

# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - Oklahoma vs UConn

Friday, March 21, 2025

Raleigh, North Carolina, USA

Lenovo Center

## Oklahoma Sooners

## Porter Moser

## Jalon Moore

## Jeremiah Fears

### Media Conference

UConn - 67, Oklahoma - 59

THE MODERATOR: We are now ready to begin the Oklahoma press conference.

Coach can we please start with an opening statement.

PORTER MOSER: I couldn't have asked for any better effort from our guys, especially defensively. The effort they gave for 40 minutes, I couldn't as a coach ask for anything more from these guys.

We didn't get some shots to fall. They made two big ones in a row, Karaban made two big ones in a row. The one thing I told them, they can't have any regrets. They left everything they had on the floor guarding a lot of movement, and I thought defensively their effort was outstanding.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach. At this time, we'll open the floor for questions for the student-athletes.

**Q. I would like to ask each of you, the way you guys rallied, falling behind early like that, 11-2, maybe a little nerves being back in the tournament, but falling behind and being able to rally and finally get the lead in the second half, does that kind of encapsulate the way this team has played the back half of the season?**

JALON MOORE: I think this team has shown each game that when we get punched in the mouth, that we're a resilient. We're a resilient team and we're a connected team. The most connected team is always the team that rallies and comes back and comes together.



I think that was just kind of the character of this team, and I appreciate these guys, man, because they put their body on the line each and every game. For us to come out here and be connected the way we did, man, it is special.

JEREMIAH FEARS: Just to piggy-back off that, like he said, just being able to fight back through tough times. It was ups and downs throughout the game, and we just did a great job competing till the buzzer said, 0-0.

**Q. Jalon, only two points in the first half. What did you say to yourself at halftime to settle down and get yourself going?**

JALON MOORE: Coach Brock used this phrase, forget about me, I love you. I think my teammates did a great job of continuing to pick me up. It was all about the team coming into this. We wanted to win this game, and that's all that matters.

I was trying to do whatever to help this team win.

**Q. You guys have obviously been shorthanded without Sam, but what did you think of Mo's effort tonight?**

JEREMIAH FEARS: Mo did a great job. Obviously he's fasting right now, as people know, but overall he just did a great job and just continued to play hard. He gave us a lot on the offensive and defensive end. We couldn't be more thankful for him.

**Q. Jeremiah, I saw on your Instagram, you called it a heck of a run here. Obviously future decisions for you. Is this your last game at Oklahoma? Has that sunk in that this might be the last time you played with these guys?**

JEREMIAH FEARS: No, I haven't talked about anything yet. I'll speak further after this with the coaches and eventually my parents and just see what the next step is after this.

**Q. Jalon, I know it's hard right after the game, but can you try to put into words what these two years in Norman being with the sooners has meant to you.**



JALON MOORE: First of all, I want to thank God for giving me the opportunity to play the game I love. I want to thank Coach Moser for taking a chance on a kid from Birmingham and developing my game and believing in me. I want to thank my teammates because they became my brothers. They had my back every step of the way.

These two years in Norman, man, were special. I've grown as a person and as a player, and I think I'm going to leave here a better man. I just want to thank Sooner Nation.

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, you're excused. Thank you very much.

**Q. The last three minutes of the first half, last three or so minutes of the second half, no field goals went down. Shot selection? Movement without the ball? How did you feel about those two periods of the game?**

PORTER MOSER: It was 54-54, and we had two -- we got to the paint, and we took two shots with some of our guards in the trees. Those are two possessions that they went, and Karaban hit a 3. It went from one to four. We did the same thing, we got down in the paint, we had one of our guards again take a shot in the trees. We knew we were kicking out.

Then they had a tip-in, and it went from one to six on two straight possessions where we tried to take on the trees, and we shouldn't. We were spacing it.

I thought we did some things in not having a lot of layups fall early. It was one of our poorest 3-point shooting nights. We've been uber efficient offensively. I think we were 23 or 24 in offensive efficiency coming into the game.

But, yeah, those last -- those two possessions, and then we took a 3, air balled a 3 from the corner on an out of bounds play.

The two ones that stick out are the back-to-back driving in and one of our guards trying to take on when we could kick and play close-out basketball. And they capitalized on it. Karaban, now he's won 13 games, I think, in a row, and he showed why. That 3 and that midrange shot that he hit were two big shots for them.

**Q. Porter, you started off talking about the defensive effort from your group, and you just mentioned how efficient you guys have been offensively of late. Coming into this game, did you know that you guys were kind of going to be in this defensively, or what did you like specifically there?**

PORTER MOSER: We knew our defense with the movement -- you saw it firsthand, UConn's movement is never ending. We got them to the end of the shot clock a bunch. I think they had 64 a possession, they got 67 points. I think they've been only under one point per possession one time all year.

I think Mo gave -- obviously we were shorthanded inside when Mo was out. I thought Reed was able to capitalize on that. I can't tell you how much Mo, with the effort he gave defensively and our guards guarding all that movement, we just 3 for 17, we didn't capitalize on a bunch of layups I thought.

But they gave the defensive effort against that offense that we were asking for, with the exception of some rebounds. They got some. But that depth inside when Mo was out, I think they capitalized on that as well.

**Q. Porter, just how tough was it, or was it tough at all, to keep those guys locked in, engaged? You love to say don't let your offense dictate your defense, but when you're shooting that rough of a night, how tough was it?**

PORTER MOSER: It was obviously tough, but I didn't think they let it bother them. I thought our effort after possession after possession was outstanding. That's not easy to guard as much movement as they have. I thought we guarded it very well.

We just had some tough possessions down the stretch, back-to-back trying to take on their big men in there.

I didn't think they let their offense dictate their defense at all. I thought we played hard possession by possession even when we were missing shots.

I thought we got -- I thought at the beginning you referenced the 11-2 start. I thought our guys were ready. I thought we got some good looks. I'll look back at the tape, but we had some good looks. Brycen had one. We missed a couple layups, but we didn't let it bother them. We stayed defending, stayed defending, and clawed back into it.

**Q. Porter, I know yesterday you referred to Jalon as the heart and soul of this team, but for him to have the struggles in the first half that he had and then be able to kind of battle back and kind of will you guys back into the game there early in the second half, just what does that say about him and just reflect on his two years at Oklahoma.**

PORTER MOSER: I'll start with that, I thought that was

Jalon's best defensive effort of the year. I thought the way he was guarding and denying and playing hard, he didn't take breaks. I mean, his defensive effort was phenomenal.

In this world of the transfer portal and the NIL, being able to have retention on some guys, it's tough. It's tough to retain guys, and we didn't retain a couple guys. I remember sitting with Jalon at a luncheon in Miami and talking to him about staying and coming back. From his first year coming from Georgia Tech and buying into the skill development, you look at how much he got better from year one to two, and then his jump again.

To us, the thing I'll remember about Jalon is he takes every loss so hard, and every day we would come back, we say fall seven, rise eight. Keep coming back up. He was the one that would just look you in the eye and believe, and every time I was just like there's a path, there's a path.

I told each one of them, someday you're going to tell your own kid about this team, about the resilience you had when the paths just kept on closing, but you kept on finding a path no matter what someone else believed. We believed, and Jalon was the leader of that believing.

On one hand, I'm happy that we got to this, but on the other hand, I know him, I know myself, I know the teammates. We didn't come in here just to be happy we're here. I don't think our efforts showed that. We just simply had not a great efficient night on offense.

I love Jalon so much, and I'll have a lifelong relationship with him. I can't wait to see his next step, but I'll be forever grateful that he believed and he just kept on getting better. Then he was the resilient through this crazy season of 13-0.

You look at some of those things, you win in your rival at Bedlam, you win the Battle of Atlantis, you win the Jordan Brand games, we start out 13-0. Then we hit a rough spot, the SEC. We went in there, we grew through it, we had a bunch of tough losses.

All of a sudden, these guys kept on believing. That's what I'll remember this team by is the adversity we had to go through with this league and then to keep trying to find a way. And when Sam went out, to win three Quad 1 wins in a row, win at your rival on the road with your back against the wall, that's resiliency. I think these guys will always remember that.

THE MODERATOR: I'm afraid that's all the time we have, but Coach, thank you very much.

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