

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Four

Tuesday, March 18, 2025

Dayton, Ohio, USA

UD Arena

Xavier Musketeers
Coach Sean Miller
Jerome Hunter
Dailyn Swain
Ryan Conwell
Zach Freemantle

Media Conference



going up against your old teammates, Julian Larry and Jayson Kent, and what you think the experience will be like.

RYAN CONWELL: I think it's just a great experience for both teams, just it being both of ours -- me, Jul and Kent, all our first time playing in March Madness. It's kind of full circle just the fact that we're playing against each other. But I think just two great teams going head to head, and I think it'll be a great game.

Q. Dailyn, you're no stranger to this building. What's it feel like to be back? Maybe a bit bigger stage than what you're used to.

DAILYN SWAIN: It's a great feeling. I was just telling my teammates that I got to play here twice in the Final Four in my high school days, and hopefully it'll be a different result this time. I'm glad for the opportunity.

Q. Zach, I wanted to get your thoughts on the post play and the forwards and the big guys inside for Texas and the challenges they present for you guys.

ZACH FREEMANTLE: Yeah, Texas has a very good front court. This obviously starts with Arthur Kaluma and Kadin Shedrick. They're both talented young men, and it's going to be a big challenge for the entire team, not just myself, to be able to keep them off the glass and match their physicality, and everything will be a very big challenge. Whoever is able to do that better will have a good chance to win the game.

Q. Dailyn, we've heard from Ryan and Zach a lot the last couple weeks, but in your opinion what's been the biggest change for Xavier in the last 16 games going 12-4 really since that St. John's loss?

DAILYN SWAIN: I would say the main thing is defensive rebounding. Coach Miller talks about it all the time, from around that game, talking about St. John's in the Cintas Center, we were towards the bottom of the Big East in defensive rebounding, and we made that a focal point in our practices and game plans.

And we've worked our way towards the top and among the top 20 teams in the country in defensive rebounding. So I

Q. Jerome, your excitement in seeing your name Sunday night?

JEROME HUNTER: It's the most unreal feeling I could ever experience since I've been in college. We was all just so happy and we just didn't know.

Q. Dailyn, your reaction when Xavier popped up on the board?

DAILYN SWAIN: I would say the same as Jerome. It was a super unreal feeling. It almost made it better knowing if we were not going to be in or not, and my first time playing in March Madness, so it was that much better.

Q. Ryan, for you, sort of heartbreak a year ago, and being in here this season?

RYAN CONWELL: Yeah, first and foremost, I've got to give all glory to God, just to be in this position, like you said. Last year I was kind of in a similar position, but I'm glad just this year we came out on the other side of things, and we just have this great opportunity to play.

Q. Zach, you're excited at being in the show here in March Madness?

ZACH FREEMANTLE: Yeah, I'm just super thankful to have the opportunity to play in front of so many people in such a great venue.

Q. Ryan, I was interested to get your thoughts on



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think that's a testament to how hard we work and how bought in we are.

Q. Looking back at you guys' season, was there a specific game or moment where you felt like you truly came together?

JEROME HUNTER: I'd probably say after the St. John's game, maybe after the Creighton game when we lost at Creighton. I felt like that was the game that was the turning point for us to see if we were really going to lock in and buy into our team and just keep flipping the coin, like Coach tells us, and winning games and take each game at a time. I think that's what this team did a real good job of.

DAILYN SWAIN: I would say around the same time, after the St. John's game we came together as a team, not really with the coaches and stuff like that, and just had a man-to-man conversation, what we wanted to do, what our goals are and the things we have to eliminate and the things we have to bring to the table to get to where we want to be, and I think we did that.

Q. Jerome, Zach mentioned going from the lows to the highs from Thursday at Madison Square Garden to hearing your name on Selection Sunday. What were those two days like for you? Was it different throughout the team of becoming amateur bracketologists for those two days and watching other games, or how did the team differ on that?

