

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - Texas A&M vs Saint Mary's

Thursday, March 19, 2026

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

Paycom Center

Saint Mary's Gaels

Coach Randy Bennett

Liam Campbell

Joshua Dent

Media Conference



Texas A&M 63, St. Mary's 50

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by student-athletes Liam Campbell and Joshua Dent and Head Coach Randy Bennett. We'll have an opening statement from Coach Bennett and then open it up to questions.

RANDY BENNETT: I don't really have much. I didn't think we played very well. These two guys did. I thought Dillan Shaw played well, too. You got to have more than that in the NCAA Tournament. Guys have to play well. We did not. We did a poor job taking care of the ball, which know better than that. Did a poor job on the boards, and we did poor offensively. That's too many things. You can't give up those three areas and expect to play well and win.

Having said that, having the one stretch at the end of the first half, they ran off four threes there, and that ended up being the difference in the game.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up for questions.

Q. Randy, obviously some guys were not feeling their best, and I know you don't like using excuses, but how much of the performance tonight could be attributed to guys being under the weather?

RANDY BENNETT: I would say it's more contributed to the immaturity of our team. We've been battling that all year, and I told our guys, listen, for regular season I was really proud of them. We went 27-4, really incredible, but after that, we weren't. We weren't. The last 21 days or whatever, we weren't; we weren't that.

So I just think we weren't mature enough. Our leadership wasn't mature enough. You want some of your best players to be your leaders, and that was the biggest difference between this team and last year's team, just our maturity.

To play in the postseason, playing in the NCAA Tournament, you got to have that. Whether that's, you know, you're under the weather or whatever, every team has that this time of year. They got injuries. So you got to be mature enough to get through that stuff and play well when they turn the lights on.

Q. For Liam and Joshua, just how hard was it to play against that A&M press from the beginning with that ten-second call? How difficult was that?

JOSHUA DENT: Yeah, obviously we knew what was coming. Just struggled to consistently find ways to get the ball. A lot of that was my fault. I think I gave them a little too much respect as individual defenders. I feel like going around them seemed to be the answer.

Yeah, I mean, young group. Not many of us have seen that spotlight before, so I think we just got to take it on the chin.

Yeah, I think that in the end that was the difference in the game. I'm not going to sugar-coat it. We were bad in that area, but yeah, room to improve.

LIAM CAMPBELL: I just thought that sped us up pretty well. I think at the time we had five turnovers in less than five minutes. I think that's what really gave them momentum, caused us to struggle. I just think they sped us up. And we prepared for it. We thought we would be ready, but again, I think they just sped us up.

Q. For both the players, A&M came off an SEC tournament game where they didn't play very well on the boards and at the rim. Were you surprised at all by the level of physicality that they had, especially defending at the rim?

LIAM CAMPBELL: No, we knew that they had a lot of strong guys, physical guys, and we're physical guys, too, so we thought that we could really push them off the



boards. I just didn't think we came ready to play at that aspect today.

JOSHUA DENT: Yeah, I think we felt the difference in that sort of SEC style. We knew it was coming. A couple of layups rolled out for us early. Never helps. But, yeah, we pride ourselves on the rebounding count especially, and yeah, we weren't able to get that done.

Q. I know it's hard right now. It's been only 20 minutes or whatever since the game ended, but how proud are you of the entire season and how do you use this game as fuel for next season?

JOSHUA DENT: Yeah, I'm super proud of the boys. As we kind of said in the locker room already, we kind of split it into two seasons... regular season, postseason. Postseason obviously probably played two of our worst games of all year.

But, yeah, I thought the group we brought in was a lot of fun to be around. I thought we played an exciting brand of basketball, for the most part. Like, every game day, like, I was excited to go out there and play with my mates, so, yeah.

LIAM CAMPBELL: Yeah. I know we couldn't get it done tonight, but every one of us, like, we're super close with all the guys. Like we all love each other. To have the season we had, like, I'm proud of our guys. That's it.

I know this wasn't the way we wanted to end our season, but overall I'm just proud of how we competed every game.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Questions for Coach.

Q. It seemed like more of a concerted effort in the second half to get the ball into the post. On paper coming into this game, did you like that match-up in the post between the two teams?

RANDY BENNETT: I actually don't like looking at the box sheet and saying I like the match-up, but Agee played well. We're good when we put the ball in the post. We didn't get it there much, and when we did, we didn't get a lot of results. We're good in the post. That's our best way to play.

I just thought we were very inefficient offensively. You asked the question, do you think their pressure was that different? I really don't think it was. We played against that a couple of times.

That was one of the keys. One of the keys was don't turn it over, like, take care of the ball, and then the other one was

keep them off the three, keep them out of transition.

Other than that one stretch, we did a good job of keeping them off the three and keeping them out of transition, but we did not do a good job taking care of the ball. Then our numbers weren't good offensively percentage-wise either. So I think that's where the game was lost. We should have been better.

Q. Same question I asked Josh and Liam. Obviously right now you're not in the best mood, and understandably so, but obviously you had a great season through February. How do you balance the disappointment of tonight with the pride of the '25/'26 season?

RANDY BENNETT: I'll be able to keep it in perspective. I think I always step away from it 24 hours and start figuring it out, but for our team to go 27-4 in the regular season and win the league for the fifth year in a row -- or fourth year in a row, I couldn't be more proud.

We were immature, and we battled with that. I mean, we have one senior, and he's a four-year senior. We have one junior, and the rest are freshmen or sophomores. To do that with that group, I'm proud of them.

I wished I could have done a better job helping them to grow up a little bit, and then we might have done better in the postseason.

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