

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Four

Wednesday, March 19, 2025

Dayton, Ohio, USA

UD Arena

Mount St. Mary's Mountaineers Coach Donny Lind Dola Adebayo Dallas Hobbs Jedy Cordilia

Media Conference

Mount St. Mary's 83, American 72

DONNY LIND: First of all, I've got to thank God for this opportunity that we have, to get to be here, to get to coach these guys, I've got the best job in the world. I'm beyond blessed to be here.

It was a different game than we've played over the course of the last couple weeks. Obviously offense was clicking pretty well for us. But credit to American; they battled the whole time, obviously without losing their guy there early, but they showed no letup.

But I was really proud of the way we shared the ball today, the way that we were unselfish on the offensive end. And then when we needed to there for most of the second half, we were able to lock in and get a bunch of stops.

Q. Dola, did you feel that was the best first half you guys have played all season?

DOLA ADEBAYO: Yeah, that was crazy, just to see how the ball was flying around, this man hitting crazy step-backs. But that's normal for him at this point.

I was just proud of how our guys went out there and performed today. It was great.

Q. Dallas, you seemed locked in from the jump and everybody else fed off your energy. No nerves, no jitters today?

DALLAS HOBBS: No, I was nervous. It's safe to say this was the biggest game I've played in in my life, but you



don't feel that type of stuff when you're out there with your brothers. And I know if I mess up, he got me back; if I mess up, he got me back. And it's 15 deep. It's easy to go out there, and the ball was just going in tonight.

Q. Jedy and Dola, what was your approach to playing Matt Rogers? And when he went out of the game in the second half, did you feel you had a green light to attack the basket?

JEDY CORDILIA: Yeah, we came in with the mentality to just attack and attack and get him in foul trouble, something like that. But he got hurt unfortunately, so I hope he recovers fast. But we just wanted to attack and see what happens.

DOLA ADEBAYO: Yeah, credit to him. He's a great player. Like Jedy said, it sucked that he got hurt, and I'm praying that he gets better quick, too.

Mindset stays the same. Whoever is in front of us, they've got to see us. That's how it is.

Q. Dola, X comes out, hits that three immediately. Did today kind of feel different with adrenaline from the beginning of this game?

DOLA ADEBAYO: I mean, it's exciting, but I feel like it's just another game. That's how you've got to play if you want to -- you can't play too high, you can't play too low, you've got to stay even keel. That's how it felt for me.

DALLAS HOBBS: Sorry, I didn't hear the question.

Q. Just the adrenaline in this game --

DALLAS HOBBS: It was flowing, but it felt like any other game, honestly. It felt like any other game. It was a big stage, but I've got my brothers with me, so it was easy to go out there.

JEDY CORDILIA: I had a lot of adrenaline, but my guys had my back, and when the ball got up, we just started playing.

Q. Dola, you said it's just another game, but your next game is Duke down there. Is that just another game?



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What's that feel like?

DOLA ADEBAYO: It's just another game.

Q. Why is that?

DOLA ADEBAYO: It's basketball. It doesn't matter how big they are, how they're ranked. They've still got to tie their shoes just like me. That's it.

Q. Dallas, Coach mentioned that this was a different type of game than you guys have been playing. How did you think you would adjust to that pace? Because that was there really from the start on both sides.

DALLAS HOBBS: In the MAAC, most of our games, they're gritty, nasty, and it comes down to defense. This game it just came down to who got more buckets. Yeah, credit to them, they're a really good ballclub. But yeah, it's a different game.

Q. What's it mean for the university? And I know you've got to play Duke in the next game, but what about this game tonight for you guys?

DALLAS HOBBS: It means a lot to the university. And as far as playing Duke next, our mentality is the same thing, just going in and following the game plan, follow what Coach says, and hopefully go out there and get a win.

JEDY CORDILIA: Yeah, it means a lot to the university. They came out today. I saw a bunch of them sitting right there. So there's a lot of love. So I appreciate you y'all Mount fans.

DOLA ADEBAYO: Yeah, shout out to Mount fans that came and supported us. It means a lot to get past this play-in game because before I got here in 2021, we didn't get to experience that. I'm just proud we get to keep on making history.

Q. Dallas, you mentioned this was a game about buckets. You strike me as somebody who would enjoy a game like that, good scorer. Was that fun? Were you in the moment? What was the feeling out there for you?

