

# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - Arkansas vs Kansas

Wednesday, March 19, 2025

Providence, Rhode Island, USA

Amica Mutual Pavilion

## Arkansas Razorbacks

## Jonas Aidoo

## D.J. Wagner

Media Conference



THE MODERATOR: We can open up the floor to questions for student-athletes here.

**Q. DJ, Boogie coming back into things, how has he looked in practice and how are you divvying up the ball handling?**

D.J. WAGNER: He's looking good. We're just happy to have him by our side again, just being on the court with us again. He's been looking good and he's going to help us a lot.

**Q. Last season, you were in the NCAA Tournament with Kentucky and that didn't go the way you wanted. How much of a motivating factor is it to be back in the tournament and what do you feel like you learned from last year's result?**

D.J. WAGNER: It's very motivating, but this is something you dream of, just being able to play in March Madness. It's a blessing, but I learned not to take any game lightly. Any game is going to be hard and it's not going to be easy, so just to prepare for every game like it's your last.

**Q. D.J., how you doing, man? Last year, what was Cal's message to you when you transferred about how to get better and become a better player at Arkansas and how seriously did you consider maybe trying to go to the NBA after last year?**

D.J. WAGNER: Really just learning, learning from experience, just listening to him, trusting and stuff like that, really improving everything. Nothing specifically, just improving as a teammate, as a player and everything. When it comes to the NBA, I didn't put too much consideration into it.

**Q. Just to follow up on that question before, how painful and difficult was that loss last year losing in the first round, and how happy are you to have another chance at that?**

D.J. WAGNER: It's very painful. For me personally, it was very painful. That wasn't the plan to lose. That's never the plan, though, to lose, especially in the first round and stuff like that. I'm just happy to be back, happy to have another opportunity and another go at it, and now I know you can't take anything lightly or take anything for granted. None of the games are going to be easy. Every team is good. I feel like it was a good learning experience.

**Q. When you came out of high school, there was a lot of hype and expectation with your ranking. Everyone thought you were going to be one and done. Do you feel now like your timetable to get to the NBA is what it will be?**

D.J. WAGNER: I ain't even thinking about that right now. I'm just thinking about March Madness, winning with my team. I'm in college. That's the only thing that matters to me and my teammates, just trying to win.

**Q. Jonas, you went to the Elite Eight last year with Tennessee. Johnell had been to the Final Four in the past. How much is the team leaning on you guys and that experience so far since you have been working on the tournament stuff and how much have you embraced a leadership role in that regard?**

JONAS AIDOO: They definitely depend on us a lot, especially me and Nelly, we've been to the future rounds, Elite Eight and Final Four, but we need every individual on this team, including the coaching staff falling back on our work, going in, scouting each team carefully. We don't want to lose these games. We want to go all the way. We're trying to get Arkansas their second, so we're trying to go all the way for sure.

**Q. What are some of the things that stand out about Kansas to you guys?**

JONAS AIDOO: Really good team, well-coached team. A lot of history between the two. We -- they played them in



exhibition earlier. They had some players I have played. We played them in October so just exciting to see.

D.J. WAGNER: Yeah, like Jonas said, they're a very well-coached team, very talented, very experienced, as well, especially when it comes to the tournament and stuff like that, very experienced.

A lot of our players have been here before. We're excited. We're just excited to be able to go up against them and compete against them, just knowing how good a team they are. We prepared as much as we can and we're preparing as much as possible because we know it's not going to be easy.

**Q. D.J., for you specifically looking at the game you played in October versus now, what is the biggest difference you see in Kansas?**

D.J. WAGNER: Of course they had a couple players out, so players can make them a totally different team and the guys we did play were good, as well. Just learning from that. That was an exhibition, so it's been a long time since then they have had a lot more games. I feel like we'll be seeing a totally different team.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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