

# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: Regional Semifinal: Villanova vs Baylor

Monday, 22 December 2025

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

**Baylor Bears**

Hinkle Fieldhouse

**Jesse Bobbit**  
**Zevi Eckhaus**

**Joshua Meredith**

Postgame Media Conference

*Sweet 16*

Washington State - 34

Utah State - 21

THE MODERATOR: I'm joined by Washington State interim head coach Jesse Bobbit, Zevi Eckhaus, Joshua Meredith, and Caleb Franci.

We'll begin with an opening statement from coach.

JESSE BOBBIT: Thank you. Appreciate it.

All I got to say is incredibly proud of these guys, the seniors that chose to stay here their whole career, this team sticking together, choosing to be here when you don't have to choose to be here anymore. Incredibly proud to be able to lead these guys in that.

It was them, it was the leadership that took control all year long, but especially in these last couple weeks through the adversity.

So super excited for these guys to finish out with a win. It is extremely important. But to see the smiles and laughter on these guys' face is really what it's all about. I'll be forever grateful to these guys for the impact that they've had on my life, for sure.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. Coach, I want to ask you about stopping Utah State. Pretty good offense for most of the season. Bryson Barnes, the guy has been the engine of their offense.**

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How much did you key in on him as far as knowing if you stopped him, you probably stop the rest of the offense?

JESSE BOBBIT: Yeah, you knew that was a big part of what they do, is using him. I talked about that the other day during the press conference.

Our guys played fast, did a lot of things to let our backers flow, guys to attack him. We were able to add up some hits on him that eventually took a toll.

Again, a testament to him. He is a really good player. But overall the execution through a lot of the game allowed for us to stop what they wanted to do. Still had some things here and there we need to clean up, there is no doubt, especially towards the end of the game.

The response throughout the game... A couple sudden changes. To be able to go out there and hold them to zero points, that's what I was most proud of, for sure, the defense.

**Q. Josh, how did the potatoes taste?**

JOSHUA MEREDITH: I actually didn't take a bite of it. I was afraid I might chip a tooth or something (smiling).

**Q. How were they?**

JESSE BOBBIT: They're dry (laughter).

**Q. Zevi, you threw by far the most, at least this season. What was working well for you offensively and to be able to throw that many passes? What was that like?**

ZEVI ECKHAUS: Yeah, it was nice. Obviously just trusting in the O-line, running backs, tight ends, wide receivers. I think we got everybody involved. Unless I miscounted, there were like 12 guys who caught the ball today. That's huge, just to be able to have the trust and faith in everybody to go make plays. Obviously we did.

I thought Coach Freund did a great job just putting us in good positions. Honestly, there were a couple that I'd want back and I think I could have helped put us in even better positions to be successful.

Overall, I thought the boys did a great job, regardless if

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it was a touchdown, a field goal, interception. I thought the guys kept responding well. You saw it in the success.

I mean, I think we had close to 600 or maybe more than 600 yards of total offense, which is huge. When you do that consistently, you're going to win games.

Just really proud of the guys and how they fought today.

**Q. It's really hard obviously to lose a coach mid-season. I want to ask you guys, as leaders, how you took that upon yourselves to really make it a positive thing and to come back and win a bowl game.**

JOSHUA MEREDITH: I'll say from my point of view, it's not my first rodeo, so all I could really do is help the younger guys out, let them know we're still playing ball, we still have a game to play, not to worry about just what happened.

At the end of the day, practice is going to stay the same, we are still going to do what we usually do, and the schedule is not changing for us.

ZEVI ECKHAUS: Yeah, I mean not to discredit Coach Rogers at all. When he was here, he did a phenomenal job installing everything, or instilling everything that we were out there today.

The biggest thing the better teams have is they're player-led. Obviously the coaches, they kind of set the foundation. Us as players we have to run with it. That was another opportunity for us to lead by example.

There are a lot of seniors on this team who wanted nothing more than to win this game. We knew what it takes or what it took. They did a great job of exemplifying that throughout the prep, obviously on the field today.

CALEB FRANCL: I would also add Coach Bobbit stepping up really made it a smooth couple weeks of bowl game prep, whatnot. As seniors, leaders on the team, we really appreciated him stepping up in that role.

ZEVI ECKHAUS: No doubt.

**Q. For the players, correct me if I'm wrong, I guess this was the last game for all of you guys. Kirby Moore was here. What is your guys' impression of him from what you've seen so far?**

ZEVI ECKHAUS: Yeah, I mean, he's been pretty busy trying to meet all the guys, trying to get acclimated and whatnot.

From the conversations that I've had with him, he seems like a really good person. Obviously that's the most important part as a coach. You want somebody that you trust and somebody that leads with character. Like I said, they set the foundation.

I'm really excited for Cougar football and Cougar Nation after this year. I think they hired the right guy. I'm really excited to see what he does with this team.

**Q. Caleb, obviously the defense has provided such an extraordinary foundation for this team week in and week out, especially today. Complementary football today. In the second quarter, I think it was after two turnovers, what did it mean to go back on the field and to stand your ground, provide and pick up your teammates?**

CALEB FRANCL: Yeah, that's just our defensive mentality. No matter what happens we're going to go out there and do our job to the best of our abilities. There's a lot of older guys on that defense, too, that have been around for a long time. When stuff like that happens, they tend to pick the younger guys up in those roles.

