

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

Saturday, March 21, 2026

Portland, Oregon, USA

Moda Center

Texas Longhorns

Sean Miller

Daily Swain

Matas Vokietaitis

Media Conference

Texas - 74, Gonzaga - 68

THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and get started with an opening statement from coach and then take questions for the student-athletes.

SEAN MILLER: Well, we're obviously thrilled to advance, be a part of the Sweet 16. It's just, it doesn't matter how many times you have been there or not, it's just, it's a huge difference between being in that round and just entering the Tournament. Having the opportunity to play through another week, be a part of a field that only includes 15 other teams, and obviously it's that next four-team tournament you're playing to get to the Final Four.

Just super proud of our group, our team, coaches. Like I mentioned time and time again, our ride has never been easy, but we have fought the good fight the whole way and today we did it again.

Q. Can you talk about your decision to bring Camden in off the bench on that last sequence?

SEAN MILLER: Yeah, these guys will tell you, I'll take credit for it. Just the way I saw it was on the last possession of a game, just to have that other guy out there who is capable and in Cam's case you can make the case he's our best three-point shooter. To not have him in there, I just didn't think it made any sense. Because what happens is exactly what happened. The play gets broken, a guy makes a drive, pivots, next thing you know you find someone.

In that situation it was great to see him knock it in. I was



really, really happy for him. I might have even said, I'm putting you in to make a shot and again, when it happens, it's almost too good to be true.

But these guys will tell you, Cam has been a huge part of our team this year, he's had some ups and downs, and I don't think anybody deserves to make that shot more than him. He's just a fantastic teammate.

Q. What did you make of the big shots that Jordan hit down the stretch last five minutes and the opportunity for him to come back to this state and perform the way that he did?

SEAN MILLER: Yeah, I don't know if there's too many guards that are playing in the Tournament that are playing at a higher level than Jordan Pope. He means a lot to our team, and what he's really mastered is that he controls the game and he's our point guard, but he adds such a strong scoring punch that he can change the game from the three-point line.

Even the shot before halftime was a big shot. Right before the half, where he came off the screen and buried it and gave us a lead. We struggled for a lot of the first half, it was good to go to halftime leading.

Q. Coach Miller has a long history of a lot of tournaments success, when you guys got the bid, got into the First Four, what were your conversations in the locker room with him and without him about why you believed he could get you back to the Tournament and maybe make a run?

DAILY SWAIN: To start with without him, like I said a few days ago, we had a players-only meeting, and we just talked about that we just needed a chance. We didn't end the regular season the way we wanted to. But we never gave up on each other and that grew us closer.

We all took a different approach. We all stepped up our play, as you can see a more balanced attack. In this post-season I feel like everybody stepping up to the plate. And he also gave us that confidence, like it's a new beginning, kind of gave us that spirit that energy, and I think that we're using it very well.



Q. People are going to see the 11 seed and they're going to think a Cinderella run, but then when they see the Texas name, this doesn't come off as a Cinderella story. What is this team, when you look at it? Is it a team that just earned its opportunity or kind of like how would you define this run that you guys are on right now?

SEAN MILLER: Yeah, I don't think we ever really want to sign up to be the Cinderella story, because we are the University of Texas and, look, we represent the SEC as well.

I think a couple things: The long regular season you can learn a lot of lessons, you can grow, and you can really kind of redefine yourself as time moves on. We played at UConn, we played Duke in Charlotte we went to Maui, none of us truly knew each other, other than Dailyn and I. And in some ways the first couple of months of our season were very much a work in progress, in fairness to us.

But we kept working and going. I think when you look at our record in the SEC, we were really close to being 10-8. I don't think anybody necessarily celebrates that, but I'm here to tell you, as evidenced by this tournament, there's no easy game in the SEC. The league itself prepares you for post-season.

And then when you enter post-season, Dailyn hit it, it's a new beginning. Sometimes the lessons you've learned along the way strengthen you. We're a much better team right now than we would have been a month ago. I think we're playing our best, everybody wants to play their best in March, and we just so happen to do it. We're playing our best right now and hopefully we can keep going.

Q. What are your thoughts on the execution of your team's offense in this game, because on the season you average 11 turnovers per game, but today just five and, in fact, it's the second fewest turnovers that Texas has ever had in a tournament game? Seemed like from start to finish it was a very clean game, even with the Gonzaga putting a little bit more ball pressure in the second half.

SEAN MILLER: No doubt. These guys will tell you, there's nothing that we talk more about right now than the value of limiting turnovers, trying to play the game with single-digit turnovers.

The other thing is we're not playing as fast right now simply because we can't, that wouldn't be the smart move based on the fact we played three games and just the way our team's made up. So we're opportunistic in transition, but I don't think you would look at us as a really fast group, up

and down right now.

And so with that you really have to value the ball. And these two guys, Dailyn Swain in the last two games has 12 assists and one turnover. There aren't a lot of guys at his size especially with what we ask him to do, that can do that. And he's a big reason.

Matas as well, he's starting to cut down on his turnovers, and I think that's a big deal.

The other number that really jumps out is we had 20 assists. So if you play an NCAA Tournament game, 20 assists and five turnovers, you certainly have to feel good about your offense.

Q. Pope hit a couple of big shots after he got hurt. What is his injury and did you consider taking him out of there at the end?

SEAN MILLER: No, I asked him, maybe he rolled his ankle, I think he'll be okay. You hate to give in or give up on a guy at the 3:00 mark of a 40-minute game when he means that much and he wants to stay in.

I'm just glad I put Cam Heide in because that was kind of like a quick-decision moment in a timeout. We had already drawn something up and just, again, entering him in the game, look, the shot he made is, it's that shot you watch on One Shining Moment. And that was an amazing shot he made, a big reason obviously that we won.

Q. You said earlier that it's special any time you go to the Sweet 16, but you've been there a lot, a lot of other people haven't. How do you think that you are a different coach and a better coach than when you were at Arizona?

SEAN MILLER: I hope I am a better coach. I know this, that over time learning from lessons, good and bad, I think you always have the opportunity to evolve and grow. I think when you look at our team this year, Dailyn will tell you and Matas will tell you, we spent a lot of time talking about being able to learn from failure and grow, and sometimes when you go through those tough moments, it can really bring out the best and take you to a place and another side that quite frankly you would never have arrived at if you didn't go through that.

And I guess to some degree that's me as a coach. But I also think our team, when we talk about being resilient, these guys have really done a great job doing that really well.

Q. Matas, you went against Graham Ike, one of the



best players, post players in the country and it was definitely looked like a battle in the post. But you come out with 17 points and a game-high nine rebounds, what was it like and how were you able to be so effective going such a talented guy on both sides of the ball?

MATAS VOKIETAITIS: First of all, I don't really care who I'm playing against. I'm just trying to play hard, confident. For my eyes, I'm the best big man in the country. So that's the key to play like that.

SEAN MILLER: Did you hear what he said? He said in his eyes he wants to be the best big guy in the country. Right?

MATAS VOKIETAITIS: Yes.

DAILYN SWAIN: That's right.

SEAN MILLER: And he's really, he's really done an amazing job here.

Q. You're down eight in the first half and that closing stretch to actually be leading after the first half, how it went, you call a playing for the big guy, a couple of lobs in that sequence too. Did that get him going and how important was that stretch at the end?

SEAN MILLER: That was a key stretch to the game. I think we just made our mind up that just the way the game felt we had to test Matas and just see if he could deliver. Dailyn by the way had two great passes to him.

But you're right, we started to go through him in about four or five possessions late in the first half, which I thought in the last eight minutes of the first half made us a better team. But Matas has to deliver and he did a great job.

Q. Nic Codie, the beginning of the season you started him, he went to the bench. You said there were lots of things he needed to work on. Now fast forward to a few months and he delivers one of the best performances of his career on a big stage. What do you say about his performance and the way he's approached this season and grown throughout?

SEAN MILLER: Yeah, he stepped up. Nic had a career high, 12 points. He was called on, I think playing 26 minutes, might have been the most he's played in a long time. But he's gotten better.

Again, back to my point, the season is long, it's filled with a lot of high moments and sometimes low moments. Nic went a long stretch where he didn't even play in the game. But he stayed with it, he didn't give in, he kept working and

when his opportunity came he's gotten better and better and better. I think these two guys will tell that you as well.

Q. Can you comment on Chendall Weaver's performance on the defensive side of the ball, because it looked like he was just really tenacious out there and making it hard for their offense?

SEAN MILLER: His value, you never truly see in the stat sheet. He's obviously blessed with great quickness and he's also blessed with an amazing ability to be unselfish. He does the dirty work, the little things. Somebody his size, it's remarkable how he rebounds. I thought he did a good job a number of times in today's game. He had three defensive rebounds, a couple of those were big plays.

So Chendall's been good in every game we played in the Tournament, and again one of those seniors that's playing down the home stretch of his career and being the best he can be.

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