

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: Regional Semifinal - Kentucky vs Tennessee

Thursday, March 27, 2025

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Lucas Oil Stadium

Kentucky Wildcats

Koby Brea

Otega Oweh

Andrew Carr

Amari Williams

Lamont Butler

Sweet 16 Pregame Media Conference

Q. Koby, you guys have done this twice now, with Tennessee for the third time. Does something have to change specifically to make it a repeat for them?

KOBY BREA: I don't think we have to do anything different. I think we've got to do the same thing against every team, consider to be ourselves. We trust each other on the court. We know what we're capable of doing.

Tennessee is obviously a really good opponent. Gotta give them respect and we're coming into the game with the same mentality that we came into the first two.

Q. Lamont, you guys are at this stage getting ready to play in a game you've dreamed about your whole lives. Wondering as a team, how often do you guys think of Jaxson and Kerr who aren't able to participate in this right now?

LAMONT BUTLER: We think about them all the time. It's really tough for them to not be out there with us and playing. But feel like they've done a great job of just being leaders off the court, being really vocal in huddles and pulling guys to the side and telling them what they see out there, what can help our team.

They're still very valuable to us. And we just are playing hard, playing for love and playing with passion for them who can't be out there with us.



Q. Koby, Tennessee has been one of the top defenses in the year, but you guys were really successful against them in both games, shooting 50 percent from 3. What made your offense so successful, and how do you look to take that into the third match-up?

KOBY BREA: I think the coaches do a really good job of scouting the way they guard and. They've been a really good defensive team, but I feel we've seen their defense a couple times this year, teams that do similar things. So we kind of just do what we do every game and just scout them and work on the things that they're good at and how we're able to use that against them.

I'm sure that they'll probably try to change things up a little bit since the first two times didn't work out too well. But we're going to continue to do what we do. We work on every type of defense guarding us. Just gotta continue to do us.

Q. Andrew, I know you didn't play too much in the first two match-ups against them, but Milicic is a guy who hit a bunch of 3s for them. What's the key to slowing him down and what did you learn when you guys went back and watched the film from his success against you guys?

ANDREW CARR: He's a great player. So certainly he shot the ball really well from 3 against us. Especially the first match-up, wasn't shooting a great percentage. We kind of changed how we scouted a little bit and changed how we attacked the game. We're not giving anybody any dead shots. We're making other teams feel uncomfortable.

I think it's helped our defense improve these last couple of months. For that being said, just being able to have presence on the ball, make sure he's not comfortable, especially when he's trying to step out and shoot some 3s, which he had a lot of success against us in the past.

Q. Otega, obviously your brother plays in the NFL and you have a chance to play at Lucas Oil Stadium. What does that mean to you to kind of bragging rights over him? I understand he hasn't had a chance to play here yet. And what's your relationship like with him and helping you get to this moment?

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OTEGA OWEH: It's a cool feeling playing in the stadium. I've never played in a football stadium before. Definitely just want to win, say that I won in a football stadium you haven't played in. That would be cool.

But it just means a lot knowing he's got to the highest level. I'm trying to get there. Just with the gems, the advice that he's given me so far has been it's a lot for me and it's definitely got me all the way here.

I'm just thankful that he's in that position. And he's going to be here tomorrow. So he's definitely going to be able to cheer me on.

Q. Andrew, you guys have the confidence of having won twice already. What do you think the mindset is for Tennessee? What advantage might they have even though they haven't won in that game heading into, especially, this kind of stage?

ANDREW CARR: I mean, I think for them, they probably want to just try to learn from anything they could from those first two games. For them coming into this third one that they think will probably shoot the ball a little bit better.

I feel like for us to continue being able to come out on top, we've got to just continue to contest every shot and make every shot tough. And that's what we're able to do the first two match-ups. That's what we're going to be looking to do again on Friday.

Q. Lamont, you played in a lot of NCAA Tournament games. You've got that experience. You're your team's point guard. Zakai sets the tone for them. How much do you take it upon yourself to set the tone and maybe counteract whatever he does on the floor for your squad?

LAMONT BUTLER: He's a really good player, really good point guard. One of the best point guards in the country. Defensive player of the year in our league and first-team. We know that we've got to go out there and really just play hard against him. It's going to be a great match-up for me.

But it's a team effort. It's a team effort, not just one person guarding somebody. We're going to be connected on defense, and we've got one of the best coaches. I think we're going to be ready to go and win that game.

Q. Lamont and Kobay, I know when you're a really good shooter, the surroundings don't matter too much. But wondering with a setup in a stadium what the backdrops are like for you to adjust to that. And how did that go today at practice?

LAMONT BUTLER: It's definitely a little different. We've never played really in a football stadium. Play in an arena. Once we got our first shots up and figured it out, it's normal at that point.

KOBY BREA: I feel like it's been pretty cool just to play in different environments; and for me, it's my first time playing in a football stadium. That's a pretty good experience. I don't really think it changes anything. I always say if the ball is round and the rim is a circle, then I think it's all the same thing. Just excited to get out there and play.

Q. Andrew, when I look at you guys sitting up there, you're all really relaxed and seem confident. Is that just part of the team mentality? I know B.G. has a tendency to get kind of worked up, but Coach Pope has always emphasized keep a level head, keep your emotions in check. Is that just part of your team personality?

ANDREW CARR: Yeah, I'd say definitely this team, we really care about each other a lot. We like to have a lot of fun together, and so it's a lot of fun to be around these guys. And definitely how talented our team is and how close we are, definitely brings you a little bit at ease at times. It really allows us to enjoy the moment and take our time. It really allows us to be a little laid back but always having a great time with each other, for sure.

Q. Otega, wanted to ask, you've been a powerhouse going into this season, into this tournament, is there a way that Tennessee actually can stop you?

OTEGA OWEH: I don't know. I hope not. But I'm just going to try to go out there, have good energy. I hope the ball finds good energy. I hope they can't stop me because I'm trying to win, but we're going to see.

Q. Andrew and Amari -- Andrew, you just talked about how much fun you guys have together, how much you enjoy each other's company. I guess, what brought you guys together so quickly? Part of the team, you didn't know each other this time last year, how did you guys become like brothers?

ANDREW CARR: I would say probably just being able to bond over things pretty quickly in the summer. A lot of us have similar interests, just being able to really, just try to get to know each other on a deeper level.

Everybody is new at one spot. So everybody kind of had that mindset of trying to get to know each other a whole lot better. It gives you a little bit of nostalgia growing up in the park playing against each other early on in the day, it's like



you're a little kid. It's a lot of fun.

AMARI WILLIAMS: I'll say the same as Andrew, just hanging out in the summer, I feel that helped a lot. So I'll just say that.

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