

# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Four

Tuesday, March 18, 2025

Dayton, Ohio, USA

UD Arena

**Mount St. Mary's Mountaineers**

**Coach Donny Lind**

**Dola Adebayo**

**Xavier Lipscomb**

**Dallas Hobbs**

Media Conference



**Q. Xavier, just your excitement and what has been a thrilling March so far.**

XAVIER LIPSCOMB: Man, it's been a joy ride. We've banded together for these past five, six months, been through all the hardships together, and we've prevailed, won the championship, and now we're here.

**Q. Dallas, the same question.**

DALLAS HOBBS: Like X said, it's just been a joy ride. We fought really hard, and I've just very appreciative of being in this moment.

**Q. Dola?**

DOLA ADEBAYO: Dream come true. I've been looking forward to this since I can imagine, since I was born. Now I'm just trying to keep it going.

**Q. Dola, you haven't played many stretch bigs this year like a Matt Rogers. How does he change what you plan to do defensively?**

DOLA ADEBAYO: It's kind of like guarding somebody like me. Last year I was put in those positions, so I think I'm going to just go back to those principles, trust the game plan that the coaches have given us. Not much changes.

**Q. I was wondering if your coach had mentioned that he's from not too far away from here, if you knew anything about that.**

DOLA ADEBAYO: I don't think he's mentioned it.

**Q. Dallas and Xavier, they have some quicker guys like Elijah Stephens. For you guys, any thoughts on that matchup and how you'll look to defend them?**

XAVIER LIPSCOMB: Like Dola said, we're going to rely on the coaches. They've put in hours upon hours of watching film and studying their plays and whatnot, so we're going to rely on what they tell us to do and try and execute what they have planned for us.

**Q. Kind of peaking at the right time that you are without a couple guys due to injuries, how did that change things up for you in the tournament run, being without Terrell and losing Melo at the end?**

DALLAS HOBBS: We would love to have those guys out there with us, but like Coach said, he instilled in us a next-man-up mindset, and we're brothers so we banded together and pulled through.

But like I said, we would love to have them guys out there.

XAVIER LIPSCOMB: One thing that we pride ourselves on is having a roster where everybody can step up and have their big moment. In the MAAC tournament you had Patrick Haigh, Malcolm Dread step in big moment. Trey Wilson, 'Landus Keyes, even though he's a regular at this point.

They stepped up and made big plays down the stretch which we needed to win a championship.

DOLA ADEBAYO: I think one thing that helped us was Terrell getting hurt the first time during the season. That kind of -- that was the shocking point, so then when it happened again, we were more prepared the second time and were able to, like they said, next man up. People were more ready at that point.

**Q. Who was your toughest opponent in your conference this year?**

DOLA ADEBAYO: I'd say Quinnipiac. We weren't able to get the win against them during the season. We're looking forward to playing them, ended up playing Iona. But they stacked up against us pretty well skill-wise,



physicality-wise, so I'd say them.

DALLAS HOBBS: I would say Quinnipiac, as well. They stacked up well against us.

XAVIER LIPSCOMB: I'm going to just say everybody. You really get your best shot in the league every game. The Mount really has a target on its back because we play so hard and we're relentless, so every game was competitive and tough.

**Q. Dola, you mentioned hoping to play Quinnipiac again; that didn't happen. But you guys go on to win the MAAC and you were tournament MVP. Talk a little bit about your game for folks that will be watching you for the first time and sort of your season and being a second team all performer in the conference and what folks might expect tomorrow night.**

DOLA ADEBAYO: I first want to thank God. He's given me my ability. I'd say I'm just a versatile player. I'm able to guard multiple positions. I'm able to stretch the floor. I'm able to play above the rim.

Anything you ask, I'm able to do it. That's what I pride myself in, and I just continue to try to elevate myself in each other category.

**Q. Dallas, in your game and also to add to it, the best quality of this team?**

DALLAS HOBBS: Our relentlessness. I feel like our best quality is how hard we play and our will to win. That's all we want to do is just win. I feel like if you're not familiar with my game, I'm a winner, and expect for us to win tomorrow, for me to win tomorrow.

