

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - Texas vs BYU

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Portland, Oregon, USA

Moda Center

Texas Longhorns

Coach Sean Miller

Jordan Pope

Dailyn Swain

Tramon Mark

Media Conference

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by the University of Texas student-athletes. We'll start with questions.

Q. Quick turnaround for you guys, emotional game last night, especially when you add in the fact that Sean Miller was met with some hostility. Was that added motivation for you to win that game for him given the boos?

DAILYN SWAIN: I would say so, for sure, especially for me playing at Xavier with him. I felt that energy, too. Heard the boos when we came out to warm up the first time.

He understands that feeling. Hostile environments like that make the game a little bit more fun. I think we were all extra motivated for sure.

TRAMON MARK: For sure, they called his name out. The whole crowd started booing. Hearing stuff like that, it gives you a chip on your shoulder, more than we already had. Just coming out, playing hard. That's what we did.

JORDAN POPE: Yeah, definitely going into today we knew that was probably going to happen. To hear the boos and all the chirps, definitely added that chip and that motivation to get the job done for Coach Miller. I'm glad was able to do that.

Q. I would like each of you to estimate how much sleep you got last night, especially Tramon.



TRAMON MARK: I would say about six, seven hours. Decent.

DAILYN SWAIN: I would say like six hours maybe. That's the most.

JORDAN POPE: Yeah, maybe like five, six, but all broken up into small spurts. I couldn't stay asleep for too long. It was definitely an interesting 10 hours I'd say (smiling).

Q. It's a quick turnaround, but what do you know about BYU? What stands out on their end?

TRAMON MARK: They're a great offensive team, you know. They have great guys that can get downhill. They have guys that can shoot. They have great offensive rebounding. They're big.

They're a good team. They're solid all around. We have to come out, play our game plan and execute.

DAILYN SWAIN: Yeah, I would say the same. Super talented team. Very up-tempo style, great coach. They held their own in a great conference, so they're a pretty good team, for sure.

JORDAN POPE: They're a pretty fast-paced team that runs the floor pretty well. Like Tramon said, a really good offense with a really good point guard, obviously A.J., a nice rim protector with shooters around them.

Being able to come into this game executing our game plan, knowing what we need to do defensively to give ourselves the best chance at winning.

Q. Jordan, a couple hours away from Corvallis right now. You spent a lot of time down there playing for the Beavers. How does it feel to be back in Oregon? Was there anything you missed about your time now that you're in Austin?

JORDAN POPE: It definitely feels good to be back. I haven't been able to be on the West Coast since I've been to Texas the last two years, outside of our season opener last year in Vegas.

It definitely feels good to be back, maybe play in front of



some old Beaver fans of mine. Just to be able to put on a show and have this opportunity in front of us to play on this big stage, seeing how far I've come. Obviously coming from Oregon State. I loved Corvallis. I don't want to compare the two from Austin. It was a great place. I loved my time there.

I'm glad to be at where I'm at now.

Q. Jordan, Wayne Tinkle, they parted ways with him. What did he mean to you as a coach at Oregon State?

JORDAN POPE: It meant a lot. Coming out of high school, I was underrecruited, in my opinion. He was one of the few coaches that gave me a chance. Without him and my time at Oregon State, I wouldn't be here at the University of Texas.

Coming out of high school, I was extremely thankful and blessed for a guy to give me an opportunity when not many did. Like I said, I wouldn't be here without that chance that he gave me.

Q. Jordan, you were there at a weird time, the Pac-12 collapsed. Would you have stayed at Oregon State? Did you want to stay?

JORDAN POPE: My decision to go to Oregon State out of high school, Pac-12 was a dream of mine. When that all fell apart, it definitely played a huge role into my departure from there.

I'm not sure what I would have done if that would have never happened. But I'm glad to be a Longhorn. Being in Austin has changed my life, has helped me in ways I couldn't even describe or imagine.

Yeah, I'm glad to be a Longhorn and I'm thankful for my time in Corvallis.

Q. Dailyn, it's possible you and AJ Dybantsa could hear your names called in the NBA Draft this summer. I know you put the team first. Whenever you're playing against a top elite player like that, do you feel the competition side of you raises up a different level?

DAILYN SWAIN: Yeah, I would say so, for sure. He's a super talented player, potentially the No. 1 pick in this year's draft. I see myself as an NBA player in the future as well. I'm a competitor, for sure it brings that energy out of me.

