

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - McNeese vs Vanderbilt

Wednesday, March 18, 2026

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Paycom Center

McNeese Cowboys

Javohn Garcia

DJ Richards

Larry Johnson

Media Conference



THE MODERATOR: We have McNeese with us. Senior guard Javohn Garcia, DJ Richards, Jr. and freshman guard Larry Johnson with us. We'll get started with questions for our student-athletes.

Q. When you look at the tape of this opponent, what jumps out to you guys when you watch the film and the scouting report that has been provided to you guys?

DJ RICHARDS JR.: It's no secret they're a good basketball team, but we feel like we can play with anybody, so we're going to go out there and treat them how we treat everybody else and just be a little bit more alert and just focus on the small things that helps win games and just be ready to play, and don't look past them.

JAVOHN GARCIA: They're a really good team, like DJ said, but we have a plan installed that we've been practicing and Coach, like, preaching that we just do little things and all the little things matter. So I think that's going to be the...

LARRY JOHNSON: Just like DJ said, we just have to come out and be ourselves and play our game, and we'll be good.

Q. Javohn, turnovers will be a big thing in this game. You are one of the best teams in the country, if not the best team in the country, at causing those turnovers, and they're one of the best teams at holding on to the ball. How are you going to speed them up and pressure them and get them to turn over the ball?

JAVOHN GARCIA: We're just going to be ourselves. Like our principles, we standard press the whole game. So we're just going to tweak it a little bit, but just Coach has been emphasizing not turning the ball over, because they get out on the fastbreak like real fast, so easy points like that, and then we should be all right.

Q. How much have you leaned on them, because they've been here the last two years, Larry? How much have you leaned on them this week?

LARRY JOHNSON: I lean on them a lot, basically every day, because they've been through it, they've been through everything that I'm fixing to go through, so it's good to just ask them questions and know what's coming through.

Q. DJ, there are so many Houston guys on this team. Were you involved in helping getting these guys here? And what does the Houston basketball scene -- how does it prepare you for this level of play?

DJ RICHARDS JR.: That's actually a good question. I definitely didn't help anybody come over here, but when Coach told me that a lot of Houston people were coming over and I knew, like, a lot of the people, it definitely made me feel comfortable in coming back.

Like you said, Houston is, like, good for hoops. We just seen, I mean, Wade is my guy, but the dude that hit the game-winner he's from Houston, Tramon Mark.

It's definitely good to see Houston like around the world, like start to like show themselves and show that Houston is a good basketball city. Definitely the talent that we always we went against, like iron sharpens iron, so like we've definitely been going against each other our whole life.

This is just a bigger stage, but it's the same talent for real, we just gotta treat it like a regular -- like I said, a regular game earlier.

Q. Javohn and DJ, this is your third year coming into March Madness. Would you say that there's more pressure now to perform after last year's performance?

JAVOHN GARCIA: I wouldn't say it's more pressure. I'd



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just say, like, we took the experience, like Larry was saying, like, me and DJ, we took this experience to heart. We told each other we want to get back to this point and win some more games. Like last year we won one game, but we can win -- like we say every day, like why not us? Why not win it all?

DJ RICHARDS JR.: Kind of like what he said. When you reach new goals, there's new expectations, so we came up here, and we knew what we have to do, no matter who we were going against. Our goal is to reach our goal, and if someone is in front of our goal, we have to go through it. We have to figure it out. I feel like we got the right players, the right coaching staff, and the right support with us that always pushes us to be the people that we can be and that we want to be. I mean, we just put our faith in God and then we go and we just tie our shoes like everybody else and try to make everything happen.

Q. For all three of you, this is obviously a big opportunity for this school, but it's also a big personal opportunity for you guys to kind of show out on the national stage, especially with you guys being seniors, kind of going onto the next level. How are you taking that into account? How is that motivating you to kind of show out tomorrow?

DJ RICHARDS JR.: Honestly, I really -- it's hard to not look at it that way, but the best way is to not look at it that way. Like we came here with one goal, it's a team goal, and it's to win.

Whatever helps McNeese win that day, that's what we're going to do. Goals is going to come with it, you know what I'm saying? The things that we're going to reach, that's going to come with doing things the right way.

The only thing that we're going to be focusing on, for real, is doing things the right way, playing the way that we've been playing all year and let the goals and all those things take care of itself.

Q. For both, DJ and Javohn, what did last year's upset win over Clemson sort of teach you guys that you're taking into this game against Vanderbilt?

JAVOHN GARCIA: I will just say, like, never get down. Like, I mean, we just follow the game plan that Coach has, and you should be successful.

I mean, it teaches us a lot, though. Just like overcoming everything. McNeese never won a game, so we just overcome that, so I feel like we got the first step out the way, so now we just have to keep knocking them down.

DJ RICHARDS JR.: Yeah, kind of like what he said. Anything can happen. You put your focus in the right things and you put your, you know what I'm saying, your mindset -- you be mentally in the right place, anything can happen.

We kind of know that now, and that's what we've been trying to preach to everybody else. Like no matter what game plan it is, you know what I'm saying, we have to stick to it. As long as 15 people have one game plan, it's going to work. That's the mindset that we're going on, and I don't want to be that person, but this is Larry Johnson. He broke a lot of records. He did a lot of things. I'm pretty sure he has a lot of questions y'all can ask him. Like, he's really that guy. You all really gotta get to know him, so... (laughing).

Q. This question is for Javohn. You're coming off a monster game in the Southland Conference Championship. What does that do for you as an individual, as a veteran leader of this team? What are you bringing from that into the March Madness tournament?

JAVOHN GARCIA: I just tell the guards every day, like, I'll do whatever the team needs for me to win -- for us to win. It was a good game. We won the championship, but we're on to the next one. It's the most important game because it's the next game.

I feel like the first round is the most important round. Like you gotta come out swinging, get off to a good start, because it's going to set the mark for the rest of the tournament.

Q. Do you guys expect Amir to be a big star again? What does he do for his second act?

DJ RICHARDS JR.: Amir is Amir, man. It's funny because I'll be seeing things on Twitter, and they kind of portray him as someone that he's not. If you all could ask Amir right now, I'm pretty sure he would be so cool without all the attention, all the things. Everything came to him naturally, you know what I'm saying?

Yeah, a lot of people are going to come to him, but if y'all really have a conversation with him, you know he's really not that type of guy. We told him to put on the speaker one day. He knew the words, and then he just ran with it that day.

We'll see if it's another moment, but like us and him, we really don't be looking for those moments. Like we put our faith in God, and if God wants to give us that opportunity to have that platform, then we're going to take it, of course,

but we're not seeking for anything.

Q. What has it meant this year to have a break-out year like this? What does a stage like this do for you?

LARRY JOHNSON: Honestly, just having my teammates just give me trust and just be myself and stuff like that. Everything else just falls in place.

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