XAVIER LIPSCOMB: Really whatever Coach Lind tells me to do, any of the coaches. If they tell me to go out there and crash out, I'm going to crash out. Really just a Swiss Army knife. Try to make the little plays work. Try to win games.

**Q. You mentioned listening to your coaches. Talk about your head coach and this being his first season, sort of this incredible year that you guys have been able to have and him coming in and what he's meant to the program.**

XAVIER LIPSCOMB: I think it all starts with the relationships that he formed at the beginning of the season. When he first came in and interviewed for the job he said he's going to build the program off of culture and a love and togetherness that we have and formed bonds, long lasting after basketball.

He followed that up with having breakfast with each and every player and having one-on-one conversations with them to get to know them better. So that's the foundations of our team, and I think you can see that when we play out on the court.

**Q. Dallas, same thing, playing for Coach Lind year one.**

DALLAS HOBBS: Just the loving and caring nature of him. He built those relationships really early on, and you can tell he really cares, and it's easy to play for a guy like him.

DOLA ADEBAYO: Main thing I noticed when he first started coaching us was practice was actually fun. We still put in hard work but were able to go out there with a smile on our faces and get the job done and not make it feel like it's a job. It also helps it be easy to play for somebody like that.

**Q. Dola, I know you said this was a dream come true. Do you have a favorite March Madness moment as a fan growing up?**

DOLA ADEBAYO: Next man up. I didn't grow up watching college like that. I've always wanted to get to this moment to reach my dream.

DALLAS HOBBS: I'm a Texas native, so I remember watching Carson Edwards in his March performances. I feel like I would say that Virginia game, Purdue and Virginia.

XAVIER LIPSCOMB: You stole my answer. Let's see. I'm trying to think. Really, I feel like that Duke run when they had, was it Tre Jones, RJ Barrett and Cam Reddish, Zion, just watching them.

Unfortunately they had a game in D.C. and I couldn't go and I was really mad. I think they played Michigan State or something like that. But watching it at home with my dad and stuff like that, that was probably my favorite moment.

**Q. You mentioned D.C. and taking on American, but Xavier, talk about staying relatively close to home. I know it's about an hour, and being able to play in front of friends and family.**

XAVIER LIPSCOMB: It's an awesome feeling having my family be able to come to games. When I'm feeling a little homesick any weekend I can just jet home, get a home-cooked meal and be with family.

**Q. You played against these guys last year at their**



**arena. X, you know them because you're from that area and probably played some of these guys growing up. What's it like to come to Dayton to play a team that's an hour down the street from you?**

DALLAS HOBBS: I just see another team in the way. That's all I have to say on it.

DOLA ADEBAYO: It's exciting. They beat us last year, so looking forward to getting back on that one.

**Q. Dola, you see your name drawn, you know you're coming to Dayton, but was there sort of an extra wow in seeing your opponent?**

DOLA ADEBAYO: Not really.

**Q. You were just excited to see your name pop up?**

DOLA ADEBAYO: Yeah.

**Q. Dallas, describe that with the selection show. You know you're in, but when it's actually confirmed, sort of that feeling of being able to reach March Madness.**

DALLAS HOBBS: Thank you, God. It's all surreal. It's everything you dreamed of. It's a surreal feeling. But we've got to live in the now because the job is not finished. We're going to make a push.

**Q. Xavier, take us back to Sunday and what that experience was just after 6:00 and seeing the name pop up.**

XAVIER LIPSCOMB: It was an awesome feeling, all the hard work that we put in day in and day out, the extra hours in the gym, the extra weight lifting sessions with Coach Travis, the treatment with Meghan Weeks. It all paid off.

But like Dallas said, the job is not finished. We're here for a purpose. We really want to put The Mount on top and make a name for The Mount.

**Q. What are you looking forward to most tomorrow night?**

XAVIER LIPSCOMB: Really the atmosphere. Coach Lind has hyped up the Dayton crowd and the Dayton faithful. They love basketball here, so I'm happy to see what that's going to be like.

DALLAS HOBBS: Like what X said, the atmosphere. I want to walk out there and just -- I'm playing in March Madness, so that's what I'm looking forward to.

DOLA ADEBAYO: I'm just trying to have fun, get a dub, soak it all in, the experience. Yeah.

**Q. Dola, is balance sort of a good way to describe this team? Is that maybe the best quality? You look at stats across the board, and you guys got a lot of different players that can put the ball in the bucket.**

DOLA ADEBAYO: Yeah, I'd definitely say so. If you look at it, in the MAAC we average the most assists, so we share the ball with each other pretty well. Everybody gets involved and that's why it's hard to stop us, because it's like whack-a-mole. You can stop somebody but then somebody else is going to pop off.

**Q. Dallas, how much fun is that, to play with a team that shares the ball so much and so well?**

DALLAS HOBBS: It's a lot of fun. It elevated my game a lot. Going into the season, I've just got to give credit to X and Coach Lind because they had a vision of how they wanted the team, and it worked out.

They wanted a well-balanced team. They wanted a team where it doesn't matter who scores the ball, and that's the culture we have, and that's the culture we built. It's a lot of fun playing for it.

**Q. Xavier, how satisfying is it having that vision of how you want to play but then going out and being able to execute it and hoisting that trophy and being MAAC champs?**

XAVIER LIPSCOMB: That just goes to show you how much work we put in individually and collectively. Each and every person on this team can say that they work on their game relentlessly and then just combining it all together and finding the right formula for success is just an awesome feeling.

Going out there and actually proving it and winning is an even better feeling.

**Q. Dola, did you enter the MAAC tournament with the confidence that you guys were legit and being able to hoist that trophy?**

DOLA ADEBAYO: Most definitely. Before we got into the tournament, I went around and asked my teammates, like, how much do you actually believe. I made sure that we actually believed before we got there so everything would take care of itself, because without belief you really can't get too far.

**Q. Talking about that belief, Dallas, I'm impressed because you guys have had to deal with injury, and then still having that mindset, what does that say about this ballclub?**

DALLAS HOBBS: Relentless. Do whatever it takes to win. That describes us.

We're just mentally tough. Coach Lind always told us -- well, he told me, it's going to be a lot of adversity, it's just how you respond to it. I feel like I can speak for us as a group. We dealt with a lot of adversity this year and we responded well to it every time, and I'm just proud of that.

**Q. You guys have been on a tear recently; won 11 of your last 14. What advantage do you think that gives you coming into the tournament?**

XAVIER LIPSCOMB: Honestly, coming into March Madness you have a clean slate. It's great that we won a conference and we won 11 out of 14, but right now, it's a new season. This is a postseason tournament. We're 0-0.

We've got to go out here and re-prove ourselves that we're deserving of this spot, you know, put The Mount.

DALLAS HOBBS: Exactly what X said. In my head, like I said, it's good we won a championship, but that's old news. It happened, but it's good.

I'm just trying to win the next game.

DOLA ADEBAYO: I mean, yeah, coming in 11 wins out of 14, that gives us some momentum, but at this point everybody is having some momentum because they won their conference too.

Like X said, everybody comes in with a clean slate. You can be confident; don't be over-confident and underestimate somebody. So going to come in and do what we gotta do.

THE MODERATOR: Donny Lind in his first season has been able to claim the first championship in the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference.

Coach Lind, also a little bit of a homecoming, New Knoxville, Ohio, just up the road here from Dayton. Just an opening statement on what this team has been able to achieve in your first year.

DONNY LIND: Yeah, thank you. It's been an amazing 10, 11 months that I've been back in Emmitsburg to see this team grow from the day I met them and bring in half of a new team and retain half of a team.

To see them grow and learn how to win has been one of the most impressive parts. To see them grow together and truly care about each other is the thing that I'm most proud of with this team, because that's the only way we'd be able to have any level of success.

To see them get to that point and obviously be able to leverage that into hoisting the trophy on Saturday night is unreal still a little bit to me. But it's been just an unbelievable year so far.

**Q. You mentioned your first year here, but a lot of these guys are returners and I think in the transfer portal era it's nice to have some continuity. How much of a head start did that give you to have some guys that are familiar with each other?**

DONNY LIND: Yeah, absolutely. It was great to not lose anybody. From the time I got the job, to not have anybody new go in the portal was surprising to me. I didn't think that was going to happen.

Xavier has a lot to do with it. Because of our relationship he was able to work behind the scenes and let everybody know what I was doing, I guess.

But those guys were talented players but hadn't really had an opportunity to show really how good they were, and pretty early on in the summer or in the early fall, I was able to evaluate that we probably had enough talent to be good enough in the MAAC.

It was just a matter of are we going to learn how to win; is this talent going to come together and be unselfish and play the way that we want to play.

But that older experience matters, especially this late in the year.

**Q. Your familiarity with the UD arena, you were here with Shaka, right?**

DONNY LIND: Yes.

**Q. Did you come before that already just as a kid or anything like that?**

DONNY LIND: Yeah, I'd been in the arena before as a kid. I couldn't tell you exactly when. But growing up here an hour away in a basketball-loving community, you would come to a UD game.

I do have a memory of seeing the Globetrotters in the Nutter Center when I was a kid with my family, but I don't





have a specific memory here in UD arena.

**Q. What sticks out from your experience with Shaka?**

DONNY LIND: Yeah, that was a heck of a month for sure, being here in 2011, the first time we had the First Four. But being here and the belief that we had and -- we weren't supposed to be in the tournament, and the chip on our shoulder and the belief was certainly the thing that resonated the most with that group late in the year.

Then obviously this propelled us on.

I don't have many specific basketball memories from that time probably because of lack of sleep, but the memories I have are more of the people on the ride more than the games themselves.

**Q. Coach, you guys are peaking at the right time. Is there something specific? You play an intense defensive style. Is that something that took longer to integrate and get everybody to click in on?**

DONNY LIND: Honestly, I think our recent success, we dealt with a lot of injuries earlier in the year. Dallas was hurt for a good chunk of the non-conference, most of the month of December.

As soon as he came back, the same game, Terrell got hurt for the first time. We lost four games in a row when 'Rell got hurt. After that fourth game -- in the MAAC you play Fridays and Sundays, so Monday practices are -- some days they're bang-out, aggressive, competitive days. Other days they're like recovery.

The Monday after that fourth loss in a row we went in the film room to meet before we went to go practice and we ended up not leaving for about two hours. Got back to the heart of who we want to be as a team and kind of why we weren't that team at that point.

From that point on, we kind of got back to ourselves, the team. You know, we were able to recommit to playing for each other, to putting our egos at the door and being more worried about The Mount's success as opposed to individual success.

We've had to change some things as we went because of the injuries. We're more a half court defense team now. These last, what, six games or so since 'Rell got hurt for the second time and is not coming back.

But it's more the recommitment to our culture that turned things around for us.

**Q. Dola said that you had made practice fun. I just wondered if you can expand on that or what your reaction would be to that.**

DONNY LIND: Yeah, I'm glad he's having fun. I want our players to have fun.

I fell in love with basketball when I was six or seven years old in New Knoxville, shooting on a little hoop outside my house. My son is nine right now. He's falling in love with the game of basketball.

I believe that we have the unbelievable privilege of coaching and playing a kids' game for a living, for a full scholarship. No NIL money on this team but maybe next year. But for a full scholarship and good food in our caf.

We should have fun with that. It is an unbelievable joy to get to do this every day. For me, I want our guys to have that. We try to have a lot of fun. We keep things light. We compete a lot. Competing is fun for most guys. If you don't like to compete, you probably won't play for me for very long.

Little things like every day a different guy gets to pick the music we listen to for practice. So something -- one day it's me and they've got to listen to some worship music and some Grateful Dead, and then other days it's -- most days it's modern hip-hop.

But you'd be surprised what some of the guys put on their playlist. Guys have fun. You walk in the gym and it's your music playing, you perk up a little bit. Things like that I think loosen the mood for our guys and let them enjoy what they're doing.