Like you said, I put the team first. I am trying to impact the game as much as I can to help our team win no matter who we're playing against.

Q. You're coming off such an emotional roller coaster ride from last night's game, you come here, you can't really get much further geographically. You mentioned all the sleep you managed to get. How much of a challenge will it be for you and the rest of the team to get yourself in gear and try to avoid that jet lag and coming out sluggish?

TRAMON MARK: We're a team full of competitors. So it won't really be that much of a challenge for us to get up and play the game that we all love to do. So just coming out tomorrow, playing as hard as we can shouldn't be a challenge. It won't be a challenge actually. That's what we're going to do.

DAILYN SWAIN: Yeah, I mean, we're all adults. We're grown men. We know what we signed up for. I look at it as a privilege to be able to travel the way we do, and get to places as fast as we do, be able to get our sleep and have everyone manage our days as good as they do, make sure they prioritize our rest, get energy.

Sometimes that can be an advantage, already be in the flow in a tournament game. It will be there first game. I look at it more of an advantage, for sure.

JORDAN POPE: We all should be blessed and privileged to be student-athletes in today's age with all the resources that we have. There's no excuses there.

What more motivation, chip on your shoulder do you need than to be playing a 6 seed BYU team that's really good in Portland, Oregon for a March Madness game to potentially get to the round of 32? There's not much other motivation you need than that.

We're all big boys. We've all worked very hard to get to this point. It won't be a deciding factor in terms of our traveling and things like that.

Q. Dailyn, you went through this last year with playing on Wednesday night, then the quick turnaround, going out two days later. What do you recall from the experience physically, emotionally, mentally, about playing for Xavier and then having to turn around and play a first-round game afterwards?

DAILYN SWAIN: I remember a super familiar feeling. We played an emotional game. We beat Texas in the First Four. We were all talking about it all night, struggling to get sleep for that next day.

But we were just grateful to have the day in between to reset, think about the next game, scout for that next team.



It's a blessing to play in the tournament no matter what the route is, whether you have to play two days before, the day before, whatever it is.

It's a good feeling. We were all super blessed to be there. Hopefully we can capitalize off of this year, for sure.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, gentlemen. Best of luck tomorrow.

We are joined by head coach of Texas Sean Miller. Coach, welcome to Portland after the flight from Dayton. We'll start with an opening statement.

SEAN MILLER: First things first. This really is me. There's not two of me. I know you might think, how did you get here so quickly from Dayton. We went straight, came straight from the airport.

Nonetheless, we're thrilled to be here. Last night, it seems like it just ended about 10 minutes ago, and here we are in Portland, Oregon, ready to play BYU.

But we're super, super excited about being here. There's nothing like the thrill of being in the tournament and advancing. I think there's some real confidence and togetherness. The way I would describe it from a team-centered perspective, just a lot of good stuff that comes in March being able to win a game.

We take that with us and move towards a big test tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Have you slept at all?

SEAN MILLER: Yeah, I mean, I think the reality of our trip, if you'd like to kind of see it through our eyes, is our plane left probably about 3 a.m. East Coast time. It was delayed. We didn't have a plane there. It is what is. We got going. It's about a four and a half, five-hour flight. By the time we landed, gaining the three hours, probably got in around 5:30, 6 a.m. We had the morning to sleep. A lot of our players slept on the plane. They're younger, they can do that.

Fast-forward here today. One thing about young people, they're so resilient in the way they grow up in this game. They're playing two and three games a day in travel team basketball. This is a generation that's never traveled more. They're everywhere throughout the spring on the heels of their high school season.

We're ready. I think we'll move forward. Again, take more of the ability to say that we've played a game and we've advanced versus we didn't sleep.

Q. But did you sleep? That was my question.

SEAN MILLER: I did. Yep, I did.

Q. You have played some really elite freshmen this season. You had previously praised Darius Acuff. Where does AJ Dybantsa stack up? Who are guys in the past he compares to?

SEAN MILLER: Yeah, he's an amazing player and talent. I would call him like generational. Darius Acuff, you're referring to, point guard at Arkansas, I don't think there's too many players that are playing college basketball that are any better than him, in particular if you're talking about that position that he plays.

