

# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - Saint Peter's vs Tennessee

Thursday, March 21, 2024

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Spectrum Center

**Saint Peter's Peacocks**

**Bashir Mason**

**Marcus Randolph**

**Latrell Reid**

Media Conference

Tennessee - 83, Saint Peter's - 49

BASHIR MASON: Man, those guys are good. Ton of respect for Tennessee, how hard they played, how detailed they were, taking away our strengths, how physical they were. Gang rebounded the ball.

Coach Barnes does a tremendous job. The amount of respect they showed for us in terms of how hard they played and the detailed they broke us down, just a ton, a ton of respect for that program. I can't say enough about them.

One game for us, one loss, you'll hear on this stage, sucks. But I'm confident in my guys and the season that we had. I feel great about us being back here soon.

**Q. Latrell, being back here now, does that put in perspective how hard it was two years ago, how hard it is to advance in this tournament? Does this put perspective on this?**

LATRELL REID: Yeah, for sure. It goes to show how amazing that run was. I know everybody was expecting something like that again, but it just goes to show how crazy this tournament is.

**Q. How difficult was their size to handle and their defense? Did that take you by surprise even though you watched a lot of film?**

MARCUS RANDOLPH: I would just say it's very detailed, back to what Coach said. Every little strength they tried to take away, and they were very good at it.



LATRELL REID: Yeah, for sure. Obviously it's like you're playing yourself but like three inches taller. It's a little different. Windows close a little faster. Every time you make a mistake, they make you pay. That's why they're at the level they're at.

We knew we couldn't make many mistakes, and we did that tonight, and we paid.

**Q. For Marcus or Latrell, with that size difference being what it was tonight, what was the plan going into the game in terms of trying to work around it or kind of build a wall around it or whatever the plan was?**

LATRELL REID: The plan was just to be us and make it a scrappy game and show that we could handle. We just didn't find our fight early enough. Like I said, it happens, and it's just sad that it had to happen at this moment.

**Q. I just want to ask the players what you thought of the crowd that you had? It seemed like a decent amount of people came down from New Jersey. What did you think of that, and what did that mean to you?**

MARCUS RANDOLPH: It means a lot. St. Peter's, Jersey City is a small city, but you see who came out, all who came out. This is a great support system. We love to see it.

LATRELL REID: That's just Peacock nation right there. They show up. They show out. We're very happy that they did that, and we're very appreciative. They've been doing that all year. We forever have love for those guys.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, guys, you can head back to the locker room.

LATRELL REID: One last thing. I'm sorry for getting ejected today. I'm a competitor, and I didn't mean for it to get the best of me today. That's just not who I am. I don't think I got a tech all year. We were jawing, and that's just what competitors do out there.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Coach.



**Q. Bash, you said you expect to be back here. What's the learning lesson for these guys about getting back here? What's needed to take the next step?**

BASHIR MASON: I don't know if we end up winning the game. I thought what Latrell just said, I thought that was a big part of the game, and I call that character reveal. I thought we experienced some adversity early into the game, our emotions game out and didn't allow us to focus and play at the level that we're capable of.

I'm around these guys daily. I coach them. I know these guys inside and out. So I know that we have a little bit of those emotional things in us. That's our growth right there.

**Q. A little bit to spin off of a question that was asked before. You know what they did two years ago. Does it make you appreciate that run a little bit more and how difficult it is indeed to do it?**

BASHIR MASON: Absolutely. As I'm walking down here just quickly reflecting on the game and just also thinking about the history of St. Peter's, the run here, I'm reflecting on who they beat to make it to the Elite Eight.

Then you think about what our game was like tonight, that run we did two, three years ago, that was impressive. That was really impressive for that to happen for a small school in Jersey City.

**Q. How tough is it to play from behind against a team like Tennessee when you fall into an early hole?**

BASHIR MASON: It's definitely the best defensive team we played against all season. They've got size. They've got details to what they're doing. They're strong. I was hoping we could make it a bang-bang game through the first couple of medias.

I thought they established their physicality and what the game was going to be the entire game. I asked the officials can we start running the clock? It was that difficult to look up at the score.

As a coach, you kind of know we're not going to be able to get back into this fight.

**Q. Bashir, when you were watching Tennessee on tape and you watched that defense and the size and everything, were there things that you saw that you were like, okay, I think their numbers are what they are, but I can get them here?**

BASHIR MASON: You know what, we've struggled to

score all year, to be honest. We averaged 65 points per game. The goal was to see if we could kind of make those guys struggle. I didn't think -- for a team that's averaging 79 points per game, outside of Dalton and Zakai, those other guys have been kind of spotty. We were hoping to try to control their two main guys and put pressure on those other role guys to make plays, and it just didn't work out for us.

Again, we were trying to use our defense and our rebounding and kind of slow them down and then see if we could be in it that way.

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