I don't yell and scream. I don't think I've lost my mind too many times this year. I know we're going to make mistakes. But I really try to get them to understand that if you can respond to those mistakes the right way, if we make practice competitive, then you're going to have chances to mess up, and you're going to see it's not the end of the world, but it's how we get it back that matters.

**Q. When you first went to Loyola, were you already thinking of being a coach then?**

DONNY LIND: No, I wasn't. I don't have any coaching in my family or anything like that. I didn't know I wanted to coach. I went to Loyola because my junior year of high school they were the worst team in the country. They were 1-27.

I was being recruited to play Division III basketball and I said, I know I am a Division I player, so they were the worst

team in the country, so that's why I went there.

It's the only reason. I wasn't good enough so I became a student manager and spent four years there. Sometime during my, I would say, junior year, I realized that the coaches on staff there led by Jimmy Patsos were helping me. They were helping me grow up.

I've always knew that I wanted to find a job where I help people, and about the same time I was doing an enter ship in New York City and I knew I wasn't helping anybody selling ads in New York City so I had a realization that I could do this as a career and could help young men that were in the same position as me and the guys that I was with every day and help them grow up and help them figure out who they want to be in their life and become men in this world that hopefully can function really, really well.

So sometime during that college experience I realized it and got incredibly lucky over the course of the last 15 years to be sitting here.

**Q. Everybody talks about culture, and when you're new to a place, how much easier is it when you have a leader, a high-character guy like X?**

DONNY LIND: Yeah, it makes it so much easier. And the relationship that X and I have, he was able to know right away that I wasn't full of it. Like what I said, I actually meant.

There might be some skepticism because it's very different than what they were used to.

For me to come in and have these guys buy into loving each other and caring about each other and spending time with each other off the court and being willing to talk about things that have gone on in their life that are hard to talk about -- most young men these days, they don't want to do that. They don't have any experience doing that.

When you sit in a room and you make them do it, it's a little uncomfortable at times. But X was able to kind of help us push forward those things and not be afraid to have those conversations and really jump in and get to know each other.

X is a little bit of an introvert, and so he's willing to do that. Now the other guys are more willing to do that because of his leadership.

**Q. Coach, with the short turnaround, how do you feel you match up with your opponent?**

DONNY LIND: Yeah, I mean, I've always thought -- this is

my fourth time being in Dayton for a First Four game. The idea of playing a 50/50 neutral site game in the tournament is not a bad deal.

It's pretty much going to be a coin flip type of game. American has a strong inside-outside presence with Matt Rogers who's going to be a load for us to deal with for sure.

We are like 355th in the country in the amount of threes teams take against us. We let teams shoot a lot of threes against us. They are like 50th in the country in most threes attempted.

So if they got hot from three, we're going to have to make some adjustments because they can really, really shoot it. Generally speaking, we're okay with you shooting some contested threes, maybe more than some other teams might be.

So that'll be a little contrasting style there.

I think we may have some athleticism advantages, some physicality advantages at some of the other positions. But we'll see. We'll get out there with them.

I've never coached against American. A lot of our players have familiarity with their players. Both teams have a lot of DMV ties, guys from the area on both teams, so they know each other well.

Coach Simpkins and I know each other well. We been running around a lot of the same gyms, but haven't ever coached against each other. We know each other from film I'm sure, and we'll see each other in 18 hours.

**Q. Talking about the matchup, and I asked this to your players, when is The Mount at their best?**

DONNY LIND: Yeah, it's evolved throughout the year. We're at our best when we're taking care of the basketball. That's the first thing. That's been a struggle with us. I think we're the worst team in the tournament on the year at taking care of the basketball, so we have to do that.

We have significantly better over the last month of the season or so. But when we're taking care of the basketball, and then when we are aggressive and frustrating to play against defensively.

When we are connected, we switch a lot, we are a unique defensive matchup in the half court, and yet we're big and physical, especially for our level.

And so when we can execute defensively we're really

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

tough to play against, and obviously if we're taking care of the ball we're going to get good shots. We are the best team in our league affect the field goal percentage all season; we just didn't get a lot of shots because we turned it over too much.

