

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

Thursday, March 19, 2026

Portland, Oregon, USA

Moda Center

Texas Longhorns

Coach Sean Miller

Matas Vokietaitis

Tramon Mark

Dailyn Swain

Media Conference

Texas 79, BYU 71

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Texas. Coach, congratulations on the win. We'll start with your opening statement.

SEAN MILLER: Well, I'm beyond thrilled to be able to advance and have the opportunity to play into the next round. I'm thrilled for the University of Texas, thrilled for these guys.

One word I would use to describe our group is 'resilient'. Nothing has ever been easy for us, starting with our opening game against Duke in Charlotte. From there we've always fought the fight. I think a number of times throughout the year it looked like, man, can we do it. We always seemed to be able to respond.

Obviously our latest challenge happened by how our season ended. And as we entered this tournament in Dayton, I think all of us up here really came to grips with let's really go out playing at the highest level we can, sticking together.

I think the last couple of games from a defensive perspective is about as good as we've done all year. When you connect the defense with the offense that we've played, you have a team that's certainly dangerous. That's what I would call us right now.

But these three guys here deserve a ton of credit. Just really very, very proud to be here with them.



THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Matas, you had a monster game. How did you feel about playing through all that contact? They let a lot go. Were you agonizing over the missed free throws?

MATAS VOKIETAITIS: I mean, I love play physical with a lot of contact. That's what I like to do.

Talking about free throws... I don't know what to say. Just need to work more on that and improve. That's on me (smiling).

Q. (No microphone.)

MATAS VOKIETAITIS: I mean, I'm usually making free throws. I never miss that much. Maybe today was a bad day and I didn't do good, so... I just need to work more on that, and that's it.

Q. Coach, I saw during the broadcast they asked how do you stop AJ Dybantsa and you said, I don't think we can. He ended up having 35 points today. It didn't really matter. You controlled the game. How are you able to let a guy have such a dominant game but at the same time you controlled it almost from the jump?

SEAN MILLER: Yeah, I mean, don't misinterpret kind of the deeper meaning to it. I think these guys understand it.

We understood that he has the ability to score like nobody else. What we talked about is a jump shot by him is a victory for us. What we couldn't afford is that he puts Dailyn in great foul trouble or he fouls our entire team out.

Among the many things he does, he puts so many fouls on the opponent that he wears out the other team. We were able to play him. Again, I see he had 12 free throws, but these guys were able to play all the way till the end.

The key for us, in addition to just him, is not allowing everybody else to join in. That truly was our true game plan, take away the three-point shot. If you look at the first half, until we went zone and scrambled on the last play of the first half, they had not made a three-point shot.



We knew he was going to score. We just wanted to make sure we did a great job rebounding, and we did as good of a job as we can guarding the rest of the group. I think that's really why we were able to win.

Q. Dailyn, could you take us through that play where you found Jordan Pope on the other side of the court, he hit that three. Also talk about the resiliency of your group.

DAILYN SWAIN: That play, we drew up a backdoor for Cam Heidi. They defended it well. I tried to get downhill. I knew the defense would collapse on me because I score well in the paint. I saw him in the corner, jumped up, made the pass. We all know how good of a shooter Jordan is. I felt like that was a great play for us. He knocked it down. That's what he does in big-time moments.

To our resiliency, like Coach Miller said, we didn't end the season how we wanted to. We never folded, never gave up on each other. I think it made us closer. We kind of had a players-only little meeting. I felt that built our chemistry and that's what is making us a pretty dangerous team right now.

Q. Looks like the last minute you trapped AJ every time he touched the ball. Is that what you were trying to do?

SEAN MILLER: I mean, we really tried a lot of different things. Again, he had 35. I guess if you're going to nitpick his game, he did have five turnovers.

But he's a great player. That's probably not giving him enough credit. Again, we knew that he was going to be very difficult to defend. We did not want him to foul our team out. We wanted to do as good of a job guarding everybody else as we possibly could.

You're right, if they brought a screener up, we would try to keep two on him as best we could.

Q. Coach, obviously the NC State game, that ending had a little bit of a scare because of all the difficulties. In this BYU game, how do you think the team responded? They didn't turn the ball over.

SEAN MILLER: You're right, finishing the game the right way. It's never as easy as you think it is. I mean, I thought T-Mark -- when Matas kind of went on his streak there with free throws, again, Matas played potentially the best game that he's played at Texas today. A big reason we won is because of what he did. But down the stretch when he was missing, sometimes that can be contagious. When Tramon got fouled, got the ball in, him going to the line and

making two allowed us to take a deep breath. I thought that was big.

Then look, we called a timeout. We protected the ball. In the NCAA tournament, to play with nine turnovers, that's what we did. We'll sign up for that. Again, one of the many good things we did in this game is we played with single-digit turnovers.

Q. We made a lot about the fact you didn't get a lot of sleep the other night. How much do you think it helped that you had a game and you were ready to play?

TRAMON MARK: I mean, we were fired up no matter what the circumstances were. We came out here to win. That's exactly what we did. We didn't get much sleep, but we got enough sleep to win the game, and that's all that matters (smiling).

Q. You talked about how this was probably Matas' best game. In the first half he had as many rebounds as BYU had as a team. What can you say about a dominant performance like that?

SEAN MILLER: Yeah, I can't really speak on BYU's end. They're a very good rebounding team. A big part of their success this year in a great conference like the Big 12 is they rebound; offensive rebound, defensive rebound.

We talked a lot to these guys the last day and a half. You can kind of get caught up in AJ, the great player he is, focused sometimes on the wrong things. The biggest point going into the game is we have to rebound.

I thought Matas set the tone. We had 40 rebounds, 16 offensive. They had 8 offensive, and a total of 31. The 40 to 31 discrepancy clearly is a big reason we were able to win. Matas had a lot to do with that.

Q. Sean, earlier this year you talked about wanting this team to embody a Sean Miller-coached team, take on the identity of your teams. Do you feel now this part of the season they're starting to take on that identity?

SEAN MILLER: Yeah, I mean, I don't even know what a Sean Miller team is in that context.

I think really to your point, look, you have to win not just with one side of the ball. Like in basketball you got to be able to get stops. Sometimes you have to be able to get a win when the ball doesn't go in or you don't play as well on offense. Through the 32-game season, there's going to be those nights. When you can do both, when you can be a



good defensive team and offensive team, that's when you really can become special.

We're hitting our stride defensively at a good time. I think these guys are really, like, locked in. Dailyn talked about being closer as the season has gone on.

Sometimes you can fracture. Our guys, especially recently, they're as close of a group as they've been all year. You could start to see that on the defensive end.

Q. Tramon, how comfortable are you getting with these last-minute heroics, sinking the four free throws? How do you explain a career-high four blocks?

SEAN MILLER: Wow (smiling).

TRAMON MARK: Just going out there playing hard, playing my heart out. Just like my team was doing, playing our heart out. The four blocks just came. That's what happens when you play hard. The last-second shots that I get, I feel comfortable with 'em. They're going in, so... That's all I can say (smiling).

Q. Tramon, going back to the four blocks, two of those were against AJ. Did you take that matchup personally? How have you leaned on your previous experience going back to Houston in March Madness to help you find success?

TRAMON MARK: Yeah, me and Dailyn were kind of switching on and off Dybantsa. When I got my turn on him, I took it personally, just like I take any other matchup. I executed some stops on him. Of course, he's a great player so he's going to score some buckets. The stops I got, I felt good about it. It helped our team win, yeah.

I'm having a great March Madness experience. This is my best one for me. This team is great. I love this team. We're doing it in a very fun fashion. So I'm just happy that we can keep this thing going. We're going to try to get another win.

Q. I know this was a neutral site game, but it felt like all of Provo ended up in Portland. In a way did it almost feel like a road win with how loud the BYU crowd was throughout the game?

DAILYN SWAIN: I would say so for sure. We kind of knew that coming out for the warm-ups. We saw a lot of blue in the stands. Coach Miller mentioned it a little bit before the game.

Being an underdog in terms of attendance of your fans, it

adds an extra chip on your shoulder. We were already motivated to come out and win this game. When we seen how many of their fans showed up, how they had the crowd on their side, I think it was just some added motivation, and we handled it well.

SEAN MILLER: Look, we're in Portland. I don't know who's going to win the next game, but there's a reason from the region perspective certain teams are closer. Our games in Dallas would probably feel different for us.

That's all part of the tournament. You kind of earn your way into it. But I will tell you, we played in so many different arenas at this point, so many hard, tough road games in the SEC. At this point you're pretty much hardened and ready for everything.

It's about executing and being the best we can be. I thought tonight that's why we won.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much.

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