

**2017 LEXINGTON VOLLEYBALL REGIONAL
MEMORIAL COLISEUM**

Match 2

Kentucky vs. ETSU

Dec. 1, 2017

Kentucky Head Coach Craig Skinner

Opening Statement ...

“Well, first of all, congratulations to East Tennessee State for a great year. I know it’s not an easy tournament but I’m just really impressed with (ETSU coach) Lindsey Devine and the way she coaches and their team. They’re very disciplined and very organized and they have a great system. You know, one of our things that we wanted to make sure happened as their outside hitters did not have a big night offensively and we did a really good job of that with our defense and we felt like if we did that then we’d have a great chance to win. And, hats off to our fans for showing up big time tonight and being there for us and getting over 4,000 (people in the) first round of the NCAA tournament is an awesome deal for us and our athletes and just for the environment itself in the NCAA tournament. So, very fired up for that and hopefully they come back tomorrow.”

On what the team has left for tomorrow ...

“Well, I think we have a lot left. You know, I told the team in the locker room, I just really want us to try and find the first 10 or 15 points and find a rhythm and get after it and get our feet wet out there. You know it’s like anything you can’t overlook an opponent. We hit .556 in the first set and East Tennessee State came storming back in the third set put it on us so, you know you have to expect that type of fight from every team in the tournament, otherwise they wouldn’t be here and they’ve put up a lot of great wins throughout the year and East Tennessee State is a team that we knew was going to be tough. Again tomorrow, Western is a great team. They’ve had a lot of great wins and they’re going to battle and compete, so it’s going to be a great match.”

On UK’s two freshmen ...

“I mean, they’re pretty experienced freshmen. I guess I don’t consider them freshmen anymore because we are already in December and they’ve played a ton of matches. But, I think that’s the choices the teams have to make. Who are they going to focus their defenses on on our team? And, we’re going to find out who that’s going to be and then we’re going to try and exploit other opportunities within our offense and Avery (Skinner) was clicking tonight and Leah wasn’t for a time and Emily (Franklin) was clicking early, and then Kaz (Brown) got going and then Darian (Mack) had a couple big kills at certain times and I think that’s kind of our job as a staff and Madison’s (Lilley) job, you know, trying to kind of figure out ‘OK, they’re putting two blockers on Kaz (Brown), so how do we exploit what’s happening?’ And Avery had a lot of great opportunities tonight.”

On Kaz (Brown) and Emily (Franklin) staying grounded ...

“I’m glad you said that because, you know they’re, a quiet six blocks for Emily (Franklin) and a quiet six kills hitting .415 and three blocks for Kaz (Brown) is a great feeling as a coach. Because, I don’t disagree with you, you know, they don’t go out and have three kills a set. But, they made an impact with our defense and if a team like ETSU hits .130 and their outsides hitting negative and the other one hits, they both hit negative, I think, I mean that’s a heck of a night for two middle blockers to put

that on two outside hitters like that, who, both of those guys get over 50 percent of their offense. So, really pleased with not only Kaz (brown) here. They can impact the mass in a lot of different ways even if they're not killing the ball."

On challenges expected by WKU ...

"Great challenge. I mean, Western Kentucky doesn't win 90 percent of their games because it's luck. I mean they're very skilled, they're very talented on defense and yes their offensive percentage is impressive, but they've been really known as a great defensive team and they train well, they train hard, they're well coached and they recruit the right kids to fill the system that they run. I'm certainly not surprised by their performance tonight and I'm looking forward to a great match for the volleyball community tonight and our state."

On facing the same team (WKU) as back in August ...

"I'll tell you, it's a completely different teams. You know, our team is way different than we were back then and their team is way different than back then. And, I don't even think in that match that either team had their entire starting lineup in each set. So, as a coach and a team, you don't ever take history as what's going to happen in the future. Western Kentucky had a great year. We had a great year and tomorrow is another opportunity to step on the floor and lace them up and go."

On 300th career victory ...

"You know, I don't really pay attention to those. I will pay attention to this one only because, when I got here the dream was to fill this place up and we didn't do that very often in 2005 and 2006, and to see the crowd and the coverage and the interest in our sport, if it goes along with win No. 300 that makes me happy as a coach and the staff and our program to know where we've come from and where we can even go to. So, special night and hopefully we can get another one tomorrow."

On if coaching is getting easier for him ...

"Absolutely not. I mean, I've probably worked harder the last eight months than I have my whole head coaching career, just trying to figure out a way to get a little bit better. You know, if you ever feel like you've made it, you can just flush yourself down the toilet, I mean it's going to be over, so I've got a long way to go and I may appear outwardly calm but there's a lot of conversation going on inside that only I know about."

On the quick turnaround of play ...

"Yeah, you know, when we played last year we played four matches in eight days. So, we were play, play, play, play, play. So, we were kind of getting into a rhythm and really kind of starting to hit our stride and so I'm glad we're playing tomorrow to be honest with you. I think we've got three sets under our belt. We've had a couple good practices in a row and each time we get out there and play is another chance to improve something and I think that's kind of been our mantra all year. You know, it's something that I think will benefit us. Now, obviously our opponent might have something to say about that but I'm excited to turnaround and play, to wait, I'd rather not have."

Kentucky Student-Athletes

#3 Madison Lilley, Freshman

On being her first NCAA tournament....

"It is just a little bit more official. So, it is a little different than regular home matches. It definitely takes the nerves off when you are at home and you are sleeping in your own bed and everything. That is really nice. It is a lot of fun playing in front of all the fans that are showing up. So, I am excited for tomorrow night. "

On the plan for tomorrow before the game...

"Sleep and eat and drink some water. That is my agenda. Basically, just reset and do it all over again tomorrow. You have to reset and focus on another game."

#4, Avery Skinner, Freshman

On being her first NCAA tournament...

"There are nerves but it really helps being home and having the opportunity to play in front of all our fans. So, it is really great that they all came out. "

On her kills tonight...

"I really have to credit Madison (Lilley) and Kaz (Brown). I think Madison (Lilley) did a great job of just seeing the court and setting me the ball and Kaz (Brown) did a great job just getting up and pulling the block so that a lot of times I had one on one opportunities. So, I really have to credit them. "

On execution at the beginning of the game...

"I think we have had time to kind of rest. So, we are rested and so we are going to be able to play better tomorrow. Just taking time to recover tonight, I think yes, we will be a lot stringer tomorrow."

13, Leah Edmond, Sophomore

On her message to freshman after playing in the tournament last year...

"Basically just to relax and have fun. Don't get too nervous about it. Try to treat it like any other game, a normal game and go out there and play your hardest and that is about all I can tell them. They have to go out there and play. "

On the team growing since last playing Western Kentucky...

"I definitely remember their outside. I think it is number seven, even just watching her today too. Definitely their whole team has improved and their defense is really incredible. It was nice to watch. So, it will be a nice battle between our offense and their defense tomorrow. "