It's just a mentality that we go out there with every drive, yeah.

**Q. A couple of the younger guys in the secondary, throughout the defense, what did it mean to play alongside them?**

CALEB FRANCL: It was awesome. All those young guys came up to me afterwards. I was on the verge of tears because I really love those guys. They've improved a ton since they came in. I was kind of sad for D. Russ there because he got called back.

They're all talented players, all these young guys. I'll be rooting for 'em.

**Q. Zevi, you obviously had the chance to come out and lead this team one more time. How much does that mean to you to have been able to come out and do that one more time?**

ZEVI ECKHAUS: I mean, it was everything. It was huge to be able to go out there one more time and just display what this team is made of.

I mean, I'm just super grateful and blessed to be able to have done that, through all the ups and downs that this team has encountered this year. People are going to have their opinions, and they can say whatever they want. Whenever they talk about the 2025 Cougs, they have to mention we're bowl champions.

Really proud of this team, grateful to be a part of it



and be able to lead it. Like I said, blessed beyond words.

**Q. (Question about being the MVP.)**

JOSHUA MEREDITH: The metal is heavy (smiling). It did catch me off guard.

It's almost like a perfect ending for me really. Been to four bowl games, didn't win one until today. It's bittersweet. I wish I could run it back with these guys another season.

I'm excited to see what comes for the future for this team. I mean, it really means everything to me.

**Q. Coach, early in the fourth quarter Tucker came back out on the crutches. You had your arm around his shoulders. What has he meant to you as a player?**

JESSE BOBBIT: My first full-time job, he was a safety that I coached. He's someone that stepped up a ton that year, started to become the player that he is today.

It was obviously really emotional. Incredibly sad for him. He'll bounce back and he'll get his opportunity moving forward. There's no question about that. Obviously really unfortunate.

There was nothing really to say except give him a hug, tell him I love him, that I appreciate everything he's done for me. It's a lifelong friendship, for sure.

**Q. Josh, 2018 was the last time this team won a bowl game, two years before you got here. What does it mean to be the team that breaks the seal there?**

JOSHUA MEREDITH: Something you always remember. We will talk back to this 2025 season, everything we went through. We get to say we ended it with a bowl game victory. It's going to go down in history. Everyone's going to remember it.

**Q. Coach, when was the last time you were on the sidelines during a game?**

JESSE BOBBIT: 2022.

**Q. Was it Coach Menage calling the defense?**

JESSE BOBBIT: Coach Menage.

**Q. What did it mean to have that staff behind you, have this new experience?**

JESSE BOBBIT: It was awesome. The biggest thing is that there wasn't too many game management things that happened today just naturally. But you never

know how a game's going to go.

For me to be at my best for these guys, it was that I shouldn't be calling the game, that I should try to be able to manage it and be focused.

Coach Freund called and awesome game. Really let it loose. He was down the field having fun.

Coach Menage, I was going to say a phrase (smiling). He had some fun today, called some pressures, did his thing. Incredibly proud of him for his composure and stuff on the headset. Definitely more composed than I am at times. Really proud of both of them.

It was awesome to have guys I could trust. It was easy for me. They did all the work, and these guys.

**Q. Caleb, to have Coach Menage calling the defense, consistent system, but what is your impression of the job he did and the impact he made today?**

CALEB FRANCL: I think he did a really good job calling quite a few of those pressures early. It was nice. It was fun to get in rhythm with those sacks and whatnot.

I will say, though, towards the end of the game I was running sideline to sideline. That was not fun (laughter).

No, he called a great game. Proud of him. Proud of how he stepped up.

**Q. Could you tell us a little bit about what you think you'll miss most about WSU?**

CALEB FRANCL: I'm just going to miss the people. Coming in, they accepted those transfer guys with open arms. Met a lot of great people. They're going to be brothers for life.

Yeah, the people.

ZEVI ECKHAUS: Yeah, I'm just going to miss the relationships with these guys. College football is so unique. The ability to travel the world and do what you love with people that you really care about, meetings and practices, things of that nature. Obviously you don't know what the future holds, but college football is something special. I'm forever grateful for it. I'm glad that it gets to end on this note.

But yeah, I'm just super blessed to be a part of such a caring and charismatic team with so many incredible people.

JOSHUA MEREDITH: Same for me. I have a lot of people on the team that I consider brothers. Everyone



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is a friend of mine. It was love across the board.

In this next chapter of my life, I don't know when I'll see any of them. We all got things to do. Pullman is going to look different. Not being in Pullman is going to be weird because I see it as home. It's on my license plate. It's everything for me.

To openly say I'm going to miss it, it's easy for me to say that. Pullman doesn't have much. It has a family there, a brotherhood you won't get anywhere else.

Coach always said college football is the most fun you're ever going to have. For a long time I didn't believe in that. I would say this year is the most fun I've ever had in my life. I can stand on that. I'm going to miss waking up and seeing my brothers every day.

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