

# NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: Second Round - Kansas State vs Kentucky

Saturday, March 22, 2025

Lexington, Kentucky, USA

Memorial Coliseum

## Kentucky Wildcats

## Coach Kenny Brooks

### Media Conference

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon. Thank you for joining us for the press conference for the Kentucky women's basketball head coach, Kenny Brooks. Questions.

**Q. After the win yesterday, what have been the next steps that we haven't seen going into this game?**

KENNY BROOKS: Obviously you go right into preparation for the next opponent. We did watch the game yesterday just because we wanted to make sure we shored up some of the deficiencies that we had, especially in the post.

We watched it. We showed the kids clips this morning, and then we will watch film on K-State here later on today.

But it's that time of the year where you want to continue to get better. A lot of our kids are visual learners, so you want to show them what they did wrong. But also you're very limited in your time. So you want to use it wisely.

So obviously we want to focus a lot of our attention on K-State. That's what we did today in practice.

**Q. At this point in the year, are you still -- I guess you're always trying to improve, but is a lot of kind of masking what you're not as great at, but at this point you're maybe what you are at this point of the year? Are you trying to, okay, let's do this better?**

KENNY BROOKS: At this juncture, you pretty much are who you are. And we're a good basketball team that has strengths. We also have weaknesses, just like K-State, just like anybody that you're playing against.

So obviously you want to play to your strengths, you want to mask your weaknesses, and then you want to try to exploit the same on their end.



And right now it's just a will. Jeff knows what his team is, we know what our team is, and we're going to try to do our best and try to exploit their weaknesses.

That's what the beauty of March is. You're not going to go out in one day try to reinvent yourself as a team, but you want to try to make sure you're playing your best basketball.

**Q. Two really good guards tomorrow in Georgia and Serena. What do they both do well, and how important is it to have a point guard like one of those two to help run your offense?**

KENNY BROOKS: Yeah, they're both tremendous facilitators. They make everyone around them better. They do it in different ways. Obviously one is 6'2" and one is 5'6". But they do it in their own special way, which really makes them unique to the game.

But it's invaluable. I'm sure Jeff will say the same thing. When you have a point guard of that magnitude who can really make everyone else around them better, it's a luxury. It's been fun.

Obviously, they're in a different conference, but with Sundell, her and Georgia's name were always together because I think they were like 1 and 2 or 2 and 3, or something like that, in assists the whole year long. So it made you watch a little bit.

So I think tomorrow -- although, I don't know, they probably won't guard each other at all unless they get switched off on each other. But it just goes to show you their uniqueness and how they both can affect the game as point guards but in different ways.

**Q. And to that same topic, how does Serena impact the game in her own unique way?**

KENNY BROOKS: Well, she's a big guard. So she can see overtop of -- if you put a smaller player on her, she'll take them in and she -- she operates a lot around the paint. She can rise up over you. She can command a double



team because she's so good at scoring around the paint, and then she can facilitate in that manner.

Very unorthodox from what you see from a typical point guard, but she does it in a way that really causes problems. And I'm sure everyone has been able to say that, and it's going to cause us some challenges tomorrow.

**Q. Jeff Mittie just told us that this is going to be a game that he thinks other secondary players from both teams will have to step up. Do you see it similarly? And if so, what kinds of conversations are you having with those players?**

KENNY BROOKS: Yeah, you know, we talked about it a little bit. We need a little bit more production other than Georgia. I think we got good production from Dazia Lawrence, Clara Strack, although we could probably get a little more from her.

We are going to have to have some other people step up because it's going to be an intense basketball game. It's going to two highly intelligent basketball teams. So we're never going to try to take away the strengths. I'm sure they're going to do some things to Georgia to try to get the ball out of her hands. And we're going to do the same thing.

But their team is so much more than Lee or Sundell. They're good. And they were a top 10 team legitimately for most of the year. Then obviously they had to try to change their ways. But they still did a really good job.

And in Lee's absence, everyone else stepped up and they played at a high level. They maintained their ranking and their positioning. And then all of a sudden, it's a tremendous luxury. It's like, okay, let me just plug in an All-American now, a dominant All-American. And they've become a really formidable team.

They're a legitimate top 10. They really are. Their record is not indicative of who they could be. And obviously when you take out Ayoka Lee, even though the rest of the players are phenomenal, but she makes them that much more special.

So we understand. It's been a little bit difficult trying to go back and watch them because we had to go back essentially two months ago to see what kind of team they're going to present to us tomorrow. But you can't look at it and say, okay, let me get Sundell, let me take away Lee, because they have Poindexter. They have a lot of players that can step up and score at a high clip.

I do think that some other players are going to step up, and

whoever steps up in that fashion will probably give that team an edge.

**Q. You have Georgia, Clara Strack, Dazia, players who have experience in this tournament, but did you see some things yesterday from some players that it was their first time, some things that you like?**

KENNY BROOKS: Yeah, I mean, you know, we just -- I think going on a stretch, we had opportunities to really put the game away, and we back-rimmed a lot of shots. And you give credit to Liberty. They made those shots.

But we're going to need that special production from Teonni, where she's playing, and she's out in the open court and she's flying around, she's getting offensive rebounds.

We're going to need Amelia to step up. I think she had some opportunities yesterday to knock down some big key threes. She hit a couple. But we're going to need her production as well.

And then I think ST, Saniah Tyler, did a good job coming off the bench, giving us a spark. When Amelia missed that last shot, we kind of credited ST for getting a deflection where we got the offensive rebound back. So we're going to need her to be a little bit more focused on if she's got an open opportunity to step up and take it.

And then I think Clara Silva is going to -- she's been given a mission that she has to go in, and she's got to help us battle and go out there and play and play physical basketball.

And so it can't just be Clara Strack that's going to guard their post players. And it's not just Lee. They have an abundance of post players that they send in, and they pretty much play the same way with the physical style of play.

We're going to have to have a lot of hands on deck, and those kids are really going to have to produce for us.

**Q. I believe it was yesterday you talked about how important the front court battle was. K-State's coach talked about how he thinks whoever is going to win this game will be the one who makes the contested shots. How important do you think that aspect of the game will be as well?**

KENNY BROOKS: Well, it's kind of contrasting styles. They're going to sit on a low block and really try to get the ball inside and play inside out. They do a tremendous job of that.

Our post players are a little bit different where we'll probably try to spread them out more and make their post players run on the perimeter.

So it's going to be two contrasting styles. And whichever one is more productive will probably have the edge. I know they're going to try to play the physical style inside, and we're going to try to make them run around and chase us a little bit.

It's going to be a match of wits, and hopefully we can play to our strengths. But I do think that is going to be a key matchup. But not in a way -- it's kind of like all over the place. Like we talked about the point guards. They're different styles. Our post players are different styles. And so it's going to be two contrasting styles playing. But I think it's still really two good basketball teams competing.

**Q. I was going to ask you about Cassidy Rowe. Yesterday when the game was on the line, you put her in, and on an inbounds, and got the ball to her hands. And I just wanted to ask you about the confidence you have in her?**

KENNY BROOKS: Well, at this point in the year, it's all hands on deck. And give Cassidy a lot of credit. Obviously her minutes have fluctuated throughout the season. But she's always stayed ready.

I can't recall the exact time I put her in, but I think it was 12 seconds, and I called her name, and she sprinted to the desk, checked in, and she was the one that received the basketball and did a really good job of helping take some of the pressure off of Georgia in that situation or even Dazia Lawrence.

So it added an extra element, and just proud of her. But she's been that way all year long, just ready to handle anything that's come her way.

THE MODERATOR: This concludes the press conference. Thank you so much.

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