

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

Saturday, March 21, 2026

Portland, Oregon, USA

Moda Center

Gonzaga Bulldogs

Mark Few

Graham Ike

Jalen Warley

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.

MARK FEW: Well, it was a heck of a basketball game. I think we were both kind of trading punches down the stretch, but I think both teams were having a hard time getting stops down the stretch, and we just couldn't get one on that last possession. I would have liked to have seen if we could have capitalized and hit our coverage, but Heide hit a big three, and that was about really what it came down to, was kind of just our lack of being able to get stops down the stretch.

But a lot of credit to Texas, our defense has been great all year and they stung us pretty good, especially in that second half, and we responded and hit big shots too at our end.

It was just an awesome, awesome group to work with this year. I've done this as a head coach now I think 28 years and the amount of adversity that we went through with all the injuries and, you we lose a guy like Braden Huff I think he was the most efficient offensive player in all of college basketball and loss Jalen for a while, loss Graham for a while, we had to reinvent how we played and the group was just unbelievable with how they just hung with it and hung with it and just kept winning games. So really proud of 'em.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.



Q. You had mentioned yesterday that Texas wasn't really a Cinderella, curious, you know, do they kind of fit that mold at all or is it just a team that's just has got it clicking at the right time?

MARK FEW: I mean, I think we're all adults here in this room, some of these monikers we put on everybody from Cinderella to blue bloods and all that, I have a hell of a time understanding it. I mean, they make literally no sense.

So that is not a Cinderella team. That's a really talented basketball team with a really, really, really good coach, that has incredible resources and has a great history of doing great things in the Tournament. So that's just a 11 seed that, you know, had some tough losses during the year.

But definitely more than enough talent to win another game after this.

Q. What were some of the things that Texas presented for your defense that ended up with them getting 46 points in the paint and putting more pressure on?

MARK FEW: Well, hey, great question. I mean, first of all, that's what makes this tournament so tough and so special when you do move on. These second games you got one day of prep after a really tough outing the night before. So you usually kind of doing a light walkthrough or jog-through.

Listen they have some great isolation players. I thought we did a nice job in the first half on Swain and Mark, but in the second half those isolation players got loose. They have a terrific big guy who puts a lot of foul pressure on you. They run some nice stuff, just like we do for our big guy, to get him a variety of looks and coming from a lot of different spots on the floor and the ball's coming from different areas. We tried doubling, we tried everything.

But honestly, the thing that really probably hurt us the worst was their role players came in and just, I mean we gave up 12 to Codie and eight to Weaver. They're good players, but I thought we by and large did a good job on their kind of best scoring options. But those guys killed us. That's 20 points.

Q. You mentioned the 28 years you've been a head



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coach and just by virtue of the consistency and success you guys have had, that's 28 years that the season has ended more or less with this feeling. How do you process that? Are you like already, do you want there to be another game? Obviously you want to be another game, but are you ready to get back on court and start working for next season or do you need time to process it?

MARK FEW: No, I need, we all need time. Look, the suddenness of this tournament, no matter how many years you've done it, is just shocking to have to walk in the locker room and address these guys that really, truly, honestly, care about each other and love each other and would do anything to get one more possession together. To stand up there and address 'em and try to have it make sense is hard. So I always try to tell 'em it will make more sense as time passes. Kind of just like everything in life.

They will realize it was a hell of a season. I mean 31 wins is no joke, especially the way we schedule and with especially, as I mentioned earlier, just all the injuries and everything that we had to overcome. It's a heck of a run. We leaned in on this guy so hard, I mean, and he just delivered night in and out. Night after night after night after night, including tonight, he just delivered.

I'm so proud of Jalen. We only had him for, I don't know, six, seven months, and he, as I told him I wish we would have had out of high school. He's got all the Zag characteristic that all our great players have had over years, and he's just a big-time winner and he showed that tonight.

So that's what is really painful and that's why you don't really move on from it, but as time goes by these guys will understand it was a heck of a year and a heck of a lot of fun.

Q. Graham, you've been so capable of expressing yourself in these post-game things. When you had that dunk it looked like you thought that we got this in the bag, this is ours and then afterward. What's going through your mind and your heart now?

GRAHAM IKE: It was a great season. We played a hard-fought game. Ultimately we didn't come out with the outcome that we wanted, but we put in the work this season day-in and day-out to try and win the day.

Just super proud of this team for the adversity that we pushed through. We were built for adversity, no doubt about it. We faced so much of it. That built us for, to be better men in life, absolutely. It's not just this game, but this season built us to be better men in life.

I'm proud of this squad, I'm excited to see where everybody goes after this.

I'm just extremely grateful for Coach, the rest of the staff, for allowing me to be part of such a great legacy.

And to my teammates I can't thank them enough for always having my back, the fans always having our back.

Special season, special three years here that will forever be ingrained in my heart and my mind. So just grateful.

Q. Building off of that, we really got to see you grow as a person and as a player at Gonzaga. How would you capsule who you were when you arrived versus who you are now.

GRAHAM IKE: Just a human being in constant evolution. That's who I stepped in here as, that's who I'm leaving as. I grew as a man. Coach built us. My teammates helped me grow.

Like I said, I'm just extremely grateful that I got to experience something so grand as this.

Q. Is it weird to think about the next time that you coach a Gonzaga basketball team that it's not going to be in the WCC, that it's going to be in the PAC-12 that it's going to be all these new matchups? I mean a door just closed essentially on a chapter of the history of your program. I don't know if "weird" is the right word but how do you sort of look at all that?

MARK FEW: I mean, honestly, the weird, strange, just awful thing that I'm thinking about is not being able to coach these guys. I mean, that's what you process first. And you kind of just got to get over that and with time that will happen and it does take time, back to your earlier question.

So I haven't even thought about really the PAC-12, to be honest with you. We've just been focused day by day in kind of this deal and now like I said, no matter how many times it's happened it's kind of just shocking how fast it happens and all of a sudden you're one stop away from winning a game and then it's over.

It just takes time. It takes time. In this day and age it's an arduous recruiting season, that's the biggest thing that looms large. Especially, I mean, it's nearly impossible to replace guys like these two up here.

But, hey, I would encourage everybody to ask Jalen a couple questions, he's incredibly deep and he's incredibly



-- he was a huge, huge part of this team, and on the floor and off the floor, and this game. I mean, that was, what you guys got to see tonight was Jalen pretty close back to where he was when he's full speed and full a hundred percent. He was big time tonight.

Q. Jalen, obviously when you kind of reflect on your decision to come to Gonzaga and then spend that time kind of redshirting and waiting for your turn to get on the floor, and then playing a role that is very different from the role that you played previously in your career. Did you feel like you got out of this experience in Spokane with Coach Few, with this team, and this new role what you were hoping for for your final season?

JALEN WARLEY: Yeah, I couldn't even imagine it until I went through it. It was everything to me. I'd make the same decision a hundred times over. Yeah, just looking back on all the guys and all moments that we had, on and off the court. Like both of them said, we battled a lot of adversity. Yeah, this was my most fun year playing basketball. I feel like this is one of my most connected teams I've been a part of, and it really means a lot to me to say I can be a Zag for life, because this was everything for me.

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