

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: Second Round - Grand Canyon vs Alabama

Sunday, March 24, 2024

Spokane, Washington, USA

Spokane Veterans Memorial Arena

Grand Canyon Lopes

Bryce Drew

Gabe McGlothan

Tyon Grant-Foster

Media Conference



GABE MCGLOTHAN: You know, our God is way bigger than just a basketball game. We lost the game, but I gained 14 other brothers in the midst of it all and just looking at where God has led us through it all, being able to carry this every single game and rely on it. I mean, I know these guys started picking up their own Bibles too. So just saying that they're more than just basketball players. Your identity is way bigger than just basketball. Your identity is in Christ.

So I'm proud of these guys having open hearts and being able to take the Word and live it out themselves. It's just a message of just like you're more than just a basketball player. Like, God has built you and uniquely designed you to be who you are and you have so many gifts that he will utilize for your purpose later on in life.

Q. What do you guys take from your time at Grand Canyon over the past couple years for you, Gabe, and over this year for you, Tyon.

GABE MCGLOTHAN: Just really the community. I would not be the man I am today, I wouldn't be the man of faith that I am today without the GCU community and without Coach Drew, without brothers like Tyon and everyone else on the team. Even though I gave a lot, it seems like I was just the spiritual leader or whatever, like, really I was getting poured into the whole time by just the GCU community as a whole. So I'm just so blessed to have been a part of it and to be a Lope for life, basically, and I couldn't be more grateful. Yeah, just blessed.

TYON GRANT-FOSTER: I'm going to take -- like Gabe said, I gained 14 other brothers, man, and that's just going to -- they going to ride for me for life, just like I'm going to ride for them. So I'm going to take that from this experience.

Q. We know about the Havocs, but just to see that support 1,400 miles away from home and have it feel like a home game on a weekend in March, what did that mean for you to look up and see that support, the standing ovation as you left the court?

TYON GRANT-FOSTER: It means everything to me,

Alabama - 72, Grand Canyon - 61

THE MODERATOR: We'll take an opening statement from coach and then followed by questions for the student-athletes.

BRYCE DREW: Yeah, never fun to talk after a loss. Man, these guys are fighters, though. If you would have told me before the game we're going to shoot 10 percent from three, 32 from the field, and 62 from the free-throw line and be up with six minutes left, there's no way I would have believed you.

The fight of these guys, the will, the togetherness, the no quit in them was really fun to be part of. We talked about sometimes the ball doesn't go in, sometimes a rebound doesn't bounce your way, but your effort can be outstanding and tough every possession, and that's what they did.

So hate losing, especially a game that if we would have made some shots, made some free throws, rebounded a little better, we easily could have turned the outcome. But not going to take away anything from these guys, what they achieved all year and the fight that they had tonight in this game.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Gabe, after the last game, Coach really called you that spiritual leader on the team. What does it kind of look like to continue being that leader after that big win and now after a tough loss?



really. Just the support and the care that they have for us is like unwavering. No matter where we at they're going to find a way to get there, so like I love that so much.

GABE McGLOTHAN: Yeah, I think it goes to show for the program and just the school. I mean, after a loss, everyone's of course disappointed, but you look up into the stands and you just see giant, like, Lopes up or hearts coming out from the stands. It just means more to me knowing that, even though, unfortunately, I feel like I let them down, that they're always going to be like, you know what, you're a Lope, and then always have that love for you.

Q. Not to linger on something game-related, but you guys are down 10 early in the second half, you come back to take the lead, and then you can't really -- you didn't really get anything going the last four, five minutes. What did you guys do really well to come back from that deficit to get the lead and what didn't work for you guys the last four, five minutes?

GABE McGLOTHAN: Just looking at each other's eyes and just being connected to see who we're fighting for. We're fighting for each other. I think that that love that we have for each other is a bond that can be -- is not breakable. So when we were down 10, being able to come back and fight, it was for each other and just being connected. Unfortunately, the ball just didn't bounce our way towards the end, and they got the best of us. But the one thing is is I can sit here and say that this bond was never broken and that love that we have for each other, that fight, was never once tested and lost.

TYON GRANT-FOSTER: Like Gabe said, I just feel like the connectivity that we had, like, that didn't leave the whole game. We knew we had a chance to win that game. I will just say -- I say we were one rebound away from winning that game. We get one rebound, like, the game's turned. We win that game. So that's the only real thing that I have to say about that, just because we were so connected that, like, everything that we did we were doing it for each other. Like, nobody was doing something trying to just win the game. Like, we all were, together. So I feel like we were literally just one rebound away from winning that game.

Q. You guys they took 31 three-pointers and made eight. And I think they had 20 offensive rebounds. Was the ball just clanking back out to them, was it hard to be able to block out, and because some of those came down the stretch when number 10 I think had five offensive rebounds. I know you guys fought like heck on the glass, but, man, was that just frustrating to see the ball banging out to them?

GABE McGLOTHAN: Yeah, the thing about three-point shots, they're long shots, so they have a lot of momentum going towards the rim which means long rebounds. Sometimes they just, you're boxing out, you're doing what you're supposed to, and it just flies over your head. That's what ended up happening. We just can look at those moments and be, like, you know what, I got to push 'em a little bit harder, get 'em out, box out a little better. But long shots equals long rebounds and I think that's what got us.

TYON GRANT-FOSTER: I would say it was just like a couple plays where we had the ball and we just lost it sometimes. Sometimes that happens, but, shoot, it just, that just happens. So, I don't know, I feel like we just didn't have the ball in our hands.

Q. This was one of the best seasons in GCU history for basketball, so what are you guys going to take from it and what are you guys most proud of over the course of this entire season?

TYON GRANT-FOSTER: I would say just the connectiveness that we had. Like that was one of the main things that Coach preached to us, no matter how many points we were down or anything like that, we just made sure that we stayed together, because we knew if we stayed together that we could do anything. Like I said, we could play with the best of the best in the country. So I'm going to say I'm going to take that from this season.

GABE McGLOTHAN: I think my joy throughout the season was just seeing my brothers come to faith a little bit. They opened their hearts, they were all believers, but really understanding who Jesus is and what he did for us. That truly was the biggest blessing being around on this team and seeing us win the real battles, which is for eternity. I'll see them in heaven one day. So even though we lost, we won the real fight. We won the real victory of, you know, what this life's about. So, that's where my joy comes from from this year.

THE MODERATOR: All right, we'll excuse the student-athletes and take questions for Coach.

Q. I think there at the beginning, between both teams, it was 3-21. Just kind of how you guys, after that media timeout, started to get rolling again.

BRYCE DREW: Yeah, we struggled in the half court offense. I think their length and speed gave us a lot of problems. Some of our shots, I thought we had really good looks, we just didn't make 'em. Thought they had some good looks to start the game, just didn't make 'em. I think it just was the energy in the building and just the excitement



of the game and knowing what's at stake. But I thought both teams really competed. That was a fight for 40 minutes with teams really going at each other.

Q. Same question I asked them, what did you see the last five minutes? You guys kind of got stagnant offensively, didn't score the last 4:40. What did you feel like happened there?

BRYCE DREW: Yeah, I mean, the shift came when we were up three and they had a five-point possession. Our inability to get two rebounds off missed free throws. That really shifted the momentum. I think it was deflating for our guys in a way. We were on such a good run and built a three-point lead and that's what Tyon was referring to, if we rebound that first free throw, we have the ball up two, we score, go up four, all of a sudden that whole dynamic changes the last five minutes. So we sub, we brought Gabe and Ray back in with four fouls. And credit Sears, Sears, I thought he willed them to win. Defensively he was terrific, scored it, rebounded it, and he was just, he just willed his team all night, especially those last five minutes.

Q. Alabama out rebounded you guys by nine. Talk about kind of that impact that had on the game.

BRYCE DREW: Huge. The offensive rebounds in the last six minutes cost us the game. Won the game for them. Long shots, like Gabe said, long rebounds. They were just quicker to the ball on the long rebounds. Then the free throw box-outs, I'll have to go back and watch the film and see if it was just a tip or we missed the coverage. But the offensive rebounds were the most, probably the biggest difference in the game, even despite our shooting, if we rebound, I think the last five minutes goes different.

Q. Losing Luke with five minutes left, fouled out, how big was that, because I think he only played seven minutes in the first half with three fouls. I mean, he's, if not your best interior defender, one of your best. How did that impact it?

BRYCE DREW: It really hurt our offense. We've been so good in this last month and a half with Luke and Gabe on the floor together. So our inability to put them on the court for a long stretch of time really hurt. Just, offensively, I think we would have scored a lot better if he could have played more minutes out there.

Q. I'm going to ask you the same question I asked them, this is your best season at the helm at GCU, so what are you most proud of, of the season, what's the main thing you're going to take away from it?

BRYCE DREW: Really thankful. Thankful to be able to

coach. Thank you for our school. Thank you for the players that we had. It's been a blessing all year. We've beat two ranked teams for the first time in school history, went undefeated at home, 30 wins, second round in the NCAA tournament. So much to be proud of for these guys. You know what I'm really proud of is, I think tonight we got to experience and see our team, couldn't make a shot, didn't rebound great, but the guys never quit. They battled and they fought and they found ways to stay in the game and manufacture points. There's so much similarities with life and basketball, and they survived out there, they fought out there, they didn't quit out there. Those are characteristics they will take with them beyond GCU with their families and life. So just so proud of their effort and all they gave for us tonight and all season.

Q. Just to hear Gabe speak with such eloquence, and you mentioned him being the spiritual leader, what kind of impact and legacy has he left for the program moving forward?

BRYCE DREW: Yeah, in the locker room we have a mix of transfers, first years, guys that have given their all for us this year, but Jovan and Gabe were here at the very beginning. We talked about Jovan being here when we were 312th I think in the country. He didn't know anyone on our staff. He decided to stay at GCU, and he's been part of this going now into, hopefully our NET's going to end in the 40s. Then Gabe, same thing, he was here day one that we got here, and he could have left and gone somewhere else. Those two there's kind of a special feeling towards because they have just seen this whole thing transform over the last four years to be where we're at. So it's hard looking at those guys, it will be harder later when we see 'em, but I think their legacy, they helped lay the foundation for our program for the future.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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