

# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: Second Round - UCLA vs Tennessee

Friday, March 21, 2025

Lexington, Kentucky, USA

Rupp Arena

## UCLA Bruins

## Lazar Stefanovic

## Tyler Bilodeau

## Dylan Andrews

### Media Conference



THE MODERATOR: We are joined by UCLA student-athletes Lazar Stefanovic, Tyler Bilodeau, and Dylan Andrews. Questions for our athletes?

**Q. Dylan, then Tyler, then Lazar, when you look at Tennessee on tape -- it's a quick turnaround, there may not be a ton of familiarity there -- but what has stood out?**

DYLAN ANDREWS: With Tennessee, they're a great team, we're a great team. It's going to be a dog fight tomorrow.

TYLER BILODEAU: I think Dylan said it perfectly. They're a tough team, it's going to come down to 50/50 balls, a lot of rebounding, whoever outscrapes who.

LAZAR STEFANOVIC: They're a very physical team. We are as well. So they both said it perfectly. It's going to be a dog fight. They have a some good players, some shooters, so we gotta know our personnel really well and execute.

**Q. Dylan, they've got two players among the Naismith Defensive Player of the Year announced today, Zakai Zeigler and Jahmai Mashack. With what little bit you've looked at them, what stand out when you see them defensively on the court and what challenges do they present?**

DYLAN ANDREWS: We know for a fact coming into this game, we can't play with the ball too much. We got to be in control almost the whole entire time, can't get sped up. So that's what we're pretty much working on.

**Q. You guys put the game away last night, and when you did, what was going right and how can you capitalize on that tomorrow?**

DYLAN ANDREWS: Last night we knew for a fact the were scoring a lot of their off second-chance baskets, so we took our mind to the defensive aspect and knowing that if we could stop them from getting the offensive rebound, we could get a good win.

TYLER BILODEAU: I think everything starts with defense for us. That's the most important part of our game. So we stepped up there, shut 'em down, and got the win.

LAZAR STEFANOVIC: Yeah, we knew they were a great execution team. They run a lot of sets, a lot of screens. We were on top of that, our coaching staff was on top of that, so we knew what was coming. And we played really physical, got 'em out of most of their stuff, and it was hard for them to play. And then offensively, our passing was incredible and that's what separated us yesterday.

**Q. Dylan, a lot of teams -- basketball is a tough game, sometimes streaks happen good or bad. And y'all lost five of six at one point right there around Christmas. Some teams may not have bounced back the way y'all were able to do. What was going wrong and what started going better?**

DYLAN ANDREWS: You know, we have a new UCLA team here, a lot of transfers, a lot of new guys, so it took a little while for us to click. I would say we're clicking at the right moment, right time. So it's survive and advance now, it's win or go home, so we're giving it our all.

**Q. Tyler, I know much was made about how much y'all would kinda have to travel this season being in the Big Ten and there has been a lot of discussion about that. Because of that, I imagine y'all are used to playing in some road games where you don't see a lot of your own people there and that's probably what it would be tomorrow, too. As a team how do you deal with that? Is it something you have learned to deal with? Can you shut that stuff off?**

TYLER BILODEAU: Yeah, it's a lot different from the



Pac-12, our travel schedule this year. But I think it's been good for us, we're used to it. So I think coming into tomorrow, you know, we're used to being on the Eastern Time zone and all that, not as many fans there, being far from LA. So, yeah, we're definitely used to it, ready to go.

**Q. Guys, Tennessee has a great defense, you guys have a great defense. Talk about the pride that you take in your defense, Dylan.**

DYLAN ANDREWS: I mean, defense wins games, most definitely. Especially from playing under Coach Cronin, we preach defense every day in practice, every time we're around him. Like I said in the beginning, defense wins games.

**Q. Question for Lazar, a lot of times when kids are growing up playing this game in the backyard -- like I don't know if anybody practices defense, usually you're out there by yourself shooting the ball. Before you came to UCLA and started playing for Mick Cronin, how much did you enjoy playing defense or think you could play defense?**

LAZAR STEFANOVIC: There is one Serbian coach that says this all the time. He won a lot of titles, and he says I've yet to walk in the gym and go in stance and start playing defense. Everybody grabs the ball and starts shooting. That's how it is, that's what the game is, you try to score.

But, yeah, we talked about it before, Dylan mentioned it. You can't win without defense. You've got to stop the other team's best player. That's what we did the other night, Ian Martinez was their best scorer and we got him really, really well, and that's why they struggled to score.

You realize that great players know that to win, you gotta play defense, and they learn how to do that because you're going to do whatever it takes to win and that's what matters the most. And you learn to -- might not enjoy it, but you take pride in it, and you do whatever you can to help your team win.

THE MODERATOR: Guys, we appreciate your time. Good luck tomorrow.

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