

# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: Second Round - High Point vs Arkansas

Friday, March 20, 2026

Portland, Oregon, USA

Moda Center

**High Point Panthers**  
**Coach Flynn Clayman**

**Rob Martin**

**Owen Aquino**

**Cam'Ron Fletcher**

Media Conference

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by High Point student-athletes. At this time we'll open it to questions.

**Q. How long did you guys celebrate last night or earlier this morning until you shifted the focus onto tomorrow's game?**

ROB MARTIN: I mean, our phone has been blowing up. We got a quick turnaround, so focusing on the next game.

It was a great win, of course. Now we have a tough team tomorrow. We celebrated, but not too much. We still got more work to do. Now Arkansas is our main focus.

**Q. Rob, do you know much about Arkansas? Have you seen Acuff play?**

ROB MARTIN: Of course, we seen they have pro potential, NBA players on their team. They're very athletic, they rebound well. We got to bring it. Focus on our game plan. We know they going to make tough shots. Just staying poised, yeah.

OWEN AQUINO: I mean, I say there's a lot of names out there. We just going to play High Point basketball. There's not a lot of pressure for us. We the underdogs right now. We're just going to keep doing what we've been doing.

**Q. Now that you won, your school is getting a lot of press, a lot of people are learning more about campus. You have a steakhouse on campus that's included in the meal plan. How often do you dine there during the**



**week? What is your go-to order?**

ROB MARTIN: I only been on my visit. I haven't been outside the visit. Like steak or something. I only been one time, so...

CAM'RON FLETCHER: I've never been.

OWEN AQUINO: Like Rob, I've been in my visit. It's really nice, really nice.

**Q. Do you echo the sentiment of your head coach in the sense where you feel like the high major teams were ducking playing you guys because you knew how good you were? How fun is it now to show what High Point basketball is?**

CAM'RON FLETCHER: Yeah, I think there was some teams that ducked us this year. But, I mean, like Coach Flynn say, we're here now, so... There's no ducking anymore.

OWEN AQUINO: You have to play us now.

ROB MARTIN: Yeah, there's no ducking, for sure (smiling).

**Q. Cam, how do you feel facing your former head coach tomorrow?**

CAM'RON FLETCHER: It's just another game for me. Obviously people will say it's a lot of pressure for me because going to Kentucky with Coach Cal, now I'm playing against him in one of the biggest games of my life.

I just treat it like a regular game.

**Q. Rob, you did such a tremendous job yesterday of attacking ball screens. Was there a certain coverage that you were really attacking or one tomorrow that you are really going to utilize? Does the screener have autonomy?**

ROB MARTIN: All credit to Owen, he set great screens, good screen setter.

Really just attacking the weaker defender, getting downhill



using my speed to my advantage, reading the defense.

We definitely try to attack the weaker defender. I feel like that's what we did yesterday. Tomorrow we have the same game plan ready for it, so...

**Q. Rob, whether it's an individual thing or team thing, what's the biggest key you've seen on film guarding Acuff? How important is it to make him work at the other end?**

ROB MARTIN: He's a great player, he's going to make tough shots. I do see they do a lot of iso. Just being in the gap, having a lot of hands, making him see bodies. Making him pass the ball and deny him a lot.

He's a great player. But I'm ready to play, for sure. Our guys are ready to play and compete at a high level.

**Q. Coach likes to keep the focus on what you are building on, you guys the player. What is Coach Clayman like? What kind of impact has he had on you personally, professionally?**

ROB MARTIN: I say he's kind of insane. No, he ain't insane (smiling). He's a great coach. He's not insane.

He's a great coach. He bring it each and every day. Our guys love him. We work hard. Super proud of him believing in us, trusting us to go out there and make the plays.

He's a super cool guy. Have a great relationship with him, yeah.

CAM'RON FLETCHER: What Rob say, Coach Flynn is insane (smiling).

I can say that I feel like he will have a lot of success at this coaching level because of that. It could be a gift and a curse.

Like I told Little Rob the other day, it's crazy. Him and Coach Cal got a lot of similarities. I can see Coach Flynn having a lot of success being a head basketball coach because of that, him being insane.

I feel like it kind of can be a good thing because he kind of motivates us to go out there and go dominate a game. It's a good thing.

**Q. You had a lot of people see Coach for the first time, see how he talks. You have Charles Barkley saying he wishes he could play for a guy like that. What is it about him that you love playing for him?**

CAM'RON FLETCHER: He's like a great motivator to us. Before every game this year, he's getting riled up, getting hyped for us to go play. No matter if it's Presbyterian or Wisconsin, he has the same mindset every time.

Him getting fired up before the games, getting the whole team fired up before the game is good for us.