JEROME HUNTER: I just tried not to watch it, not get caught up into it. I had a feeling that we were going to be in. I didn't lose confidence. I just kept -- the next two days, like you said, were just a long two days just because we just didn't know. But I was very confident them two days just thinking we were going to be in, knowing we were going to be in, and we're here now.

Q. How would you describe Texas' front court, and what are the special challenges maybe the entire Texas team represents?

ZACH FREEMANTLE: Yeah, I would describe their team as a very physical front court. Both the 4 and the 5 spot does a lot of damage on the offensive glass.

So it's going to be a big challenge for us. And as Dailyn mentioned a little earlier, we've really emphasized defensive rebounding over the past few weeks. So it's going to be a big clash of our defensive rebounding to their offensive rebounding.

Q. Jerome, the only one up here with NCAA Tournament experience. What do you remember most

about that run a couple of years ago and maybe an insight of -- I know the faces have changed for Texas, but maybe the style of play and the concepts are the same. Anything you're taking away from that game?

JEROME HUNTER: Just thinking back two years ago, I just know they played really hard. We played hard, we played fast, they played hard, they played fast. I feel like that's what they emphasize over there. I feel like if we come out matching their intensity, sticking to our game plan, it should be a good game for us.

Q. Jerome, the excitement of playing close to home, talk about that. Talk about your feelings of being just down the road.

JEROME HUNTER: Yeah, so my whole family is coming to the game. It's just a blessing that they can still come to the game, and especially a game like this, a big game that's meaningful. We didn't even know that we were going to be here. So for them being able to come here, me being close to home, it's just a great feeling for me.

Q. Zach, you've had a tremendous career -- actually you had to deal with a lot, injuries. How satisfying is it being at this moment and being in the NCAA Tournament?

ZACH FREEMANTLE: Yeah, I can't describe how grateful I am for this opportunity. Obviously we didn't know that we were going to go in. Jerome said he felt pretty confident. I would say I was kind of on the other side. But I'm just so thankful to be here, and I'm really excited to make the most of this opportunity.

Q. Ryan, last five games you're averaging right around 24 points a game, and of course you had the great night at Madison Square Garden. What really clicked for you the last few weeks of the season to hit that stretch and really propel this offense with your root shooting?

RYAN CONWELL: I would just say staying consistent with my work, just trusting in work that I put in daily, just listening to the coaches and the feedback they're giving me. I know my teammates, they trust me, and they help put me in the best position to do what I need to do on the court.

I think it's just you're going to have up and downs every season, but I just stay with it.

Q. Ryan, do you consider this a clash of styles between the two conferences? I don't know if there's anything you noticed there. Also, how would you

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assess Tre Johnson, their freshman?

RYAN CONWELL: Yeah, I would say like a clash of styles between the conferences, the Big East and the SEC. I don't think it's too much different, to be honest. I think they're both physical conferences with athletic, skillful players.

I think Tre Johnson is a very skillful player, as well, and looking forward to just playing against the entire Texas team and the matchup on Wednesday.

Q. Do you think the SEC gets too much credit?

RYAN CONWELL: Yeah, I think that's just not on me to judge, to be honest. At the end of the day, it's my job to go out there and perform and play basketball. That's up to others.

Q. Jerome, Zach said on Sunday everyone talks about how magical the tournament is and how quick it seems to go by. Was that your feeling in 2023 when you were able to be on part of that Sweet 16 run?

JEROME HUNTER: For me I'll say yes. Yes. That first game, when we didn't know how it was going to go, Coach Miller always told us, like, playing that first game and you lose that first game, it's like you wasn't even there.

That's the main thing I'm just trying to focus on with this team, is just like let's just keep advancing and advancing because the more we advance, the more people are going to remember us.

Q. Just wanted to know how you guys were able to hold things together while Zach was out injured, the time period he was out. How was you guys able to hold it together?

JEROME HUNTER: I just think we were very optimistic that he was going to come back. We didn't think he was out for the whole season or anything like that. We knew we had a chance of hope, so we played for that. We played for that hope. We played for him. We played knowing that he was going to come back and be a big part of what we've been doing.

DAILYN SWAIN: Yeah, I would say the same thing, just being optimistic, knowing how mentally tough Zach is and how excited he is for this year, we knew he'd be back.

And just like last year, we went through a lot of adversity, too. I wouldn't say it's new to us, just learning to keep playing and play for him and just having that chip on our shoulder, it made it that much easier for us.

RYAN CONWELL: Yeah, I would just say the same thing. Just coming to practice and coming to work every day, despite Free being out, just trusting the process, and just thank God that he's back.

Q. Zach, as you start the season, you look back on the exhibition game that you played against Dayton in this building, do you think that'll help you tomorrow night trying to get adjusted to the surroundings?

ZACH FREEMANTLE: I mean, yeah, maybe a little bit, just having a little bit of familiarity with the arena, the rims, the lights and all that. Also obviously it was a pretty good crowd when we did play Dayton back in the preseason. So just having that experience with the crowd and everything, I think it will be good for us.

Q. Jerome, how would you describe Coach Miller as a coach? What are his strengths, and how is he during games?

JEROME HUNTER: I feel like his strengths are he's a very honest coach. He tells it how it is. He doesn't sugarcoat a lot of things. If he wants stuff done a certain way, he's going to tell you he wants it done that way, and he's going to make sure it gets done.

As a coach I feel like he gives us confidence. He helps us play harder just by coaching and him being confident, then just him being an older coach and winning a lot of games from Arizona and him just being a known coach gives us confidence, as well.

Q. This is supposed to be a neutral court, but do you have any concerns about maybe the people from Dayton here getting behind Texas with the history of Xavier? I know you guys don't have a lot of firsthand knowledge with the Dayton and Xavier stuff, but do you feel like the fans might come out in burnt orange?

JEROME HUNTER: Well, I feel like we come out and play basketball. We don't worry about the fans and people that's rooting against us or with us. If you're rooting against us, then we're going to play for you, but if you're not, we're going to go out there and give you the same play-hard team that we do every game.

DAILYN SWAIN: Yeah, I don't think it would be much of a concern worrying about that. I wouldn't say that's one of the things we're worried about, no.

Q. Ryan, what are your thoughts on winning the fans?

RYAN CONWELL: Yeah, kind of like what 'Rome and



Swain said. We don't really worry too much about that. We just worry about winning the game.

ZACH FREEMANTLE: Yeah, we're not too far down the road, so we'll have a lot of people here, too, so I think it'll be a very high-energy game, and I'm just really excited.

Q. Ryan, that feeds into mind, you envisioned what Cintas Center was like when you were recruited by Xavier in the portal. From what you saw during the regular season with crowds against UConn and Creighton at home, what kind of environment are you expecting the fans to bring when they come north on I-75 tomorrow?

RYAN CONWELL: I know they're going to bring their energy. We love our fans and how they are always by our side. I know they'll be in the building on Wednesday for sure.

Q. When is Xavier at their best?

RYAN CONWELL: I would say just when we're all just together, whether it's defensively or offensively, just clicking on all cylinders. We kind of just take a lot of pride in the defense, and I think our defense fuels us in transition and/or offense. When we're playing defensively at the highest level, that's when we're at our best.

Q. What's the best quality of this basketball team?

ZACH FREEMANTLE: I would say probably our togetherness. We've got a very tight-knit group of guys who obviously we've been through a lot of adversity this year. We've been through a lot together, and we're ready to get some wins together.

Q. Jerome, what's your favorite thing about this basketball team?

JEROME HUNTER: I just think we all get along so well. And I think that just makes a good basketball team, when your whole team gets along and we can all play around and joke around. But when it's time to get serious, we all get serious.

