

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - Prairie View A&M vs Florida

Friday, March 20, 2026

Tampa, Florida, USA

Benchmark International Arena

Prairie View A&M Panthers

Coach Byron Smith

Lance Williams

Dontae Horn

Media Conference



Obviously it's just an inopportune time being the NCAA Tournament, with the unbelievable run we had. Really were a hot team coming in, and we knew that Florida was going to pose some problems for us, especially with their size, their experience. They had seven or eight guys returning from a National Championship team. So we knew that we were going to be in for a tough task.

We got off to a really good start offensively, and I think the ball stuck, and we told them they can't stick, meaning by that, we didn't pass the ball, move the ball around. Kind of got away from our offense, started playing a little too much one-on-one basketball. I think they capitalized on that.

But yeah, this is my 11th year here. This is the best team in my opinion in the history of this university. So very proud of these guys for a remarkable year. Obviously disappointed, but I'm sure the sun is going to come up tomorrow.

Q. When you look at what's going on with the NIL and everything, how do you prepare for next year?

BYRON SMITH: I think that's a question for my esteemed athletic director sitting -- I want everybody to chase this guy out of here, and that will be a question for him.

We hope for the best. Obviously he's doing the best that he can, and I'm sure all the success we had this year, I think everybody knows that it's going to take some resources to be able to kind of reload this, what I call a formidable machine right now. We hope that we will be able to attract some quality student-athletes that resemble the quality student-athletes that we had for this particular team.

I think brighter days are happening, are coming for Prairie View men's basketball.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

Florida 114, Prairie View A&M 55

BYRON SMITH: Tough game tonight for the Panthers. Obviously Florida's size really caused problems for us. They shot the ball at a really high percentage. So we got down a little bit early and was playing catch-up from behind most of the time. That's a tough way to go. But proud of my guys. We fought. We competed. Really, really proud of the season that we had, but just kind of came up short tonight against a bigger, faster, quicker team.

Q. For both of you and Lance first, I don't mean to sound condescending, but there's going to be 67 teams that end up unhappy. How do you keep this from tainting the SWAC championship and the good season that you had?

LANCE WILLIAMS: I think you just simply don't. This is a tough loss, tough way to end our season, but when you reflect on everything we went through this season, we had a lot of adversity. We still managed to accomplish a lot of great goals like a SWAC championship. I'm still grateful for it all.

DONTAE HORNE: Like what Lance said, we still had a great season. Like he said, we made history. We went on an amazing run, and we can't overlook that. We fell short today, but we're still proud of what we accomplished, and we were glad we were able to make it here. It's a great story to tell to our younger ones when we get older.

Q. Coach, that had to be painful.

BYRON SMITH: Yeah, it's tough. It happens at times.