OWEN AQUINO: The moment he started recruiting me, whenever I was having those conversations with him, I can already feeling like he's a winner. That's why I committed here, because I want to come here again. Is working well right now.

**Q. Rob, naturally there's so much attention on Darius Acuff, Meleek Thomas. How much are you relishing the opportunity to showcase your skills?**

ROB MARTIN: I'm just going to go out there and do what I've been doing the all year, just playing High Point basketball, reading the defense, seeing where I can attack the defense. If it's open for me, then I'll take it. If not, my teammates.

Like I said before, he's a great player. Have to see bodies as well. On the offensive end, I feel like I got an advantage being able to get downhill super quick and stuff like that, change of pace.

I'm excited. I can't wait to show the world what I can do. Hopefully we come out with a dub.

**Q. A lot of casual basketball fans tune into March Madness. They haven't been following all year. They can easily get starstruck by these guys who are future lottery picks. You have played against these players a lot on the circuit when you were younger. How much do you think it helps that you're maybe not starstruck by them because you've been around them in terms of being able to pull off an upset?**

ROB MARTIN: I mean, me and Cam have been playing with pros our whole life, playing against pros, EYBL Circuit, high school, knowing that they got to tie their shoes like we tie our shoes.

I mean, of course they're great players. They going to probably next level. But we just got to go out there, compete, play hard. The results hopefully come back to High Point favor.

**Q. You have won 15 straight games now. How do you stay focused heading into an incredibly tough matchup against Acuff and Thomas? What is it that**



## **keeps you humble and hungry?**

ROB MARTIN: I say just doing what got us here. Not acting brand new or doing anything different. Just playing High Point basketball, like we've been doing this whole year, that got us to win those 15 games.

It's different players, but it's the same game plan for us. Just continue to play High Point basketball.

OWEN AQUINO: Yeah, I would say we've been talking about this moment since June. So I don't think we're surprised to be here. I think we belong here. We're going to keep doing what we're doing.

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, thank you very much for your time. Best of luck tomorrow.

Welcome back, Coach. If you want to make an opening statement...

FLYNN CLAYMAN: Yeah, I'll just say again really proud for our university. Really proud for our guys who work so hard. So proud of our students who got to fly all the way here. It wasn't a quick trip for them. We had to travel further than any team in the NCAA tournament, I saw a graphic, the most miles. We still have our students out here. For them to get to stay for a few more days and see another game is a dream come true for them.

So yeah, we're just soaking it all in. We're getting ready for a really good Arkansas team. We had a great prep today. We feel ready to go.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

## **Q. I heard Katie and Quinn got on a flight this morning. How does being married to another coach, someone who really understands your profession, make you a better coach?**

FLYNN CLAYMAN: Yeah, she does. She does make me a better coach. She sees things with our team, gives me pointers. She had pointers in the Big South tournament. She's doing scouts for me. She was out there scouting Arkansas after our game.

It's just been perfect. I love the game of basketball. Then to find a woman that I love more than the game of basketball, I thought that was impossible, but it happened. It's probably partly because she loves the game, too.

She talked about staying for a second, then she was like, I got to be with my team. I'm like, Yeah, you got to do it.

It's just a dream come true marriage and couldn't be happier.

## **Q. Your lifelong dream of being a coach, how far back did that go? How deep was your obsession about coaching as a kid?**

FLYNN CLAYMAN: That's a great question.

It goes back to when I was young. I mean, it's kind of interesting that we played Wisconsin yesterday. My dad did a one-man show, wrote and produced a one-man show on Vince Lombardi called the Life and Times of Vince Lombardi. I used to do the lights for it. I started to see Vince every day, the things he would talk about.

Obviously my dad loved coaches and coaching if he's going to write a show like that and produce it.

Then when the show blew up, Bart Starr started coming, Willie Davis, I got to meet these Packer legends. It was awesome. My dad's always had an interest in coaching. He knew John Wooden well. He used to pick him up every day and drop him off at summer camp. He's kind of had it in my ear.

When I started playing, I started paying real close attention to my coaches. I had a ton of great coaches throughout my career. At Colorado State, Tim Miles was on staff, Nico Medved there, Craig Smith who was the coach at Utah State, and went to the tournament a bunch.

I was a journeyman player even overseas, played for eight teams. I got to pick up a lot of little nuggets. I had a ton of interest in it. Didn't know I really wanted to coach. Got into graduate assistant at Southern Utah to get a master's degree when I stopped playing. Once I got there, I realized how much I loved coaching and I wanted to invest my life in it.

## **Q. Going back to you and Katie, what was it like to be able to celebrate the win yesterday? Now that you have kind of a bit of a dilemma where you're playing at the same time on Saturday, what is the game plan?**

FLYNN CLAYMAN: Yeah, I mean, we're used to it. We're used to kind of missing some games. She'll be trying to track. She's at 7, is that Central Time? Is Nashville Eastern? Then we're at... She should be able to watch it, if I'm not mistaken. I'll be able to catch it on my phone a little bit before the game. Obviously I'll be getting ready for our game. But this is something we're used to.

## **Q. Obviously a lot has been made against Fletcher going against Coach Cal. In what ways has making**



**him an addition to your roster been valuable and how has he grown?**

FLYNN CLAYMAN: Cam has just worked really hard on himself, on his game, on a lot of things. I honestly don't think we'd be sitting here right now if he didn't come back and do what he did. He had 19 rebounds. When we played Winthrop in the Big South title game, they were up 7-0 on the offensive glass to start that game. We were having some trouble. Cam comes in and gets 19 rebounds. Kind of put us in this spot.

I couldn't be happier for him. Obviously yesterday he was great again. We don't win that game yesterday if he's not getting us 11 rebounds and hitting big shots. He's worked really hard on himself and worked really hard on his game. I couldn't be happier that at this point in his career it's coming together for him.

**Q. What really stands out to you about Arkansas's guard play with Thomas and Acuff, the speed, tempo they play with?**

FLYNN CLAYMAN: Everything. They're perfect basketball players for the most part. That's why they're going to be lottery picks. You get to a certain point in this game where a level -- there's not a whole lot you can do when guys are that good. You got to just try to do your best to slow them down a little bit. You have to understand that you have to score points to beat a team like that.

There's a reason why you don't have 70 games in the NBA. It's not because you don't have good defensive coaches. It's that when you get to a certain level, like, there's going to be better offense. Those guys are going to score. We just got to do our best to try to make them as inefficient as possible.

**Q. You do a tremendous job of valuing going off two feet and having controlled finishes. What micro skills did you do in the off-season so your players understand that?**

FLYNN CLAYMAN: Yeah, that's become very popular amongst coaching, is playing off two feet. I mean, I don't know who first got it going. You probably credit like Jay Wright in Villanova when they won those two national titles. They were making that really popular. Then it's kind of spread.

That's something we've been doing. We've had very efficient offenses the last few years. We try to play off two feet in the paint. If you have an angle, you can get to the basket, go score it.

But playing off two feet allows you to not have turnovers, make simple players. Basically not beat yourself is what that does for you.

**Q. There's been a lot of talk about mid-majors struggling to schedule high-major teams. A lot of times coaches who have success in this tournament at smaller schools get a shot at a bigger school. Would you commit to scheduling schools like High Point, Miami of Ohio if that happens to you at some point?**

FLYNN CLAYMAN: Yeah, I felt like maybe my comments were a little misunderstood yesterday.

The problem I have is that the high majors are not incentivized to play these games. I'm not blaming high-major schools. They are doing what's best for their program. I would love to see a system for the fans and for the game of college basketball where it's better for them to play those games.

I've seen over my time, I love college basketball, this is my passion. I was a ball boy for USC when we went to the Elite Eight in '97 I think it was. I've loved this since I was a kid.

I've seen over time that now the good mid-majors don't get a chance to play anymore because of the system. If we can just tweak that a little bit, then they'll be right back to playing.

Fans deserve to see High Point versus a good team in the nonconference. You can run down the list. Look at Santa Clara today, what a game that is. They deserve to get games. It shouldn't just be the ones that are really struggling that get games. I put zero blame on high-major programs for doing what's best for them.

**Q. How would you describe your motivational style? Your players up here earlier used the word 'insane' in an endearing way. What would you say to that?**

FLYNN CLAYMAN: I just try to be authentic in who I am. I love the game. I want what's best for these guys. When I'm out there getting mad about things, it's because I want them to win and I want them to have that experience that they had.

That's really all it comes from is helping guys reach their full potential. We've seen a ton of guys elevate. They came in at a certain level, now they're playing at another level. That's all I'm trying to do with it.

Coaches who have their teams play hard for them, they have to be authentic in who they are. You have different



personalities. You can take John Wooden and Bob Knight, two completely different personalities, but players loved playing for both, and played really hard for both.

I think if you're just authentic with your guys, they're going to want to play hard for you.

**Q. People saw how fiery you are on the sideline, but heard from your wife saying she could tell you were having so much fun doing it. How much fun has all this been just being on the sideline, coaching this team, being here?**

FLYNN CLAYMAN: I mean, yesterday was the least pressure we felt any game. It was the most fun we had. It played out kind of like I was hoping.

We were favorites in 34 of our 34 games this year, literally. That's not an exaggeration. We kind of had the weight off our shoulders. We had fun. We had a ton of fun yesterday.

Chase, I mean, you just can't make that stuff up. I think some of the other really good performances got overshadowed a little bit because he was so special. Rob Martin, 10 assists, one turnover, 20 points. Cam Fletcher to come out after a lot of people checked out on him. He gets 14-11, beats Wisconsin.

We had fun yesterday. We're going to keep having fun. We felt a ton of pressure this year, to be honest. It's great, because pressure is a privilege, that means you're in a good program. Now we're in a situation where we just get to shoot our shot and have fun.

**Q. Arkansas played six guys yesterday, but they love to play fast as well. How do you balance wanting to attack that and up the tempo but know they embrace that tempo?**

FLYNN CLAYMAN: Yeah, it's tough. Like you're playing really good athletes. There's no great answer for that, honestly, when you're playing this level of player.

I mean, look, we were really worried about Wisconsin's transition offense because they've been really good in it. I thought we did a great job yesterday. It was one of our better transition defense games. We were also really worried about their rebounding. We won the glass.

We're just going to go in this game play us, do us. See if we can do like we did yesterday, hold our own.

**Q. You do something different from a lot of different coaches. During timeouts you delegate to your**

**assistants for offense or defense. What's the strategy behind that?**

FLYNN CLAYMAN: Yeah, so I got to give credit to Coach Huss, how he laid the foundation for how we kind of operate. He does it how Greg McDermott does it, at least that's what he's told me, where you have an offensive coordinator, defensive coordinator, with a couple other assistants helping those coordinators. That might be a little different than traditional. Traditional you have three assistants, then they rotate, scout on just defense.

So I thought the coordinator system was really good. He let me call a lot of plays and do a lot of things. It helped our team. So I'm trying to do the same thing.

When you're the head coach and there's so much going on, you have one person focused on offense, one focused on defense, one focused on special teams, even though you might feel like you're losing a little control at times, I think you're going to have more success.

I'm kind of copying what he did. He allowed me to be offensive coordinator. That let me grow a ton as a coach. If he didn't let me do that, I don't think I'd have been ready to be a head coach. I just hadn't coached enough, I hadn't done enough live stuff in games. It would be wrong of me to not let our coaches do that.

I don't think I've given enough credit, like Ben Fletcher and Corey Edwards who do our defense, Anderson Clarke and Martynas Rubikas who run our offense, then Antoine Young who runs our special teams have done a fantastic job.

**Q. Your offensive system in a high-paced game, you only had six turnovers. Guys don't seem to get caught in between in decision-making. They're very decisive. How do you play so fast but are so good at taking care of the ball?**

FLYNN CLAYMAN: It starts with getting the right players. We targeted guys who didn't turn the ball over in our recruiting. That's very important to us.

Everything we built this roster around was winning a conference tournament, right? Once you get here, now it's about matchups and that. But we had to make sure we won a conference tournament.

I had lost as a 1 seed three times, and also as a 2 and 3 seed in very close conference tournament games, overtime games, because of silly turnovers. I felt like maybe even slightly less talented players who just didn't turn it over when it mattered won them those tournaments.



We focus on it in recruiting. When we get them in skill development, we talked about playing off two feet, making the simple play, not beating yourself.

That's not coaching. Like, Rob Martin came in here, he led the OVC last year in assists to turnovers. Conrad Martinez that was a backup point guard at Arizona last year and he never turned it over.

I can't take too much credit for it. We do try to teach our guys to play off two feet and make the simple play.

**Q. I know you don't have any personal ties to the state of Oregon, but a lot of family ties. How fun has it been to be the latest person to leave your mark on the state of Oregon?**

FLYNN CLAYMAN: She was super excited about coming back here. She went to Oregon for four years. Was a good player for them.

Obviously my brothers played at Lewis & Clark. I remember coming up and visiting them. They were in college before me. They're a little older than me. Coming to a couple of their games. It's great. I love the state of the Oregon.

Also on top of that, we practiced at Portland State today. I used to coach in the Big Sky. We won our regular season championship there a couple years ago. Those are good memories, too. I have a lot of good memories out here.

**Q. About the Vince Lombardi film, did you feel more of a connection to the Packers? How did that impact your life?**

FLYNN CLAYMAN: Oh, it was huge 'cause like before the play got bigger, I was running the lights at times. Then we had a writer from the L.A. Times saw it and loved it. When he put the article out, that's when the Packers guys came and they loved it. Then we got to do the show at the Hall of Fame. We went to the Hall of Fame and did it there.

They actually opened the Super Bowl with it once. I'm a Packer fan because we had no team in L.A. when I was growing up. We had college football and we had no pro team. That was my only team.

And they won the Super Bowl right around when I started becoming a fan in New Orleans against the Patriots. I've just stayed a fan. That's my team.

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