Q. Dailyn, what do you feel like the best basketball game the Musketeers played on the year?

DAILYN SWAIN: Would say Creighton at home. I think we made a statement with that game, just showing that we could play with anybody in our conference, and putting on display how hungry we were to be here and play in the NCAA Tournament.

Q. Jerome, your favorite March Madness moment?

JEROME HUNTER: I would just say for me, making it to the Sweet 16. That was probably the best feeling I felt my whole time playing basketball.

Q. Dailyn, growing up, do you have a favorite March Madness moment?

DAILYN SWAIN: Mean, I would say Kris Jenkins, the Villanova game winner, just seeing Coach Jay Wright. He said "Bang" when the shot went up, and he walked off really cool. That's the one that sticks out to me.

RYAN CONWELL: Actually, I forget what year it was, but I ended up going to the Final Four when it was in Indianapolis. I think it was 2015. I was actually at those games when Duke was playing and Wisconsin. I would say just being able to watch those games as a little kid and now be playing in March Madness is a great feeling.

ZACH FREEMANTLE: I mean, I would just say seeing Texas and Xavier on the screen on Sunday was an unreal feeling.

THE MODERATOR: Before we open the floor for questions, Coach, what this means to your group and the season that you've had for 24-25.

SEAN MILLER: Yeah, first off, I think all of us at Xavier are just thrilled to be a part of March Madness and the NCAA Tournament. I don't think it's ever been more difficult to be a part of March Madness than it is right now. It's so competitive. Never more parity that has existed in the sport that we are all a part of than right now.

We're honored to be here. We feel like we've earned our way here. It was quite a climb for us. I think you can look at our season in a couple different parts. I think we've certainly hit our stride and played at our top level the last eight weeks of the year, and again, just very meaningful to be a part of this tournament and excited to play Texas.

Q. Sean, last year didn't go like you wanted and you had some massive transfers and rebuilding. If you could speak to how hard is that to assemble a new team, which a lot of coaches are doing now, and expect a continuous, constant, consistent team?

SEAN MILLER: Yeah, I think you build a program one year at a time now. I'm sure there's different versions of that. But all of us -- there's never been more change from the spring, let's call it early April to the beginning of the school year in late August or early September. All of us go through more change than ever before.



So I think as you learn to adapt and evolve and grow, what works at Xavier may be different at another school. My mindset is what works best for our program here at Xavier.

It does take longer to build a team, especially when that group comes together. I think the summer is more important now than ever.

But at the end of the day, it still comes down to building a together group, a culture, bringing them together, and trying to play for that name on the front of your chest. Playing this game for the win and to be a part of something that's truly bigger than yourself, bigger than your individual goals.

I think all of us try to bring that out in our young people that we coach, and to have a team that's truly like that, I think that gives you a great opportunity and advantage.

For us, back to the first part of your question, a year ago we had some amazing injuries, crazy injuries, and that made, I think, the climb from this spring to where we are today even that much more satisfying because a couple of the guys that had season-ending injuries a year ago are on this year's team.

And I think part of the joy that we experience right now is to see how far they came, not just this season but in their own story, to fight through all the different things that they went through and to be here with us today.

Q. You had the press conference Sunday; how quick do you hit the ground running with film and scout, and what stands out the most to you about Texas?

SEAN MILLER: You have to hit it right away. You have all the resources and the ability. If I said I'd like to see every three-point shot that Texas made from the SEC this year, I'm sure I could have had that loaded in about 15 minutes real time. With the staff that we have and all the technology, man, you can really get into it right away.

But I think Texas, we played against them two years ago. I don't believe they have a single player on their team this year that played against us. We have one, Jerome Hunter. So the faces have changed.

But I think Rodney Terry and his team, they pride themselves on the defensive end, tough-minded defense. They do a good job of defending, and I think that their defense, like a lot of teams in the Big East, when they're flying around and playing together, it leads to transition, which I think could be their best offense.

So they get out in the open court and they make you pay. I think they do an outstanding job there.

Johnson, their freshman, speaks for himself. If you lead the SEC in scoring this year and you're a freshman, I don't have to say anything more. He's one of the best players in college basketball.

I believe that they have good depth and a great surrounding cast, as well. We respect the league they came from. We respect them a great deal.

I think for us, we have to play at our best to have an opportunity to beat them tomorrow.

Q. Coach, what's your favorite thing about this basketball team?

SEAN MILLER: Their resilience that we have as a group. If you go through the storylines, Zach Freemantle, three season-ending injuries, three season-ending surgeries, and we thought we lost him again this year. We ended up playing without him for three weeks.

To watch him stay with us from start to finish, overcome all those things, get his college degree, be an All-Big East player in his last year, and it end here in the NCAA Tournament, if you can't find some joy in that story, there's something wrong with you.

There's guys like Ryan Conwell who a year ago played at Indiana State, and I know Ryan has a couple teammates on Texas's team, those guys went through a Section Sunday show a year ago after winning 30 games, and it didn't go their way. They were left out of last year's NCAA Tournament.

Here we are a couple days ago at another Selection Sunday show a year later for him, and you just -- God, you're looking at him saying, I hope it goes different than it went a year earlier for him, and it did. Just to see the joy on his face and just -- you could tell how much it meant.

We are a resilient group filled with different stories, and we stuck with it this year. For us to play our best at the end, it sounds good, but it's not easy when you're going through maybe some tough times early, and we were able to overcome those.

Q. Sean, just want to ask you, obviously Tre Johnson gets a lot of attention, but from your vantage point, what stands out with Tramon Mark and Chendall Weaver?

SEAN MILLER: Yeah, so the way I look at Texas is they



have a brand-new team all of a sudden. I was actually confused when I started to watch them the other day because I watched Mark play the point guard, and do it really well, and I know he's scoring and played very well in the recent games and in the SEC tournament.

It's like they shifted him there, and why, and this guy Weaver, you start watching him fly around, and man, the guy plays with an amazing amount of energy, great defender, offensive rebounder, unselfish, cutter.

Now that Weaver is back playing and they've shifted Mark, I think they're playing in some ways a different brand of basketball, a different style with him at the top with the ball more. Meaning Mark. Then obviously Johnson and Shedrick, there's a lot of good players on Texas's team.

I think their depth really jumps out. When they sub, they get quality play off the bench. You have Pope that on a given night can lead them in scoring and really get hot. We respect their talent. We think they're a very, very good team for sure.

But it is interesting because if you start to look at the stat sheet and then you watched them in the SEC tournament, you could really tell what Weaver means to their team, and I don't know who wouldn't want to have that guy on their team. He gives you everything. He really is, I think, a difference maker for their team.

Q. Coaches always say they want to be playing their best ball at the end of the year, but it doesn't always work out that way. What changed for you guys over these last eight weeks? And I know the players talked about having a meeting among themselves with the coaches not present, but what changed in these last eight weeks to propel you guys forward?

SEAN MILLER: You know, I always look at those meetings -- if things go well, everybody talks about that meeting, especially the players-only meeting. I think they have a players-only meeting every year. We just don't hear about them when things don't go well. It becomes the story when things go -- almost as if, man, coming out of that meeting, a lightbulb went off.

But look, that meeting, they talked -- I think it was after our St. John's home game, and St. John's beat us up. They really did, physically. They can beat a lot of teams up. They're really athletic, physical and hard playing. They taught us a valuable lesson on that night.

I don't think anybody felt good about the direction of where we were going.

But I would say right after that game, back to their point, this meeting, we flipped the script on a couple areas of the game, one of which is we became a much better defensive rebounding team.

