

# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - Utah State vs UCLA

Wednesday, March 19, 2025

Lexington, Kentucky, USA

Rupp Arena

## UCLA Bruins

## Sky Clark

## Eric Dailey Jr.

## Kobe Johnson

### Media Conference

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by UCLA student-athletes Sky Clark, Eric Dailey Jr., and Kobe Johnson.

**Q. Previewing the challenge ahead, Utah State, what stands out?**

KOBE JOHNSON: They're definitely a good team, a physical team. They like to get around on defense, try to force teams into turnovers. But going into the game, treat them like any other team. It's a new season, basically. So they're going to come with their best game, and we're going to come with our best game, and we're just going to stick to the game plan.

ERIC DAILEY JR.: Yeah, piggybacking off what Kobe said, they're an aggressive defensive team, they get a lot of steals and fly around a lot. They're a very fast-paced team.

We got to stick to our game plan. We play good defense, aggressive as well. And we play a great system of basketball. So as long as we keep playing our best brand and they're going to play their best brand, may the best man win.

SKYY CLARK: To piggyback off both, I think the toughest team is going to come out on top. Going in, being the toughest team, paying attention to the little details, like boxing out and getting offensive rebounds will be the deciding factor.

**Q. Eric, going to a new school, Oklahoma State to UCLA, how did that progress go for you, and how do**



**you feel like you have settled in over the course of the season?**

ERIC DAILEY JR.: I think the adjustment just having -- we had a whole new team come into UCLA this year. So we all grew as one. Just my adjustment was just come in, play hard, give the team energy, as much as I can. And as we got on towards the year, getting more comfortable in the system.

As a team we've grown together, and I feel like we're one right now. You can't be stopped when everybody is on the same page. So I feel like everybody is on the same page and clicking. So we're good.

**Q. I know Kentucky is not here, but Brandon Garrison, one of your former teammates from last year, he plays here now. He's had a pretty good season, like yourself. I'm just curious if you keep up, in contact, and what the relationship is like. If you could describe his playing style and personality, things like that.**

ERIC DAILEY JR.: Yeah, Brandon Garrison is my guy. We won the gold medal together at USA Basketball before going to Oklahoma State. I talked to him last night. We called each other. I was like, I'm in your hometown. And he was telling me good luck and stuff in the tournament.

Yeah, we got that connection. We came in as freshmen together, and I'm glad to see how he's doing in his season as well.

**Q. Talk about the excitement level of making the NCAA Tournament?**

SKYY CLARK: This is something I dreamed about as a kid, playing at this level, and the fact that I'm here is a super surreal moment, and I know everybody on the team is just super excited for tomorrow.

ERIC DAILEY JR.: Yeah, I'm super excited to be here. This is definitely a dream come true, and making a deep run, that's what everybody wants. I remember as a kid growing up making the different shot clock situations as a kid and being in the tournament and national championship game, and now it's actually here. It could be a possibility for us now. I just thank God for the opportunity to be here.



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KOBE JOHNSON: Yeah, you know, this is what we worked so hard all season for. It's what we gone through practices for so we work for, and it's what we lost for and won for. And everybody wants to play in this tournament, so we just gotta come out, play our way of basketball, and do all the little things. Like I said, there's not going to be any easy games in this tournament, so we got to be ready to play every single game.

**Q. What has been keeping y'all going from this point to continue on throughout the rest of the tournament?**

SKYY CLARK: I say for everybody on the team, that trophy at the end of this tournament. It looks very nice, it's a very beautiful trophy, and I know everybody on the team would like to put their hands on it. I think that's what's kept us going for sure.

ERIC DAILEY JR.: I think coming to a school like this, the goal is to get the trophy. I think that's the motivating factor for us. Making the tournament is the first step to that, and we was all excited for that, but we know there is real work to be done, and we will be getting in it.

KOBE JOHNSON: We play for the name across our chest, and this program holds a lot of weight in college basketball history, so coming into this tournament we gotta be able to uphold that standard, and we gotta show people why we are meant to be here. We've gotta go out here and prove a lot of people wrong. I know a lot of people are down on us right now, and we gotta go out there and handle business.

**Q. Skyy, obviously a long way for you to try to get back to playing at Rupp Arena, given your Kentucky commit. Can you reflect on your personal journey and how you've gotten to this point in your career?**

SKYY CLARK: It's been a lot of hard work, definitely confusing at times, definitely hard at times, there was a lot of low moments, a lot of high moments, but I think this season has been a testament to everything that's happened, and I'm with the -- I love this team to death. I love the coaching staff, I love the players. I love everyone involved, and I've just been super happy here, playing freely. I think this thing has been a whole testament to my journey.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks so much.

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