DALLAS HOBBS: I was definitely in the moment. I had a lot of fun. But it was just fun just being out there on that stage. This is something that we all -- growing up as a basketball player, as a kid, this is something you want to do.

Like I said, the shots just happened to fall tonight. Yeah, it was very fun.

THE MODERATOR: First tournament win, Donny Lind.

Q. Did you feel that X's shot really set the tone for you guys in the first half in general, and was that your best first half of the season?

DONNY LIND: I don't think we scored 48 in a game, in a half. But I think the guys really rallied around X. He's a leader. He pushes our culture forward every day. For him to have the confidence to just step up and take and make that first shot, I think it gave everybody a sense of, all right, we're here.

Part of these games is you've got to settle in. There is a lot of adrenaline. There is a little bit of emotion. As much as these guys say it's another game, maybe that felt like that at the end, but in the beginning there's a lot of emotion.

For your leader to step up and bang that first shot, that gives everybody a sense of calm, like okay, it's another game.

Q. When you were starting this coaching journey, could you have in your wildest imagination thought that one day you'd be coaching against Duke in the NCAA Tournament, and what's your feeling about going from a big stage to now an even bigger stage?

DONNY LIND: Yeah, wow. You know, I'm really bad -- Greg will tell you, I talk to him a lot, I'm really bad at big picture. I'm really bad at thinking through what my career is going to look like. I really just want to do whatever I can to serve these guys and help them become the best they can be, use the game of basketball to hopefully teach them how to be the men that they want to be.

Today when we walked out there for the National Anthem, it was a little bit of a "holy cow" moment for me. Now to get to move on with this group and let them keep playing and to go down to Raleigh and play Duke is awesome.

Obviously, like all of us, we've watched a lot of Duke basketball as kids just because they were on TV before ESPN+ where we could watch whatever game we wanted. Certainly it is an exciting opportunity. But like the guys say, we've got to get ready and give them everything we've got.

Q. Donny, when you're used to playing one way and it's a very different type of game, when did you feel comfortable in that style, and did you feel you guys were dictating it versus matching the other team's pace?

DONNY LIND: Well, I love offense. I would prefer to play this way. I would rather win 83-73 than 53-43. I didn't mind. I was just a little worried that with all the injuries we have and the lack of depth that we'd have enough firepower to make it through.

Earlier in the year we were playing a lot more like this, a lot more up and down, shooting a lot of threes in transition. Our guys fell back into a comfort level with that.

So I wasn't too worried about it, but I was a little -- gave me a little pause, our defensive transition defense, especially in the first half. Once we cleaned that up, we were able to get some stops and kind of extend the lead a little bit.

Q. When you have a good first half like that and guys are so energized, what's the message at halftime to make sure that they stay locked in for the second half?

DONNY LIND: Yeah, the 20-minute halftime is like a hard deal, right, especially when you're playing well. You just want to get right back out there.

We let them rest and recover, but we really tried to set their mind be that it's basically starting over. Everybody is going to be fresh. They're going to come out, obviously season on the line at this point of the year, so be ready for the punch that they were going to take, and obviously deliver a counterpunch.

Q. Did you guys prep for American? What stood out about Rogers as a player? And then, obviously, tough losing him.

DONNY LIND: Yeah, I feel terrible for him. His versatility really stood out, and his will -- he plays really, really hard. He's emotional in a great way for their team. So when you watch them on film, you know, hey, we've got to make sure that he can't get it going, especially early, because they kind of feed off that.

Like I said, I hope he gets better. But they're a really, really good team just like us. When one guy goes down, somebody else comes up. They still scored 72, so obviously they can still score the ball.

Q. You talked about how good your bigs are all season long. Can you talk about the job that Dola and Jedy did, especially when Rogers went out in the second half?

DONNY LIND: Yeah, like I said, those guys are two of the best bigs in the MAAC, two of the best mid major bigs in the country, and hopefully we can see them against two of the better bigs in the country on Friday and see where they

stack up.

Those guys control a lot of the game for us. They're a safety net for our team, safety net for me. You can trust that they're going to make a good decision most of the time out there. And I have a lot of confidence that when the ball touches their hands, whether it's around the basket or even on the perimeter, that they're going to make the right play for our team.

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