

# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - Troy vs Nebraska

Wednesday, March 18, 2026

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Paycom Center

## Nebraska Cornhuskers

### Sam Hoiberg

### Pryce Sandfort

### Rienk Mast

#### Media Conference

THE MODERATOR: We have Nebraska student-athletes Sam Hoiberg, Pryce Sandfort, and Rienk Mast. We'll open it up to questions.

**Q. Sam, how much do you expect the crowd to be an impact with the number of Nebraska fans and just seeing how loud this arena can potentially get on Thursday?**

SAM HOIBERG: Yeah, it's exciting, knowing that we're going to have a lot of fans here. It should be pretty similar to a home game for us, and that's obviously a bit of an advantage, but we can't rely on that.

We're going to have to show a product on the floor that's going to get them into the game. We can't just expect it to be an advantage because they're here. We have to make it an advantage by playing the right way and executing and making sure they're into it.

**Q. This is for Sam. As a Nebraska fan yourself, how much would it mean for you to bring an NCAA Tournament win for the program?**

SAM HOIBERG: It would mean the world. That's what I've been dreaming of since I became a player in this program and turning it around. That's the only thing left to do is get that tournament win. It's the unsaid thing in every single room is we don't have a tournament win. So being able to do it as a senior would be pretty cool.

**Q. This is for Pryce. Your thoughts on having an opportunity to win this? Does this add pressure, or is it almost like a privilege? How do you feel about being**



**in this particular place in Nebraska basketball history right now?**

PRYCE SANDFORT: Yeah, it's been an amazing season. Our goal this season was to really flip this thing around and kind of break through, and I feel like we've done that.

Like Sam said that, last thing to do is just to get that tournament win. So I don't know about any added pressure. We approach every game the same. That's been the thing the whole season is having the same prep and approach to every game and go from there.

**Q. Sam, long before you were born, this was Big Eight territory. Your dad was a prominent character in Big Eight history. Does he ever talk about the Big Eight days? Not Big 12, but Big Eight days and that compact conference that was so much fun?**

SAM HOIBERG: Yeah, he doesn't talk about his playing days a ton, because he's a pretty humble guy, and he doesn't like to brag, but I've done a lot of research myself. It's pretty cool looking back seeing how good of a player he was. I know he had some pretty successful years as a player in the Big Eight, so yeah, it's been really cool to kind of look back and just know the impact he had as a player.

**Q. Pryce, what has it been like for you to see your brother get a shot in the NBA here, and I guess just playing here as well?**

PRYCE SANDFORT: Yeah, it's been amazing. He's worked so hard, and he's overcame a lot of obstacles. He had double shoulder surgery before this year and was on the G League team and then finally got that two-way. I just know how hard he's worked to get there.

So being here and where he's at -- unfortunately, he's on the road with the NBA team, so he can't be here, but I'm so happy for him. I told him that's the only way he can miss this game is if he's traveling with the NBA team, so (smiling)...

**Q. Rienk, for you, how much has the extra rest been beneficial to go Sunday at Iowa and then Friday and Thursday? To take some load off your legs, knowing the injuries and things you've overcome in your career.**



RIENK MAST: It's been a long season, so whatever rest we can get and to have the freshest legs as possible on Thursday will be big, not only for me, but for the other guys. It's been a long season, so we want to just be as fresh as possible and play our hearts out on Thursday.

**Q. For Rienk and Sam, you guys prepared for the tournament two years ago in Memphis. What have you seen that is similar and maybe different from the preparation from 2024 until now?**

SAM HOIBERG: Yeah, it's very similar with all the media you have to do. It's a little bit extra just because of the attention that we get for being the only Power 5 team without a tournament win. I think we've done a better job of staying focused on the task at hand, not getting caught up of, wow, we're in the NCAA Tournament. We were kind of bright-eyed a couple of years ago. This year it's really just been focus on the game, focus on the game plan, and make sure we're going to be ready for game time.

RIENK MAST: I know for me it helps that I think two years ago, first time being here, I was just kind of, like, looking at everything that was happening, and I know this year you kind of know what you expect and you can focus in on the game plan.

So that's definitely helped just knowing what to expect.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports