

# NCAA Men's Regional Semifinals and Finals: Louisville

Wednesday, March 27, 2019  
Louisville, Kentucky



**Rick Barnes**  
**Grant Williams**  
**Jordan Bone**  
**Admiral Schofield**  
**Lamonte Turner**  
**Kyle Alexander**  
Tennessee Volunteers

THE MODERATOR: We want to welcome the Tennessee Volunteers to Louisville. The Vols are settled in. Let's open it up to questions for the Tennessee student-athletes, please.

**Q. Kyle, I know you've gone up against a lot of good post players. I don't know against anybody 7'3" before. Can you talk a little bit about Matt Haarms and what problems he presents for the players?**

KYLE ALEXANDER: We did play against him last year, and he was on the team. He played a vital part in their team. Just against any post player, you've got to come ready to play. Especially somebody who has a size advantage on you, you've just got to come ready to play, got to be ready to compete.

**Q. Grant, can you think back to the Purdue game last year. Do you feel like that sort of jump-started you guys to the season you had, legitimized you? That was the first time you'd really gotten over the hump against a team of that stature.**

GRANT WILLIAMS: Definitely. We had a chance to show something that we wanted to show to ourselves. And last year that was a vital game for us, and we came in with a competitive mentality of going out there and winning. Getting that win was important for us and it helped us during that season.

It's a whole new team, a whole new year. We have to come prepared for the team that we're playing Thursday night.

**Q. For all you guys, the Tennessee program has**

**not enjoyed upper tier success, Final Four type success before. How much does that mean to you guys in terms of the equity that you're building for the future of this program? This is for everybody, starting with Grant, going down the line.**

GRANT WILLIAMS: We definitely coming in, being recruited here, we wanted to leave our legacy and we wanted to lay a foundation for future prospects to come here. I feel like we've done a good job of that. There's more to do and more to prove. But so far, we're doing our job, and we've just got to keep it up.

ADMIRAL SCHOFIELD: I don't have a comment.

JORDAN BONE: You know, just Tennessee basketball history, it means a lot to be one of the teams that people look forward to watching. And like he mentioned, we're a team who we feel like we're going to leave our legacy here when we leave. We still have a lot more work to do. It doesn't stop here. We've got to keep pushing so we can be the team that we want to be and have recruits who want to play for a team like this.

LAMONTÉ TURNER: No comment.

KYLE ALEXANDER: They pretty much covered it.

**Q. Grant, for this team, first of all, what does it mean to you to be here, to be on this stage in a Sweet 16? And how has Coach really prepared you all for this?**

GRANT WILLIAMS: It's definitely an honor. We're thankful to be here. Not many teams have the opportunity, and we've worked for it. And Coach just tells us that we have to come with the same mindset as we always have with preparation and understanding that every little detail matters. We have to come and prepare to play the game, because just like any other time, we have one game ahead of us, and then we've got to move on from there, after that.

**Q. Lamonté, can you talk about Carsen Edwards, the challenge that you've seen on film from him this week?**

LAMONTÉ TURNER: Carsen is a great player. Their offense revolves around him and they run a lot of different things, give him the ball in different areas. He's a great player. We matched up with him last year,

so I'm a little more familiar with his game.

Looking forward to the match-up, being able to guard him and just to compete and get another chance to prove ourselves right and I'm looking forward to it.

**Q. Jordan, how is this team different than last year? There seems to be a different dynamic, maybe a little more toughness, maybe a little versatility. Seems like you have more, for lack of a better expression, weapons at your disposal than you had before. Is that fair?**

JORDAN BONE: During the off-season, a lot of guys work at their game. We have a lot more options offensively to go to. I feel like this team is more mature than last year. We're much more mentally tough.

I think it's just brought us to this point that we're here today just being that tough team, being the team that plays towards their strengths. But if the strength don't work, we're able to play off other people and just going out there and competing.

I think this team is much more competitive than last year. I feel like some guys last year were kind of okay to walk off the court without a win. But this team doesn't. We want to win everything and it shows in practice. So I think we're a much more better team in those different aspects.

**Q. Admiral, with the SEC tournament, what did you all kind of learn from that last loss? And I guess what kind of resolve has that kind of given you all for this next level, for this next step?**

ADMIRAL SCHOFIELD: Rest is important. When you you're in tournaments, you've got to get your rest. That's the biggest thing that we learned. Just wasn't the same team, didn't have energy. We don't have energy, we make mental mistakes and silly mistakes like we did.

But at the end of the day, we had to play the game, and we didn't play it the right way. I would just say rest is very important.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much. Good luck, guys.

Ladies and gentlemen, Coach Barnes is here. We'll begin with opening comments from Coach and open it to the floor for questions. Welcome to Louisville.

COACH BARNES: Thank you. Appreciate it. It's obviously great to be here. Again, we understand the opponent we're going up against tomorrow in Purdue. We last faced them and both teams are pretty familiar with each other over in the Bahamas a year ago.

