

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: Second Round - Texas vs Gonzaga

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Portland, Oregon, USA

Moda Center

Gonzaga Bulldogs Coach Mark Few Tyon Grant-Foster Graham Ike Mario Saint-Supery Media Conference

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

Q. Mario, first time playing in March Madness. You didn't grow up in a country where it's a big deal. What did you think? What were you expecting?

MARIO SAINT-SUPERY: Well, all my teammates told me how big this was. I'm still super excited. It was super, super nice. The atmosphere was great the other day. I'm just grateful for being here.

Q. Graham, you saw what Vokietaitis did yesterday. What are the challenges with guarding him tomorrow?

GRAHAM IKE: Yeah, should be a great game, a physical game. He had a great performance yesterday. It's going to be a team effort to try and stop him and their whole entire team. I know he's a physical player who does a couple tricky nuance things that we should be aware of.

It's going to take a team effort to stop him and their whole team.

Q. Mario, you did such an impressive job in pick and roll coverage yesterday as far as making perfect pocket passes. Is that something you developed back home or something you work on at Gonzaga?

MARIO SAINT-SUPERY: I think it's something I brought from Spain. But this year I think we've been putting a lot of work with the guards in the pick and roll, making good



decision-making.

I think it's a mix of both.

Q. Tyon, Coach Few has talked a lot about what a gifted shot-blocker you are. Why do you like blocking shots so much?

TYON GRANT-FOSTER: It's just fun, honestly. I like just hearing the ball hit off the backboard. It sounds cool (smiling).

Q. Mario, there's a lot of international guys playing in this tournament. I would guess some of your former teammates. How important do you think it is that international players have good tournaments that people back home see there's a path here in college basketball?

MARIO SAINT-SUPERY: Well, I think the European players are growing a lot here. A lot of players are coming to the NCAA. I think it's just nice seeing people having growing up playing against them, playing and doing a great job over here.

But we're here, we're Gonzaga, and I just care about us.

Q. Last night pretty much felt like a Gonzaga home game. Yesterday Texas had a lot of BYU fans in the audience. How big for you guys is it that the Gonzaga faithful are able to come down and watch you play? How excited when you saw you were playing in Portland for March Madness?

GRAHAM IKE: It was huge to get the turnout that we got yesterday. Definitely needed. It's like the sixth man on the floor for us. Whenever Zag Nation shows up, they show out. We appreciate them for that. We definitely look forward to them doing the same tomorrow and exceed what they did last night.

Q. (No microphone.)

GRAHAM IKE: That's a loaded question (laughter).

THE MODERATOR: Would you like to ask questions of the reporters?



TYON GRANT-FOSTER: Our free throws, we shot really good free throws yesterday.

GRAHAM IKE: Yes, we did. We shot really good free throws.

I don't know. What goes through your head after watching a game? What makes you ask a certain question you ask?

Q. (No microphone.)

GRAHAM IKE: Graham Ike, Gonzaga.

Q. It seemed like late in the game it didn't turn out to be a huge issue, but foul trouble became a bit of an issue. Did Coach mention anything after the game?

GRAHAM IKE: We knew coming into the game that Kennesaw State, they put a lot of pressure on us defensively like through fouls. That was definitely something we were cognizant of and wanted to stay out of foul trouble. It was a little tough towards the end of it. We kind of expected that going into that game.

Q. You talk about how great your free throws were. To start the game your threes weren't falling. What's going through your head? What would you tell a player in high school to have that next-play mentality?

MARIO SAINT-SUPERY: I'll respond this one (smiling).

I think you just got to be confidence in yourself, you know? We know we able to make a lot of threes. Just got to keep shooting. Of course, taking good shots and feeling the good rhythm. But just got to let it rip, you know.

GRAHAM IKE: Let it rip. That's a great question.

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, thank you so much. We'll see you tomorrow.

We are now joined by Gonzaga head coach Mark Few. Coach, open it up for an opening statement.

MARK FEW: I'd just say let's roll with the questions. I got no statement, so...

Q. Being that next year you'll be in the Pac-12 with Oregon State, what do you think of Justin Joyner, if you had any experiences with him when he was in the WCC?

MARK FEW: Yeah, I have experiences both with him at Saint Mary's and then Michigan. We played Michigan this

year. He's a really, really solid, good, young head coach. Obviously worked in two great programs, had two great mentors.

Yeah, I mean, he's a very, very solid individual.

Q. Every year it seems like a lower seed that maybe had a middling year starts making a run. What worries you about teams like that, and specifically what worries you about Texas?

MARK FEW: Well, this is one of the beauties of the tournament. Ordinarily when you play Texas, I mean, it's Texas, man. I mean, Texas has everything usually: the resources, the student population. I wouldn't exactly classify this as some sort of Cinderella or anything here.

This is a team that has some great players. They played in a tough league, so they took some losses. The SEC's got some really, really good teams in it.

Sean is a very, very good coach. Everywhere he's been he's done a really, really nice job. I mean, I'm just looking at this, this is just going to be a really, really, really tough matchup, tough game.

Q. You have had some success against SEC over the years. 3-0 this year against that conference. How would you describe the style of play in that league, being that you played so many of these teams?

MARK FEW: Great athletes. Great athletes with great size, which is what Texas has. I mean, they have a huge seven-foot guy in the middle. They have some big-time wings that have size and athleticism. That's kind of what the SEC is known for. Usually some lightning quick guards, guys that can really hurt you from the three line. They've really stepped it up on that front as of late.

Q. Going from trying to get Gonzaga on the national stage, now people definitely want to play Gonzaga. Your thoughts on the thoughts of mid-majors wanting to get those high-quality opponents in the regular season, kind of struggling to do it to help boost their résumés?

MARK FEW: You just have to win. We were in that plight 25 years ago. You just have to win. You have to break through in the tournament. The tournament gives you an avenue to do that and a stage to do that. Once you do that, you do it a couple years in a row, then you are able to get those games.

That was kind of how we grew during the early years here. The wins were the first thing that came. The next thing that



probably started to come was recruiting. The hardest thing was to be able to schedule guys straight up like we do now.

It's not something you're going to be given. You're going to have to go out and earn it. You've got to earn it for quite a while. Once you prove yourselves, everybody wants to play you.

Q. Matas was unbelievable for Texas last night. He put BYU's big guys in trouble, foul trouble, early. How do you plan to respond and hold him down tomorrow night?

MARK FEW: I mean, that's going to be a really, really tough task. Our staff brought up that I think he has drawn more fouls maybe than anybody in the country this year. He's got a huge foul rate like that. Kind of flops around in there and makes it look worse than it is, but it works (smiling).

He's a big body. He's a skilled body. Sean, the staff, the team, do a great job of finding him, getting him the ball in places where he can be successful. They move him around a little bit.

Yeah, that's going to be a huge key. So we'll have to mix our matchups and coverages, things like that, do the best we can.

Q. As the tournament goes on, I hear people say they struggle with confidence all the time. Where do you think confidence comes from?

MARK FEW: I think confidence comes from, I preach this to our guys, is putting in the work all year, absolutely putting in the work, then just when you get to a stage like this or any game, you know you've put in the work, so you just got to go out there and let it rip, man, and live with the consequences.

It's when you haven't put in the work that I think doubt creeps in maybe. Also the ability to forget misses or forget bad plays. If you put in the work, you deserve to miss, you deserve to make mistakes. If you're fraudulent with your preparation, that messes with your mind.

Q. Last night the late finish, Graham saying he's going to watch film. Can you talk about the kind of basketball junky that he is, what that shows about who he is as a person.

MARK FEW: Yeah, I mean, Graham is really, really driven. He's driven in a lot of areas. He takes fabulous care of his body with his preparation, with how he eats, how important

sleep is. Just everything he does off the floor to help himself get ready.

He had an injury earlier in his career at Wyoming. I think that's really kicked in how important it is to do all the right things to get your body right for when you're practicing and playing in a long season like this.

He's very much all about preparation, and puts a lot of time into it.

Q. Behind the resilience of this team, you have a roster that has the depth and balance to support it. Has anything changed with your philosophies on how to develop a team, build a roster? How have you been able to have a roster that has 10 guys who average double-digit minutes?

MARK FEW: That's a great question 'cause, listen, it's really, you've been around our neck of the woods for a while, we used to redshirt all our guys back in the day. They'd come in, there was a plan, a redshirt, you develop. A lot of times by your junior year, then you'd start to reap the rewards of that.

We live in a day and age sometimes that there really isn't that much patience by anybody really; the parents, players, people around them and all that. It's hard to have that.

But I think it's just finding the right guys. Then with this particular team, I think they recognize that they bring certain things to the table, but the guy next to me, two guys down also brings different things that I can bring, and we all need this to be successful.

Then, listen, quite frankly, we've changed so many times this year with how we've played on offense and how we played on defense just because of these darn injuries. I think that's actually helped our depth in some ways. Obviously it's hurt our depth 'cause we're not going to have Braden tomorrow. There's kind of a give-and-take with that, too.

Q. Last night's game was heavily in favor of Gonzaga in terms of the crowd. The game before that was heavily BYU. How important is it for you guys to have some of that fan favor in the first couple rounds of the NCAA tournament? How excited were you when you were expected to go to Portland?

MARK FEW: I think it's great. I think it's great. The way that the NCAA does that, it does give you incentive to keep playing through the regular season. We talk about it. We talked about it at length after we got through our preseason that, listen, you did a great job in the preseason, now we



need to keep this thing rolling. If we do, we should be located out west, which is huge for us. We have great fan bases. Makes travel easier. All of the above.

I think it really gives you some incentive even to the point where maybe you're not going to be a 1 seed, but you're still playing for something. You're almost playing for a little bit of home-court advantage in some ways.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much. See you tomorrow.

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