But AJ, he's that position-less player. I don't really know what position you want to call him. He can do it all. I think his ability to get fouled is maybe unlike anything I've seen simply because he shoots eight free throws a game. He can do it in and around the rim, driving, kind of in that odd spot, 15 to 17 feet from the basket. It's a real gift for not only him, but BYU.

I can't give you the words and accolades to describe him. He is a great, great player. A player that you and we don't oftentimes see in college. You can go a long period of time and not see somebody like him.

Obviously watching him in the Big 12, which is a great, great conference, he averaged 25 a game, that obviously jumps off the page.

Q. Related to that, you have a long history, particularly when you were at Arizona, of having to play great players, having to come up with a defensive game plan for them. Does AJ remind you of anyone that you have played previously that you can draw on?

SEAN MILLER: I was thinking about it. I don't know if I can really compare him to a player. No one really jumps out. I guess you start at the top and think about what LeBron does in the NBA, what makes him so unique. What position is he? He's like a one-man wrecking crew. He can do so many different things.

AJ is his own player obviously, but that's the unique path he goes down. His size, mobility, skill level, his mindset of being able to be a smart player, make his teammates better, get to the foul line, how he gets to the foul line, makes it very difficult.



Some of the best players I've had the pleasure of coaching, Deandre Ayton, Derrick Williams, Lauri Markkanen, Aaron Gordon, those guys were all obviously great, great players, high picks in the NBA.

The one thing that's different about somebody like AJ is that scoring punch, getting fouled and doing it in a different way where he has the ball in his hands at his size.

But he's an amazing talent. Look, I'd really fall short if it just stops with him. He obviously plays for a really, really good coach, who puts him in that position, is obviously teaching him how to play the game. Then he's surrounded by a great group of teammates.

In particular I know BYU had a tough injury late in the year, which certainly has hurt them. But their supporting cast is still very good. They're a good team, led by a great player. But they're a good team, too.

Q. Obviously you have some history with BYU in the tournament in their Mountain West days. What do you make of BYU's recent rise as a program, being competitive within the Big 12, getting top recruits like AJ?

SEAN MILLER: I mean, I can't speak to it other than no doubt I've certainly competed against BYU as a coach. Dave Rose is an amazing coach. We went against him in Lexington, Kentucky, a long time ago. Obviously got Jimmer Fredette a number of times.

BYU has always been a basketball-centric place when it comes to sports. When you think about sports, you have a lot of respect for their basketball program, their history. Danny Ainge, those guys. They're clearly competing for the top prize.

We have great respect for the Big 12 Conference. Arizona I'm very familiar with. You look at the top teams in that league, Iowa State, Houston, Kansas, they're one of the top teams. No doubt we're playing against a quality opponent that's investing in their program. You feel that. I think they're going to be in this tournament in a prominent role for years to come.

Q. Back to last night, among the craziness of that ending, Assistant Coach Ryan Anderson rushing onto the court after Tramon Mark's winning shot. Can you take us through that moment. What was your level of concern there would be a technical foul called because he rushed onto the court?

SEAN MILLER: Yeah, a tough moment for Ryan as a

young coach. Ryan played for me. He felt like he was a player after he ran out there, for sure.

The thing about March Madness is it's the emotion of it all. A last-second shot, an epic win, a tough loss, it's what makes March Madness so spectacular, the emotion of it.

All of us just have to make sure we don't get caught up in the emotion; player, coach, et cetera. Yeah, we certainly didn't need to end that game on a technical foul. That would have been a bad moment for a lot of people, but in particular a really bad moment for him. I'm glad it didn't happen.

Q. Last night's game, is that the sort of thing that can pump a team up in a tournament, contributing that way?

SEAN MILLER: I think what you saw last night when you watched Chendall Weaver's performance is a senior, somebody that's coming down the very homestretch of their college basketball career, not wanting it to end, wanting to advance.

Again, there's so many elements to March Madness that make it what it is. Watching guys that are at the end of their eligibility rise to the challenge and play their hearts out, give everything to the game itself, it's really what captivates all of us, that makes March Madness March Madness.

Chendall Weaver's performance, a double-double, but watching how he did it, offensive rebounds, hustle plays, defense, scoring, getting fouled, he really did it all. A big reason that we advanced is just him rising to that challenge and playing the way he did.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you very much. Best of luck tomorrow.

SEAN MILLER: Thank you.

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