Overtime game.

You have to be impressed with, again, this Purdue team that they play really, really hard, great defense, bring speed to the game offensively and a team that understands their roles and play really, really well together.

Coming out of a great league where they were co-champions and extremely well coached team, so we know we've got a big challenge in front of us.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

**Q. Rick, I know you played against them last year, but Matt Haarms is a more prominent player now. Big guy that's very active. Can you talk about the special problems he presents for you, both ends?**

COACH BARNES: You're right, he is, John. He's improved, much improved from a year ago. He moves well. A guy that confident around the basket and can shoot the ball.

They'll move him away from the basket. They won't lock him in the post. They'll let him ball screen, roll into the post. They're double ball screen actions. They do different things out of that where he's a part of it. But he's a guy that, again, he can really affect a game on both ends of the court.

**Q. Rick, you're a guy who believes in, if you play really good defense, your offense will eventually come to you. Could you feel like this postseason Lamonté has kind of been proof of that?**

COACH BARNES: I do think that if you get lost in the game defensively and, again, just do the things that you practice offensively and execute, those things will come your way. But Lamonté really has become the defensive player we always thought he could be since he's been with us.

He's continuing to take that challenge on, and he knows, one, we need him to play that role offensively, as a group. We've got to be locked in defensively, against a team like Purdue. They do so much. They are so active and bring so much speed to their offense that you've got to be on edge there.

On the other end, you've got to take care of the ball because they do a great job themselves of turning your mistakes into baskets. I like to see our team really all lock in defensively, the way Lamonté does. If he does that, that will obviously give us a much better chance.

**Q. Rick, Kyle's development, he's like a baby, really, when it comes to basketball. Do you still find yourself having to explain things to him in a more**

**literal sense than you have to with some guys his age at this level?**

COACH BARNES: Lamonté?

**Q. Kyle.**

COACH BARNES: Kyle. You're right. You go back to when we recruited Kyle, he was going to come to Texas and be a redshirt. We were going to redshirt him. And obviously, at Tennessee, we told him that the role changes and he's going to have to come in and play. I think he's started every game. If not, he's close to it.

Coach Lanier used to have a video of a baby giraffe being born, wobbling and falling all over the place. That was Kyle Alexander.

You feel like he -- I've said before, I wish we could have redshirted him at Tennessee, because I think his best basketball -- I know his best basketball is ahead of him, and he'll be one of those guys in a couple years, people are going to say, wow, this guy's really come into his own.

Because physically, once he continues to get the weight he needs on him, Kyle's a worker, he's not afraid to put time in at the gym. But he's still young to the game. He really is.

**Q. How have you prepared the team for this whole new experience of being in the Sweet 16? It's one thing to be in the tournament, but to be at this level and how do you tell them not to worry about the program's record at this point?**

COACH BARNES: Well, to be -- they know where they are. I mean, they know it. It's something that they watched throughout their life and they know it, and I think what you do, I don't think you make it any bigger deal than it is.

I think you keep them focused on what you do as a team and what you've done since November, where we go about our -- we had a day off where we got back to Knoxville and we came back in and started prepping just like we would if we were getting ready for a game in December, even though they know where we are. They know there are 16 teams left in this tournament.

We did what we did this morning, breakfast, film session here. Do what we do tonight. As much as we can, we try to keep them within their routine and try to keep them focused at hand.

Along the way, they've worked hard to be here. You want them to enjoy it. But we've always said it gets more fun each time you win, and you hope that we can stay focused enough to do our job and there's more

left.

**Q. Coach, can you talk about Carsen Edwards, what makes him so tough to guard in the biggest games of the tournament this weekend?**

COACH BARNES: He's so tough to guard because he's got the green light. He can shoot it deep. I think that Purdue is a team that really understands their roles and his teammates understand what he can do for them. And the fact that he can stretch your defense, he can stretch your defense by -- I mean, he comes across half court, whether it's him with the ball where he can -- if you don't find him early, he's going to shoot that 3 in transition. If he's one pass away, they're a good team making the first pass in transition. They're going to shoot it.

I like the fact he's very active defensively. But, again, it's a team game, and it won't be just one guy trying to guard him. I think as a team, there's a lot that goes into guarding guys like that where you don't want to lose them. And you can lose them by just what you do on the offensive end.

If you turn the ball over and let them get out in the open court, they're great at that and finding who they want to get the ball to.

But he is a very, very explosive guy. You know he's going to get his shots. And so you've got to be on edge. Really, from the time that he comes across half court, you better know where he is. They do a great job in their offense, running him off double, triple screen, their dribble handoff actions. He does a great job himself moving without the ball.

**Q. Rick, I wanted to ask you, if you don't mind, about your director of ops, Mary-Carter, how you found her and what you thought would make her fit in that role.**

COACH BARNES: Well, when I left text a Jerry Johnson, who had been with me for a long time, chose to stay back there. The one thing I learned from being around Jerry is I wanted somebody who didn't want to coach basketball. I wanted somebody that wanted to be an administrator.

When I got there, both Dave Hart and Jon Gilbert had told me about Kyle Condon, who had been on the staff. When we went out to our orange caravans, everywhere we went, I noticed Mary-Carter was a person that was just -- she impressed me with the way she was doing everything.

Then I asked one day to Jon Gilbert, I said, what kind of administrator do you think she would make? Tom Satkowiak, who is the SID over here, I talked to Tom,

and he said she would be great.

So I wasn't sure, you know. And then we were at the last orange caravan, and we were at the football stadium in Nashville where the Titans plays. It was one of the hardest downpours you can imagine. We had like four SUVs lined up.

By the time you go ten feet, you were getting soaking wet. And Mary-Carter was in charge of making sure everybody was in the van, and so she went from one car to the next car to the next car to the next car. When she got in the van with me, I'm not kidding you, her shoes were squeaking. She was soaking wet.

I decided right then, I was going to hire her. She has been as big an addition to our program, and what she does for the program, she takes all the stress off everybody. I can't imagine there's a Director of Operations better in the country than she is.

She's tough. She's one of those guys that can hang with the guys, and she's got a great husband. Really, she's a huge part of our program.

**Q. Can you just talk about how tough this region is and how hard it's going to be to get to a Final Four?**

COACH BARNES: Well, they're all tough. It's tough. This region, every region is tough to get to a Final Four any year. It is tough, and I think if you're playing this time of year, it's because you've had a great year or you're playing well right now.

I think there's some really good defensive teams in this region right here, teams that really try to hang their hat on their defense. And good offense is hard to come by.

But it will take a great effort from any of the four teams here to make it to the Final Four. One's going to do it, and I promise you, they're going to be as prepared for the Final Four as anybody.

**Q. Hi, Coach. Your team has shown a will to win this season, which is pretty rare. There are times when it looked like you were going to lose and you didn't. What is it about the team, the sum of its parts or the individuals, that have helped you do that?**

COACH BARNES: Some situations I wish we'd do a better job protecting leads and that.

But I do think that this group has been through a lot together. I've said before, you go back four years ago, Admiral Schofield, Kyle Alexander, and Lucas Campbell and Brad Woodson, they lost 19 games. A year later, we lose 15, 16 games.

We felt a year ago, going to the Bahamas, that that tournament was really important for us. I think it was a big kick start for us down there.

But just the fact that we've always tried to play a really hard schedule and tried to put them in as many difficult, stressful situations as we can. There is a good resolve about them, but I think it gets down to they really have a belief in each other, understanding what each role, each player can do, and trying to play through those guys, playing their roles.

**Q. Coach, you've been to a Final Four. You've been to two Elite Eights. What does it feel to be back at the Sweet 16?**

COACH BARNES: Obviously, it's exciting because it's what you do. I'm really excited for this team, because I go back and I just think about how far they've grown as young men and how much they've grown as a team.

It's well documented, we didn't have the five -- four, five start guys, but these guys are better basketball players than their ratings, obviously.

But I know how hard they've worked. And from the time that we start our -- if you asked me what our number one goal is every year, it's to be a part of the NCAA tournament.

When you're a part of this tournament, it gives you a chance to do just this. And you want to be in it where you can play as long as you can. So I'm really excited. I mean, I'm older now and I've been through it. But for these guys, it's going to be something they'll remember for the rest of their lives, being a part of it and getting here.

Also, when I think about it, I think like all the teams here, you don't get here unless you have a work ethic and you've got good players and guys that buy into each other.

I'm probably more excited for our program. I'm certainly excited for our fans because they've been great with us all year. These guys have worked hard to get here, and I hope they can continue to want more.

**Q. I asked the guys earlier about the legacy they're leaving behind. Do you think they get the building blocks, the program's never been to the Final Four, it's been relatively sparse in Sweet 16s and Elite Eights and all that. There's the building blocks here for some that has almost never happened before.**

COACH BARNES: I think they do, because people talk about it with them. I do think that. Again, you talk

about goals. We come in our building. We don't have a lot of motivational sayings or those type things.

What we talk about is being the best team we can be and let's see where it takes us. That means you've got to ask your players to be the best players they can be and then buy into the role they have to play.

But this group, again, it's been fun watching them grow together. Not always the great times, but the last two years, they've done a lot. A lot more than what probably was expected from the outside. From the inside, I wouldn't say that, because we've always had the high expectations and I think they've created that.

So I do know that there's a lot to be -- they will be proud of, and in the moment right now, you don't think a lot about that. You just focus on what you have to do and hope that you can continue.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thanks for your time.  
Good luck.

COACH BARNES: Thank you.