

National Invitation Tournament: Tulsa vs Auburn

Friday, April 3, 2026
Indianapolis, Indiana, USA
Gainbridge Fieldhouse

Tulsa Golden Hurricane

Eric Konkol

Tyler Behrend

David Green

Final Pregame Press Conference



But 24 hours later, win or lose, it's the same and I want the guys to feel consistency from me, project consistency on to them. This is always about getting better, regardless of outcome. We want to be very process driven.

We celebrated well last night. We were super excited about wing and you can tell, and this is the maturity of Tyler, David, their teammates, there's another game to play. As excited as they were to win, they were right into the preparation, all that goes into it.

Q. You got to see film earlier today. So what stands out about Auburn?

TYLER BEHREND: They are just a very athletic team. We knew that coming in. They are a great team. We watched them throughout the year. So I'll just say that.

DAVID GREEN: They have good athleticism. They have got good size at every position, pretty much, and you know they play in a tough conference, they are a good team, tough, physical. But it's nothing we've never seen before. So we have to come in with our A Game and be ready and be prepared.

Q. Coach mentioned being here at Indy for the epicenter, for David and for Tyler. How good was the atmosphere last night for a neutral site game. It was a pretty good atmosphere at Hinkle. Your comments on that.

TYLER BEHREND: It was fun. It's always playing in postseason, especially in April. Beginning of the year, we all had the same goal which was to play as long as we can together. Last night the atmosphere was just great.

DAVID GREEN: It was a good atmosphere. There was a lot of people there, even more than I expected. It was a good feeling to play in that type of crowd.

Q. About four or five years ago, your feet were hanging out over a bunk in an aircraft carrier in the

ERIC KONKOL: It's great to be here in Indianapolis and as I've said to our team and everybody that would listen, we're honored to be here. We've wanted to compete as long as we possibly can. We have a special group, and just to be here along with the NCAA Final Four, Division II and III Championships, is, I think, really special. Indianapolis is the epicenter of the basketball world right now and to be a part of it with these guys, their teammates, our entire program, fans and alum, is really, really special. So we're grateful but we would like to end the season with a win against a very good Auburn team.

Q. At what point either this year or in your career did you go from just striving to get on the floor to realizing, I can really help these guys win games? When did you turn the corner on that?

TYLER BEHREND: I think spring workouts and summer with Coach Konkol, he really helps build my confidence up. I think he saw something in me which gave me confidence, and he's helping me explore best what I do on the court.

Q. Coach, this is for you. This time of year, everything runs really fast. It feels like there's a balance between preparation and celebration. Can you talk to me about your philosophy of wanting to celebrate the wins while not having it affect your preparation?

ERIC KONKOL: So we have played 37 games, and we've talked about being every day guys, and regardless of the outcome, 24 hours later, we want to be the exact same.

So, yes, we want to celebrate. These guys have put so much into this, the staff, the entire program, our administration.

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Navy. Could you have imagined that you would be here at what Coach calls the "epicenter of college basketball"? Could you ever have imagined that journey?

TYLER BEHREND: It been a dream. It's been a dream since I was a kid just to play on the biggest stage, one of the biggest stages. This whole trip has been a dream. This year has been a dream. The guys, my teammates this year, I just couldn't have asked for anything more.

Q. You touched on this a couple days ago but I don't know if you've really talked about it, but this coaching staff pushed you to look into your eligibility before you came. What was that process like, and not knowing, and then finding out you have another year left.

DAVID GREEN: Yeah, it was a long process. It was a very tedious and annoying at times but I'm thankful that they helped me look into it and try to get another year. I dealt with waiting on the NCAA beforehand, so I know how it gets.

But this time around it was very smooth, so I think God had a hand in it.

Q. Tyler's journey, the first time you pointed him out to me was in summer camp and I said who is that? And you said he's a project but he's a very interesting project. Has he exceeded your expectations, to what extent, maybe, and did you feel like you would get a big man who could help you win games and start 37 times?

ERIC KONKOL: I've learned a long time ago not to put a ceiling on people. I think the human spirit, the potential inside, is just almost limitless.

And what we saw in Tyler was someone who was hungry for an opportunity. Someone who had some feel that you really can't teach, and for those that are listening, Tyler served in the United States Navy for five years out of high school, played one year junior college basketball while his ship was docked outside of Washington State and we saw something.

Last year, it was very hard for him to get on the floor, partly because of he needed to add strength and weight, but also just to learn this game at this speed. I thought when he made the realization, I've got a lot to learn; I think that's so important when people realize: I have an opportunity to get better; these coaches believe in me; I'm not ready yet. And he just kept working and working and working.

And it was really in the summer how him, David, and all of

our new faces, we had them play a lot this summer, more than any other summer I've had in my career, just to investigate, experiment, see how the guys interact the with one another and there were so many things that clicked.

Tyler had a big part in that, along with David, but he kept getting better and better. And I think improvement can be really addicting, and he's continued to work harder.

Q. Late in the season, even in the conference tournament, you know, it's win-or-go-home, but you knew when you lost against North Texas, it wasn't the season being over at that point. You had more games. You knew there were more games to play. Coming into tomorrow, you know this is the last one. How kind of bittersweet is that?

ERIC KONKOL: There's a finality to it. But it is the goal. In college basketball, very few teams can celebrate with a win at the end of the season.

It's the one thing I'm envious of college football coaches, right, the ones that get to go to a bowl and finish with a win.

However, this team has been special; special group of people, start with that. I enjoy these guys very much. I would love nothing more for them, on top of our school, our fan base and our city to get the victory and cut down the nets.

But there will be a sad moment that we won't have practices with this team. We hope have returners and we hope to have another mission with next year's team. But this group of guys -- and I was fortunate enough to coach David four years ago at a previous institution. This is it for him. There is a finality in college basketball with the current rules, and I'm sad that this team will not be again but what a special group.

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