

National Invitation Tournament: Tulsa vs New Mexico

Thursday, April 2, 2026
Indianapolis, Indiana, USA
Hinkle Fieldhouse

New Mexico Lobos

Eric Olen

Deyton Albury

Luke Haupt

Semifinal Postgame Press Conference

Tulsa 74, New Mexico 69

ERIC OLEN: Congratulations to Tulsa. They are a good basketball team. They played better than we did tonight. They deserve to advance. I want to thank the NIT for putting on a first-class event, giving our guys this experience to come here and participate and compete. So we appreciate that.

And that's it.

Q. They were a team, obviously high-scoring team, but their defense seemed to take you guys out of it. How much of it was defense, or guys in the locker room say it was a bunch of missed shots. What was your take on the poor shooting?

LUKE HAUPT: They were pretty physical tonight so I think that took us out of our rhythm a little bit. We missed open looks early and it kind of continued to linger throughout the game.

I feel like I wasn't as sharp getting the guys the ball in the right spot today with some of my passes. So I feel like I could have done a better job there and maybe if they catch it right, they make it. So, yeah, it's kind of what it felt like it came down to.

Q. They hit nine of their first 17 three-point shots. Did they do anything to confuse the defense to get that advantage over you?

DEYTON ALBURY: No. I felt like we were prepared for everything they thrown at us. To begin the game, I don't think we had enough your understanding to start a final four game, and I think that's what kicked us in the butt.



Q. What's next?

DEYTON ALBURY: Got to talk some stuff over with my agent. You know, figure out what's next for me. Talk to my family. Go home. Enjoy the family, and just take it day-by-day.

Q. Same question for you.

LUKE HAUPT: Same thing as Deyton, I have to find an agent so I'm sure I'll be talking to a few people shortly. Go back home to San Diego, spend time with family, take a second, relax and see if I can keep playing at a good level and, yeah, just take it day-by-day.

Q. How would you grade the effort tonight, and why?

ERIC OLEN: I thought -- I mean, they are playing hard. I thought we had some errors in the first half that hurt us. Didn't feel like it was our best performance. But you know, these guys have been fighting all year and playing hard all year, and they continued to do that but we just couldn't make enough plays.

You know, credit to Tulsa. They played better than us.

Q. Almost exactly a year ago, you were introduced as the Lobos head coach. You've gone through a lot the first season. I know I'm asking you a tough question, kind of without a lot of time to think about it, but how do you dissect the season? What were the highs and lows for you? What did you learn?

ERIC OLEN: Yeah, I don't know if I can really give you a good answer for that at this moment.

Just appreciative of these guys and you know this group. They have been a lot of fun to coach, a lot of fun to work with all season. Specifically the guys who were in there last year, just really appreciative of them for choosing to spend it with us, you know, their last year of eligibility, there's lots of options for everybody in this landscape.



For them to kind of jump in and get on board for this with us, when you know we were starting it from scratch, I'll always be appreciative of those guys.

Q. Curious the timeline on decisions; something that some of the guys in the locker room were being asked about. They have decisions to make with the transfer portal next week. You have a contract, so maybe in some ways there isn't a decision to be made but curious when you might have a timeline on what is next for you, and if it is with UNM next season.

ERIC OLEN: Yeah, my plan is -- my plan is to be here. I don't even necessarily understand the question. Like if I'm going to --

Q. Are you planning to be the coach at UNM next season, or are you talking with other teams and interviewing with other programs, is any of that going on from this point forward?

ERIC OLEN: Oh, I misunderstood. Yeah, I'm the coach of New Mexico. And yeah, I'm not going to comment on anything outside of that.

Q. You guys were held below your usual scoring average. What do you think it was, the atmosphere, missing shots, or something that Tulsa was able to do to cause that?

ERIC OLEN: Yeah, I thought -- Luke mentioned it. I thought their physicality on the ball really affected us in the first half. We weren't able to get to where we wanted to be on the floor. Felt like we struggled with some end-of-drive decision-making. We got seven shots blocked. And again, credit to them but that's not something they have been doing all season in terms of blocking shots.

So I think that's a little bit of our decision-making and maybe how their physicality and pressure affected us. Just wasn't our best performance. We knew playing a good team, we had to play good basketball. You know our guys kept fighting but we just didn't have our football tonight, didn't feel like but again credit to Tulsa. They played well.

Q. In general terms, but I am curious what you are looking forward to in terms of the portal, in terms of recruiting, what you know this team, based on who is leaving. And you've got two guys right there that you have to replace, what you know you have to go into this portal week, which is only a few days away, what does this team need and what does UNM basketball need in the recruiting?

ERIC OLEN: We've got to figure out what everybody is doing. So we've got to have conversations with those with eligibility remaining. But the two guys next to me who are done with their college careers, they brought a lot of rim pressure. They brought a lot of defensive play-making. They are both good rebounders from the guard position.

So you know, those are things off the top of my head that we're losing from those guys. Beyond that, we'll have to see what everybody's decisions are, and once we know who is coming back, then we'll build a team from there.

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