At one point we struggled to get a big rebound, and we became good. As a matter of fact, at the end, we actually became one of the Big East's best defensive rebounding teams. That's not as easy to fix, and I give our team a lot of credit for being better in that area.

I also think that when Zach Freemantle got injured for us this year, he missed three weeks. When he came back, it's not like you just snap your finger and he's back and everything goes good. We then went through like another adjustment period, and then once we got through that, we clearly have played our best basketball. We really have.

I think the leadership, some of the resilience that I mentioned a few minutes ago has been a real storyline and part of our success.

Q. There's probably not a program in the country outside of Dayton that has more history in this building than you guys do. Do you think having that sort of familiarity and that sort of closeness to the building and the university gives you an advantage?

SEAN MILLER: Well, I think the proximity to Cincinnati is always going to be some form of an advantage. A, travel. We were in a bus. We didn't have to wait for an airplane or fly a couple of hours. I think all of us as we've gotten into this month of March, you relish that short trip as a coach and as a player. That's one.

Second is our fan base is second to none. They love Xavier basketball. My hope is that we have an arena that supports us, really, that they travel here to Dayton to watch us play in this tournament.

In terms of the familiarity, we played earlier in the year, as you know, in an open scrimmage against Dayton, but if you took that away, because we're in different leagues now, our players don't have as much familiarity with UD Arena and Dayton as, for example, the players I coached the first time when we were actually in the Atlantic 10.

But it's a great arena. It's a great basketball city. The fact that we could drive up here, we'll take it.

Q. You mentioned it, but what are some of your favorite memories of coaching here and being part of that rivalry looking back? Secondly, do you have any concern that maybe this won't be -- you're hoping you're going to bring some fans, but maybe some of

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the neutral fans won't be neutral in your game?

SEAN MILLER: I would have a hard time believing that. There's no way. My memories of UD Arena are simple. First of all, my brother was the coach here and he took Dayton to an Elite 8. I think that's a great memory for my family. Because of that, Dayton always has a special place in my heart.

I think the best National Anthem that I've ever heard was played on a saxophone by Dr. Willie, which was always played prior to the Xavier-Dayton game. If you've never heard him play the National Anthem, there's nothing like it. That's what I think of.

But really the biggest memory of coming here for me is we played in the Atlantic 10 tournament, I was the head coach at Xavier the first time, Dayton and Xavier both in the A-10 at the time, and we came up here needing to win four games in four days. At that point in college basketball, I don't believe a team had ever won four games in four days and won their conference tournament.

St. Joe's was here. They were No. 1 in America. They were 30-0. Dayton was very good, and in fact we won four games in four days, cut the nets down and went on to the Elite 8. We lost to JJ Redick in Duke, Coach K in Atlanta. It was an incredible run, 2004 if I'm not mistaken. Of all the teams I've been a part of, I don't know if I've ever been on a magical run like the one that team went on those couple of months.

As a matter of fact, we talk about it with this year's team. We have some similar characteristics of that team: Senior leadership, a team that really played their best at the end.

Q. The two conferences, I don't know if there's different styles overall, y'all's and the SEC? Could that come into play tomorrow night?

SEAN MILLER: I've been watching the SEC tournament and really Texas in general, and obviously the SEC had a historical year. The quality of coaches, quality of players, quality of teams, the athleticism and physicality, it just jumps off the TV.

We have great respect for the conference they came from and the games that Texas had to play and win to get here to this tournament. I mean, it's awesome to watch.

Then I'm going to say the league we play in, the Big East, in my mind it's so special. College basketball is the thing in our league, and everybody -- all eggs are in that basket.

We have some great storylines in our conference this year.

The defending -- two-time defending national champs, UConn and Coach Pitino and the rise of St. John's, Marquette and Creighton are terrific. We had the nation's leading scorer, Dixon at Villanova, and obviously us being the fifth team that made the tournament.