**Q. It's quite an accomplishment to take a team to the tournament in your first season as head coach. What about Mount St. Mary's and the culture has allowed you to do that?**

DONNY LIND: Well, people that aren't familiar with The Mount is a basketball school, much like UD. It has a long basketball tradition. Coach Jim Phelan who was at The Mount for 40 plus years and won 800 some games.

It's a travesty that he's not in the Hall of Fame. But he established that the mount was going to be about basketball. We don't have football there. The Mount community -- on campus and in the surrounding community is obsessed with mount basketball.

I was fortunate as -- to have been there as an assistant. When the job opened, I knew how good of a job it was. Mount being only its third year in the MAAC, people who aren't familiar with Emmitsburg, Maryland, and where it is and what it's like, you might be afraid of a job like The Mount.

But I was fortunate to have some inside experience and knowledge of what The Mount was and what it could be.

So that culture of an athletic department, of a university, of a community helps us be really good. We support our program -- our program is supported very well. We have the resources we need to be successful. Then we have a history and tradition of being really good.

You pair all those things together with a hungry group of guys that buy into a pretty fun culture and play pretty hard, you've got a chance to be pretty good.

**Q. You mentioned the history of The Mount. How satisfying has it been in sort of adding to that? 22 wins, a record for Division I, and then the first ever MAAC title. I know you probably had that vision in taking over the program and what was available to you, but have you even been surprised what you've been able to do year one?**

DONNY LIND: Yeah, a little bit. Honestly, that whole part of what it means to the community because of how fast it's been unfortunately hasn't really sunk in yet.

The outpouring of support that our guys have received, that

I've received over the course of the last couple days since we won is unbelievable. The 1,500 or so people that made it to Atlantic City to watch us play in the championship game, there's like 800 people that live in Emmitsburg and the school has got 2,000, so it's not exactly like -- it's a high percentage that made it to the game.

But it is humbling to say that I have any part to do with the history of Mount basketball because those people who have gone before me are such good coaches and there have been so many good players that have built this tradition that I'm super fortunate to be a little part of it.

**Q. You mentioned Jim Phelan. How can it be that he's not in the hall? He's been around a long time.**

DONNY LIND: Yeah, I don't get a vote, but what Coach Phelan did at The Mount is unbelievable. You know, five Final Fours and a national championship in Division II, sustained success over almost 50 years, and like I said, built a culture at a school that sustains to this day.

The cool thing about it, you come to a Mount game, the cool thing about a Mount game is there's little kids at the game whose parents went to the game with their parents, who maybe were a student at the Mount or they grew up in Frederick County and would come to games when Coach Phelan was coaching in Memorial gym and they're now the third generation of people coming to these games and they grew up loving The Mount.

I've worked a lot of places and there are very few that have the type of people that they just grow up and that's their team. We have that at The Mount. That's really special. There's not a lot of mid-majors that can say that.

**Q. You've worked with a lot of other really good coaches that have been in this situation before. Any good pieces of advice you've gotten?**

DONNY LIND: I've been told by everybody I have to stop and enjoy it. That's one of the things I'm really bad at, so I'm going to try my best, stop and take a couple pictures and things like that, which I don't like to do.

The biggest thing I have to do is try -- I've been told, is make sure our guys are in the right frame of mind to be ready to play. The guys I've worked for have helped me understand that their mental space is what we're fighting for every day, and if we can have them prepared and confident and loose, then we'll have a chance. We'll give ourselves a chance to win.

So I'm really trying to focus in on them and spend as much time as I can around them, talking to them, having those



conversations, so when we get out tomorrow night, we can play with a free head.

**Q. How long has it been since you've been to New Knoxville?**

DONNY LIND: So I've probably -- it's probably been -- I left when I was 15. I probably came back for about three, four years after that, so it's probably been 15 years or so since I've been back.

**Q. How many people do you have coming tomorrow night?**

DONNY LIND: A few. I've got some aunts and uncles coming, some friends and family locally. But no, it'll be cool to have them here. They don't get to see very many of our games other than on ESPN+, so it'll be nice to have some people rooting for us that don't get to see us all the time.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports.