

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - TCU vs Ohio State

Thursday, March 19, 2026
Greenville, South Carolina, USA
Bon Secours Wellness Arena

Ohio State Buckeyes Jake Diebler John Mobley Jr. Amare Bynum

Media Conference

TCU - 66, Ohio State - 64

THE MODERATOR: Coach, if you would give an opening statement.

JAKE DIEBLER: Just want to start and say what a blessing it is to coach this group of guys. When we started out in June, we talked about being a family, and we talked about just pouring everything we had into working extremely hard, and this group did that.

We've been a resilient group all season. We showed that today. That was a fun 20 minutes of basketball we played there in the second half. These two guys were so important for us, as were so many other guys along the way.

If you knew half of what this team went through to get to this point, you would get to see why I just believe so much in the character of this team and the character of these individuals. These are great young men in that locker room, really good basketball players certainly, but great young men. It was a true joy to coach them this season.

Q. For either of you guys, it's your first taste of March Madness. I know you wanted to be playing more, playing Saturday, but I guess the way this went and the way this felt, is this a little more motivation to be getting back here next year?

JOHN MOBLEY JR.: Yeah, it's definitely fuel to the fire, and it's going to be motivation for me every day for the summer coming up and the work I'm ready to put in to make sure we get back in this position and go farther next



time.

AMARE BYNUM: Yeah, like what he said, just definitely have the motivation now of getting back here. Ohio State has a great repertoire to come here. We want to keep building that, me and Junie. When the guys come in, we're going to have that and be ready to go for the summer.

Q. John, what was it in the second half that really got you going to spark the comeback? What was it that you did, as well as you, Amare?

JOHN MOBLEY JR.: I just thought I'm not going home like that. I'm not going home without putting my all to it. I had a talk at halftime, I've just got to do better. I was a little sluggish in the first half, can't do that. That put us in the drought in the first place. Second half, I had to do everything I can. To bring the team back and give us a better chance of winning.

AMARE BYNUM: I was just saying put it all on the floor for all the seniors and for the team, just try to make winning plays and then just put it all on the floor.

Q. Amare, just what was the experience of the first NCAA Tournament, even if it didn't finish how you want? What was this experience like for you, and what can you gain from it going forward into next year?

AMARE BYNUM: It was a great experience. Every kid dreams of being here. Definitely going to work really hard in the summer to get back here and keep working on my game, and just do what Coach says and keep working.

Q. John, I guess in the second half that big run, Amare, who was a big part of that on both sides of the floor, can you just talk about what it takes or what it means for him as a freshman to be able to do that?

JOHN MOBLEY JR.: You don't see too many freshmen doing what he's doing at a high level. He just puts his all out there every night, and he's always got a big smile while he's doing it. Just having that joy he has and that fight and that aggressiveness, I mean, that's hard to teach.

Q. For either of you guys, it's Bruce's last game for Ohio State. Can you talk about what he means to you



guys as a teammate at Ohio State?

JOHN MOBLEY JR.: He meant everything, especially to me. Me coming in as a freshman in the dorms. He took care of us, me and Colin. He had snacks in the pantry when we got there. He was driving us to practice. I need to go work out, he'll drive me to the gym just to get some shots.

He's a great guy to have. He was a great guy for this program. He really showed what loyalty meant.

AMARE BYNUM: He meant a lot to me, just being my roommate, just talked a lot and asked him a lot of questions. I asked him a lot of questions about how to be a leader. He just told me, just show up more and then talk more and showed me on the court how to really work. We worked out a couple times in the summer, and he showed me how to really work, and I will put that work in in the summer.

Q. Jake, some issues on the offensive side. There's a lot of defensive pressure from TCU today. Can you talk about what was giving you guys trouble and then what you changed at halftime to go on that run?

JAKE DIEBLER: Listen, we anticipated seeing that, and we didn't execute well enough against it in the first half. We moved some pieces around from a spacing standpoint in the second half, but ultimately it was kind of doing what we had prepared to do better. That was the biggest thing for us.

We needed to make quicker decisions when they committed two to the ball. Then when we got the ball out of that, we needed to make quicker decisions and cut more. I thought you saw that as the second half started and progressed.

Q. Coach, what is something that you guys learned this year that you want the nation to know about Ohio State? I believe they learned a lot about you guys, especially in that second half, but what is one thing that you want them to take away and learn from about your group that you have?

JAKE DIEBLER: I hope people saw and appreciate the toughness and family atmosphere we have in this program. That's what this program was built upon, being tough and being connected. It's a big reason why we got to this point of the season. It's a big reason why we played the way we played in the second half.

So that's what I hope people saw. Again, we've got great young men in that locker room, and they were a real joy to

coach. We enjoyed going to practice, working extremely hard every single day, every single day this season. As a coach, that's really powerful and impactful from our team. So I'm grateful for that.

Q. Without going into specifics because I know what goes on in that locker room stays in that locker room, but what are some things you can pour into those young men that's going to propel them whether they come back next year or something they can take into life, into the next?

JAKE DIEBLER: Growth is one of the foundational pillars of our program. I can leave that locker room today saying each and every single young man in our program grew as a man and as a player. That's important to me.

We took a step forward as a program this year, and our guys need to remember that. This is a step, and we've got to get ready to get to the next step.

I got into coaching because some of the most influential people in my life were coaches, and I know I'm relatively new to this, but I'm old school from the standpoint where I still think coaches can have an impact in the lives of young men, and you have a responsibility to help them grow as men. Certainly you have a responsibility to help them grow as players, we saw that from everybody in our program got better as players this year. I believe in development.

But I know leaving that locker room today that every single young man in this program grew as a man, and that's really important to me and our staff.

Q. I wanted to get your thoughts on the final play. Did you get the look you wanted? What was drawn up? What was kind of the idea there?

JAKE DIEBLER: Yeah, we got the ball to Bruce on the run. We had two outlets down the floor for a throw ahead. I was watching him with the ball, so it was hard to see if those guys were open or not.

I thought TCU corralled the ball well, and maybe that limited his ability to get the ball down the floor. But we were trying to get it to him on the run and give him freedom to make a decision. We had a couple outlets down the floor that, if we could get it to them, he could get it to them to get a look, or if we could it up there quick enough, we could use a timeout to set up in the half-court.

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