

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: Second Round - BYU vs Wisconsin

Saturday, March 22, 2025

Denver, Colorado, USA

Ball Arena

BYU Cougars

Coach Kevin Young

Trevin Knell

Richie Saunders

Egor Demin

Media Conference

BYU 91, Wisconsin 89

KEVIN YOUNG: Man, just what an unbelievable basketball game, two hungry teams. Obviously there was a decent amount of talk of how prolific both of our offenses were, and that second half was on full display for both teams.

Just an unbelievable game. Glad we were on the winning side of it. Just super proud of our guys' resiliency. We just found a way. We felt like we couldn't stop them at all in the second half, and in that last time-out, man, we just looked each other in the eye and said all we've got to do is get one stop, that's it.

Good discipline. Tonje is a really, really good ball player. Had a remarkable game. But our guys just found a way. All these guys made huge plays. It was just really fun for me and for our group.

With that, I'll open it up.

Q. Trevin, what's the feeling like advancing to the Sweet 16? What's the mood over there in the locker room?

TREVIN KNEEL: It's a lot of pump-it-up songs. But I'm super proud of my team. The coaches gave us a game plan, and I feel like we executed it. And again, like, the route it took to get us here and just the energy in the locker room, the energy on the bench, the energy in the stadium, shout out to Cougar Nation.



But this was super remarkable and just something that I'll remember forever. It was a big-time win and a big-time energy in the locker room.

Q. Richie, in your freshman year, you had some really bad losses, but now you're a junior leading the team to the Sweet 16.

RICHIE SAUNDERS: Yeah, words can't really describe it. I felt like I've loved playing with this group. Like we've been together with some great additions, but there was a lot of us my freshman year taking some bad losses, and it's crazy just to think about how we've stuck together as a team, and we haven't -- we just chose to keep moving forward. And to see where we are and the opportunities ahead is just amazing.

Q. For any of you, could you take us through those last minutes you guys had, the big lead and they made that last surge? Was it just chaotic? What was going on?

TREVIN KNEEL: I mean, yeah, Wisconsin is a really high-caliber offensive team. But something that Coach Young said, he brought us all in the huddle, looked us all in the eye and said, We went through this at Arizona, we went through this at Iowa State, and he just said, I believe in this. I believe in you guys, and let's go out there and get a stop.

So when we have a belief like that, it really shows out on the court, and I believe our chemistry, the belief, the faith these guys have is something that really stands out, and I believe that's what propels us in close games like this.

Q. You weren't on Tonje the whole time, but why was he so hard to stop for you guys?

EGOR DEMIN: I mean, he's an amazing player. I think this is, first of all, why it was really hard to stop him. He was really finding the way how to score, even if we are staying in front or we are not jumping his pump fakes.

He got to the free-throw line a lot of times. I'm not sure how many exactly, but a lot. I don't know how much was that about our discipline, not fouling him, or how much was



it about his skills or whatever it is.

He's a good player. I mean, nothing much to say about that.

Q. Coach, I know you said at the start of the tournament you were glad you guys were playing in Denver. How does it feel to be back in Denver and going to the Sweet 16 since the last time BYU went to the Sweet 16, they won the two games in Denver?

KEVIN YOUNG: Yeah, good omens, I guess. But personally I've had good memories in this building, and so this is by far the best one, man. Just the energy in the building, you can't describe it. It felt like, honestly, a home game in certain moments for Cougar Nation, just everywhere, just so much blue out there. Obviously Denver has been good to us.

Q. Kevin, you were totally in control of the game. I think Dawson got ejected. Did you get an explanation on that? And what do you think was maybe the cause of their comeback?

KEVIN YOUNG: Talent. Tonje. He's one of the best players in the country. You can try to do as good a job as you want. I think learning to adjust to how the game is getting called. The Big 12 is very physical. This game I thought they had a tighter whistle, so we have to do a better job adjusting, I thought was a huge part of it.

Relative to Dawson, I'm going to need a pretty in-depth explanation of that one. So I can't comment on that.

Q. You were obviously really emotional and pretty excited through most of the game. What was that like, advancing to the Sweet 16 in your first year as BYU's coach?

KEVIN YOUNG: Yeah, I think the emotion just stems from how happy I am for all of our players and everyone that supports BYU. You look up in there, and you see that much support, it's really just gratifying to be able to lead this team for everyone that supports it.

For me personally, just seeing my kids over there, my wife and all my family, there's just so many people that care about this, so that part of the emotion kind of got to me once we got that last stop.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports