having me. First of all, just want to thank everybody, and it was a great night last night. It's March Madness. It's March Madness. So we're excited to be here. We know we're playing a great team in Auburn and excited about the opportunity.

Q. Tony, could you talk about your experience coaching at Auburn, and does that add extra to this game?

TONY MADLOCK: No, it doesn't add any extra, but it's going to be a lot of fun. I had four great years at Auburn. Great university, great city. My son basically started his basketball there with the Auburn Raptors basketball program, the AAU program there. So we have a lot of friends still live in Auburn. I'm only forty minutes down the road now in Montgomery.

So it's going to be a lot of fun. Auburn is always going to be a special place for me.

Q. Tony, I know you talked about this last night and on the postgame interview, but to help notch Alabama State's first-ever NCAA Tournament win, and to do it with such a dramatic final play, has that sunk in yet? And what's the last 16 or so hours been in terms of people reaching out to you and just the general fanfare and excitement that comes with something like that?

TONY MADLOCK: It's so exciting. Everything that it's done for the city of Montgomery, for Alabama State University, for HBCUs around the country, it's just everything that you want and even more.

It's been a whirlwind. Haven't had much sleep. We don't



Q. Tony, I know you've mentioned how good of a team Auburn is. They're the top overall seed for a reason. How did you approach scouting this game? You knew if you beat Saint Francis, this would be the game you're put in. How did that work from a planning standpoint and things that jump off the page?

TONY MADLOCK: Yeah, everything jumps off the page. Again, I'm one of those coaches, I never look ahead. Now I have assistant coaches who had started working on Auburn, but I don't look ahead until the game is finished that we played. So last night we watched a little bit late, then me and my staff watched some this morning, so we had film with my guys this morning already. We will do this shootaround here. We got another walk-through practice off site and we will be ready for tomorrow.

Q. Having an in-state match-up where you mentioned only two schools 45 minutes away from each other, what does that mean for basketball in the state especially with four teams from the state in the tournament this year?

TONY MADLOCK: It means a lot. It means a lot for the state of Alabama. Again, that you're represented in the NCAA Tournament, with some really good schools. Again, a lot of things that people don't know, they're going to hear about HBCU. That normally they would not know about Alabama State University. It's been all over the media, so that is the type of thing that we like to be heard about our university, all positive things, so we're really excited about that.

Q. Tony was that pass set up for several people to touch it, before it went right to your guy?

TONY MADLOCK: No, but, again, we do a lot of situational basketball, and I've talked about this with the media. Every game day we spend 12 to 15 minutes on situational stuff. Nine seconds to go in the game, one second, three seconds, and what's crazy is when they put that additional -- I think it was 3.4 or whatever it was, originally it was two-something. And when it got to three seconds, I said to our guys, this is perfect, because this is the exact time we do this action every game day. It ended well, because of course the shot went in, but the thing that really worked on that, the pass was perfect. The pass was perfect so, you know, so it's something that we work on all the time.

Q. Tony, there has been conversation about whether conference winners should have to play in a First Four game, if that shouldn't be reserved for a team that gets an at-large bid. What are your thoughts? I know

expansion might occur, but as the current system stands, about a conference winner having to play in a First Four game and then turning around and play in a round of 64 game?

TONY MADLOCK: No, I'm perfect with how it worked out. So, yeah, anytime that you can continue to play and win a basketball game, in this stage, I'm all for it. I'm all for it. Because, again, what it did for Alabama State University last night. You can't -- we were the first game. All eyes were on us. We were excited to be there. So it fell in line. So, no, I love it like it is, but, again, I'm going to be biased.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, we appreciate your time.

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