We also play 20 games. We beat each other up, 10 at home, 10 on the road. If you watch our conference tournament in Madison Square Garden, it's really indescribable. I cannot give you words of what it feels like to play in that tournament.

Just coming from there, we have a lot of pride in representing the Big East, and we realize that's on full display tomorrow night. That's part of the pride of the game, of us being able to represent the conference we come from against Texas and the SEC.

Q. How would you describe the identity of this year's Xavier team?

SEAN MILLER: We've become a much improved defensive team, and because of that, I think when we've been at our best, we've been able to play both good offense and defense. We like to play the game with pace and movement on offense. We utilize the three-point shot. However, I think that getting to the free-throw line and being able to be strong on offense is also part of who we are.

But we're a man-to-man defensive team, and I think where we once were and where we are today are two different places.

I think a big challenge for us is to be that defensive team against a really good Texas team tomorrow night.

Q. For a group of guys, outside of Jerome Hunter, that haven't played in the NCAA Tournament before, what's the message from the coaching staff to calm the nerves going into this game and approach it as just another game as much as you can?

SEAN MILLER: The way I look at that is we've, in essence, been playing elimination games, tournament games, and that's what creates sometimes the excitement and the anxiety, that you know that when the horn sounds, if you're not the winner, it's over.

We've been in that mode for a long time. Although we might have had more games on our schedule, there's none of us that thought that it was going to be okay for us to lose and still have the opportunity to play in the NCAA Tournament.



I think we really call on that. We've been running our race, so to speak, with blinders on, focused on what we can do to be the best we can be, to take it kind of one day, one moment at a time, and not allow sometimes the outside excitement create that type of anxiety that can get in your way.

I think that's the most helpful tool that we have, which also includes the Big East Tournament, in which we just finished playing a great game against Marquette, in which we lost 89-87 in front of 18,000 people. You go through that, you, I believe, become hardened for that next opportunity.

I have no doubt our guys are prepared for the big moment and the big game based on what I just said. Look, it is a big moment. Playing Texas from the SEC here at the beginning of the NCAA Tournament, I think all of us recognize what a great opportunity it is for us.

Q. With the uncertainty of getting here over the last couple of weeks and being from Cincinnati, watching all the local sports stations that interviewed you, you didn't look too good. Are you okay now?

SEAN MILLER: I'm not sure how I take that, I didn't look too good. I probably don't look good right now. That's who God made: Me.

Look, you try to take it one day at a time. You feel the stress through your own players. That's really where your heart is. You want it so badly for everybody, coach, me, staff, fans, our administration, our university. But it all starts and stops with the players you coach. To watch careers end in the NCAA Tournament is a huge difference for that player's experience.

I go back to my own experience as a player, if you'd say could you recall every NCAA Tournament game that I played in as a player, I could rattle them all off, almost to the score of the game. Why? Because it meant so much to me and my teammates.

I've never forgotten that as a coach. It's about March Madness, to get here, to stay in it, to be able to advance, and I think to see that joy the other night be a part of our players' lives was an amazing moment for all of us.

Q. I'm curious as to how coaches approach a tournament game when you have player or players who have gone up against players on the other side, in this case Ryan Conwell being teammates of Julian Larry and Jayson Kent. Do you talk to them much about that? Does that go into the conversation let alone any kind of game plan?

SEAN MILLER: No, it's really a great question. I check with Ryan throughout the year and just ask him different questions, how his former coach is doing, talked to his former teammates. They had a very close-knit team, which I'm sure you realized, at Indiana State.

From my understanding, those guys stay in regular close contact throughout the year, and the irony of here we are and Ryan and those two guys playing against each other, you can imagine the pride of their coach and the program of Indiana State just to watch three of these guys playing against each other tomorrow night.

But it is really interesting, and again, when you talk about the modern game or how things are different in 2025, there would be an example right there of something that is probably more prevalent now than ever before, and it's going to happen more as we keep going down the road.

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