

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - Wright State vs Virginia

Friday, March 20, 2026

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

Xfinity Mobile Arena

Wright State Raiders Coach Clint Sargent Solomon Callaghan Michael Imariagbe

Media Conference

Virginia 82, Wright State 73

THE MODERATOR: We'll start with an opening statement from Coach Sargent and then take questions for student-athletes.

CLINT SARGENT: I'm certainly proud to be their coach, I can tell you that much. Difficult game to lose with how we competed, even more difficult when you get to this. It's always abrupt how you end, and these guys have given me an awful lot. The time we've shared has been everything you dream of when you dream of being a head coach and what they've poured into, not only me and my family, but each other. It's one of the most enjoyable... that word doesn't even do it justice. MOST impactful group of young men I have ever been around. I'm just so thankful to go through the journey. It's not always the case you get to the biggest stage, but we did.

I wish we could have done a few more things to get them over the hump in this game, but I am proud to be their coach. I'm proud and thankful to get to do life with them. I told them I'd do anything for them, and a hard one to swallow.

But as we look back at this team, they've really changed history at Wright State, and we'll only get better with time.

Q. This one is for Solomon. I believe yesterday you mentioned about how connected and locked in the group is. I just want to ask you about being able to battle the way that you guys did and what it means to do it with this group of guys.



SOLOMON CALLAGHAN: Yeah, it's an incredible feeling being out there, locked arms with brothers that you know have your back the entire time. Like I said yesterday, we spent an incredible time together on and off the floor. So just being able to have those moments, to be able to have so much joy for each other while we're playing, and then at the end of the game after we lost, everybody's so -- we just go through a lot of things together. That's why we molded into the time that we are. That's why we are a historical team at Wright State. I'm just super proud of the guys. Super proud of the coaching staff. We really meshed together in a way I have never been part of on any team. It was just incredible to go through that this year with these guys.

Q. Michael, what came over you today? More threes than you took all year and you kept making them.

MICHAEL IMARIAGBE: My coaches, teammates gave me confidence. We have been practicing. I have been shooting. We don't care if you miss, make it, ride or die for you. So they gave me confidence that I could shoot today.

Q. Have you always had that in you?

MICHAEL IMARIAGBE: Yeah, but I play my role. I'm coachable. I do whatever the coaches want me to do, so, yeah.

Q. Michael, for you, being one of the veterans on a fairly young team here, you hear Solomon talk about the way this group has molded over the year. I just want to hear from you, how much have you seen this group come together over the course of the year? And then for you, how proud are you of seeing this group go toe-to-toe with a team like Virginia when you're on a big stage today?

SOLOMON CALLAGHAN: I'm very proud. In June, waking up at 6:00 a.m., I feel like that brought us close together, made our team chemistry way stronger. Unlike last year, we wasn't as connected. We were well connected off court, which brought it on court. As you can see, we became a good team, made history here at Wright State. And being a senior, I still learned a lot from these younger guys. They gave me advice, I give them advice too and we just learn off each other.



Q. People back home are talking about how great of a game you guys played. What do you have to say about the fans back home?

SOLOMON CALLAGHAN: I'll stand on this, I love our fan base. They're so connected into Wright State basketball. It means a lot to me when we have something like we were watching the -- what's it called? Selection Sunday. When we were watching that, we had a lot of fans come out for that. The way they're so supportive of us, and I have fans back home where I'm from. And it just means a lot to have that base behind me. It encourages me to keep doing what I'm doing, adds a little extra motivation. Appreciate them for sure.

Q. Either of you, what frustration came in, 11 ties and 18 lead changes. What would be the thing that frustrations you the most?

SOLOMON CALLAGHAN: I feel like we were doing a pretty good job of taking care of the ball most of the game. I just feel like there was a little bit of time where we had some slippage. We started having a couple of turnovers, which led them in the transition, which is what they do very well. I felt like if we could have cleaned that up a little bit down the stretch, we might have had a different result, but at the end of the day, we put forward our best foot.

I feel super proud of the rest of the guys. You're always going to sit back at the end of the loss and think what could we have done better? At the end of the day, I know the brothers that I was locked with, we were going as hard as we could and we were doing everything we could.

Q. Coach, taking care of the ball. What did you see that made your defense so effective today?

CLINT SARGENT: I thought early, just an aggressiveness with our hands. TJ has been, I think, the first in the country in steal percentage and he had five of them. I think that was a big part of us just getting into the game and becoming confident in doing what we do, and did a tremendous job. Very proud of these guys with the mentality, the fearlessness that they showed up and played with --

Q. Coach, I said it to Michael, this being a very young team, I felt like there were maybe different stints today where they maybe sort of wilted and let Virginia run away with runs, but you guys kept constantly responding. Can you talk about sort of what you think that says about this young group and how far they have come over the course of the season?

CLINT SARGENT: Yeah, I don't think they wilted. Virginia's trying to win, too. They swung back. Jacari White had a heck of a game. They made big plays. I think there was that stretch there under 4:00. We were going back and forth, back and forth, we were trying to get a couple of those to drop but Solomon said it.

I don't think there's a thing, there are certain things as a coach that I will learn from which I will be thankful for in time, but these guys, in terms of their effort, we told them early, nobody cares that you're freshmen. You have no excuses not to step on to the stage with great expectation for yourself and we always encourage them to make choices. Like, don't give into the emotion of the game, you just continue to make choices. That's part of being a man. Make choices, and I thought they did that really throughout all the ebbs and flows of the game.

Q. You mentioned earlier about how special this group was and in juxtaposition from the season last year. Is there a moment that you knew this group was truly special?

CLINT SARGENT: Yeah, pretty early. It's so hard to just not get more time with them. It's hard -- for you guys to understand. I'm not trying to coach speak you but many times, we would get home from road trips and they would just stay there, midnight, and they just wanted to be together. I told them often if I didn't have a wife and five kids, I would sit there and hang with you too.

That chemistry was formed early in the mundane days of summer conditioning. These guys are incredibly honest with each other as young men and in a world where everybody wants to put on this facade and act like certain things, and these guys are just brutally honest with where they're weak and where they struggled as young men.

I think early when they were being honest with each other, that gave us a chance to be very connected. We just drew together as a team through the basketball, through highs and lows. We started off 5-7. They didn't wilt and they didn't flinch. They just got closer and closer and closer.

Q. You had multiple guys in double figures today and it felt like every time you guys were coming back in the game, it was a different guy who was able to step up. Can you talk about the balance and depth of the team and how you can carry that into the next season?

CLINT SARGENT: Yeah, thankfully that's what we have been. We have had guys step up and hit big shots, and that depth is critical. I always say, and Mike kind of said it, due to their humility and selflessness, it allows you to be deep. I don't deal with passive aggressive players. When

you're trying to play eight, nine, ten guys quickly, guys can get in their feelings, and these guys don't. They just play with a selflessness.

We try to create an environment where they're just not afraid to fail. We can handle your failure, we can use that. It's good for you. No matter who there are, for Mike to jump up from five to nine for three, that's just a byproduct of that type of environment and belief that I hope they feel for me. But I continue to say the most important thing now is the peer-to-peer influence. I would put our peer-to-peer influence up against anybody. I think that allows them to be very confident in all arenas of life, but for sure, as they're on the biggest stage. I think you saw that today.

Q. Ryan said you were doing stuff that they want expecting, shooting threes, catch them off guard that way?

CLINT SARGENT: Yeah, we had to go -- for the most part, we attacked the paint and that's how we have been efficient offensively. We knew we had to free guys up to shoot rhythm threes, and we did some different things with our ball, shrink coverage, but really I thought the game kind of came down to the glass and those extra possessions. That, obviously with their size and rim protection, that's a lot to handle for us.

Q. You've talked all season about the team playing the full 40 minutes. How do you feel about their energy tonight?

CLINT SARGENT: I thought it was great. I have no -- I have absolutely no regrets for how they competed, how they showed up, how they stayed together through the course of this game.

I think they'll continue to look back on this season and understand how different it was because of how they showed up every single day for each other, how they got other themselves, the selflessness which, again, is hard to find in this era and just social media, all the attention, all the me, me, me, me. These guys just continue to dive into themselves and that's a beautiful thing. It's a beautiful thing. So, yeah, I was very pleased with their energy.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Congratulations on a great season, Coach. Thanks very much.

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