

# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - Long Island vs Arizona

Friday, March 20, 2026

San Diego, California, USA

Viejas Arena

**Arizona Wildcats**

**Coach Tommy Lloyd**

**Brayden Burries**

**Koa Peat**

Media Conference

Arizona - 92, Long Island - 58

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by Arizona coach Tommy Lloyd and student-athletes Koa Peat and Brayden Burries.

TOMMY LLOYD: Thanks for being here. Great, great job by our guys today. These games are never easy. You never take them for granted.

LIU had a great season. So I definitely want to recognize that. Rod's done an amazing job building that program back.

I didn't realize the whole story until you kind of look at it. And that three-year turnaround from where they were single digit wins, single digit wins to the NCAA Tournament, that's pretty special. And college basketball can be pretty stratified. So I have lots of respect for my colleagues and guys that coach in some of those smaller conferences or at a place like LIU because you know what, it's just as hard or harder to win there than it is in Arizona. So I have a lot of respect for those guys.

I want to commend these guys and our players for coming out. And I thought they played really well today. And obviously we got off to a good start and that really helped.

**Q. Just so much has been made about the freshman class this year, now you get your first opportunity in the tournament. How do you feel this performance went and just getting the ability to finally get to play in this tournament?**



KOA PEAT: Yeah, it was great. We had a good team win today. I'm just proud of our guys. We came out with good energy in the beginning of the game, and I thought we sustained that well during the game. And it's special to share the court with special freshmen like Ivan, Brayden and Dwayne and C.D. for sure.

BRAYDEN BURRIES: What Koa said, but just great win. It's a great experience out there. First time, now just ready to continue to just get better.

**Q. Brayden, how much did the Big 12 Tournament prepare you for the magnitude of March Madness?**

BRAYDEN BURRIES: I think it prepared me, just the one-and-done scenario. Just taking one game at a time, being where your feet is. And don't look too far ahead, don't look too far back, just stay in the present.

**Q. What's the mindset after a game like this? How do you move forward in the competition? How do you move forward with that mentality?**

KOA PEAT: Just watch the game that's happening right now, go prepare for that. Try to rest and recover and just get ready for Sunday.

**Q. Brayden, you got out to a fast start. What would you say that was working for you and what the defense was giving you?**

BRAYDEN BURRIES: Just being in the right place at the right time. My teammates finding me. So thankful for them and just making shots, honestly.

**Q. Koa, you were a four-time high school champion in Arizona. Coach Lloyd said yesterday that for the freshmen he wants you guys to compete like you're about to win another state championship. What's the compete level feel like on this stage compared to those big stages you played on before?**

KOA PEAT: Yeah, I mean, it's huge. Everybody's watching the games in March Madness. It's definitely special, for sure.

But I played in a lot of big games. I feel like I'm pretty



seized for the moment and just ready to play in those big games. And just playing my hardest and trusting my teammates.

**Q. Koa, you guys allowed six points in the first six minutes. What were some points of emphasis specifically on defense that allowed you guys to cause so much havoc for their offense?**

KOA PEAT: I think it's our preparation. Our green squad did a really good job of getting us prepped for the game. And we were just sitting on LIU's tendencies. That's tough, especially they got a lot of good players over there. But I thought we did good defensively and we just were together for sure on defense.

**Q. Brayden, did you feel like Long Island was trying to push you guys to try to take the 3s and do whatever they could to mock up the paint?**

BRAYDEN BURRIES: Yeah, I think their game plan, I think was just to close out short and just force us to shoot 3s and hopefully they rebound it. Today we made our shots. It was in our favor.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Coach.

**Q. Tommy, yesterday Brayden told me that you had an early-season meeting with him that kind of changed the trajectory of his season. What do you remember about that meeting, and how have you seen Brayden evolve throughout the year?**

TOMMY LLOYD: We're meeting with the guys all the time. I don't know what specific meeting he's referring to, but I just told Brayden, like, if I would have been predicting the future, in September, how the season would go, I would have thought it would have played out just like it did.

I thought it was going to take him a little time. I felt like he needed to get a few games under his belt. We knew how good he was and how talented he was, because we're in the gym with him every day. But I thought he was going to need some game experiences and he was going to need to learn from them.

**Q. Your three leading point scorers were freshmen. What was your sense of their readiness and competition level in their first appearance in this tournament?**

TOMMY LLOYD: I mean, honestly I don't look at them as freshmen, you know what I mean? I just look at them as really good basketball players. These guys, they have high IQs, they have great character and obviously they're

talented basketball players. And they put the work in.

So when you have that combination of elements, I don't think it matters what year you are in school. And I would have been more surprised had they come out and been a little bit nervous today than play the way they did.

**Q. Both 1 seeds that played yesterday were in dog fights. Not sure if you watched any other games but how important was it to let the team know not to play down to the competition?**

TOMMY LLOYD: Listen, I don't think playing down to the competition is something that ever enters my mind. I mean, I have a lot of respect for our opponents, and I make sure our players do as well.

I told our guys, these 1-16 games, you just don't know. Obviously, the objective is to win the game. You can't get emotionally caught up if the game is close at half or anything like that.

The main objective is to find a way to get the win, and luckily we came out and we got a lead right away, and we were able to carry that the rest of the game.

**Q. Given the substantial margin like this, do you think there are improvements that can be made both on the offensive end and defensive side of the ball?**

TOMMY LLOYD: Always, always when you're talking to a coach. The game is -- basketball is, it's a game of a lot of random things happening in succession. And there's a lot of mistakes made. That's what makes it a beautiful game. There's always something to learn from.

I feel like I'm learning every day, every week as a coach. I'm learning new things about the game of basketball. That's one of the things I love is the never-ending pursuit of learning.

**Q. Ivan topped his rebounding record by three. Just in general, the rebounding in this game, knowing that Long Island was going to be taking a lot of shots at the rim, how important was it for guys to be closing out on those for the misses?**

TOMMY LLOYD: It's really important. Rebounding is always an interesting thing. There's some old adages -- long shot, long rebound. There's some truth to that, especially getting in the tournament with the new Wilson balls. Sometimes they bounce back a little farther than they're used to.

But there's another adage, short shot, short rebounds.

You've got to be great on those. We work on our rebound instincts every single day. We want our rebounding mentality to be more based off instincts than habits or techniques. It's something we value and we work on it every single day.

**Q. Despite getting a huge lead, how are you able to instill a philosophy in your players that allowed them to keep the intensity up throughout 40 minutes of the game?**

TOMMY LLOYD: Just encouraging them and understanding, you know, you've got to break the game into smaller segments, and when you're on the court, honestly, you shouldn't even worry what the score is. You should be playing possession by possession and honoring that aspect of the game, not worrying about what the overall score is.

**Q. What's it been like for you just carrying this proud tradition and mantel forward of Arizona basketball which has been so prominent for five-plus decades now?**

TOMMY LLOYD: It's an honor. That's a great question. I appreciate you saying that. Arizona basketball is not me. I'm a servant to this program. And I always remind our former players and supporters, when I'm with them.

We had a get-together, would have been Wednesday night. Matt Othick owns a pizza joint in this area, and I think he told anybody that had any affiliation with the Arizona Wildcats to show up, because I was expecting a small little get-together of a few players.

But man, the place was hop pinning. So we took our staff and families out there and it was great to hang out with guys like Buechler and Kevin Flanagan. These guys are great Wildcats. They're the fabric to our program.

So it's something that I don't take lightly. It's an honor to be at the helm of the program. And trust me, every day I think about, it's my job to honor and respect this program and move it forward in the direction that makes our supporters and our former players proud.

**Q. In the past, you guys have struggled with foul trouble and that wasn't the case today. What did you tell your team in order to not foul out or --**

TOMMY LLOYD: I don't know if we struggled with foul trouble. I think the people we play against struggle with foul problems. That's how I look at it. Fouls are going to happen it. We have the depth to absorb them.

When you're a physical team there's going to be whistles. And sometimes they're not going to go our way, and sometimes you are going to foul. You have to play through it.

And as the game plays out if there's small adjustments you can make you make them. And if there's substitution patterns you have to change, you change them.

So the foul game is something that's really important to us, on both sides of us -- our personal fouls and our opponent's personal fouls.

**Q. There was a couple possessions where you guys got the ball and you guys didn't have like -- you had an opportunity for a fastbreak but you guys slowed it down. Is that something you want to change later?**

TOMMY LLOYD: Listen, I didn't tell our guys to slow it down today at all. And we have -- I know the specific point in the game you're talking about. We had two or three possessions where we walked the ball up the court.

For me, being able to get the ball up the court with tempo and pace doesn't mean we have to do something quick, but it helps us initiate our offense. So getting the ball up with the right pace affects something two or three passes later, and so that's something that I always think about.

We just reminded our guys to continue to run, to continue to get into our flow as quick as we could. And our guys did a good job readjusting to that later in the second half.

**Q. Three consecutive games played in the Big 12 Tournament and then a tight turnaround with the game here on Sunday. Can you speak to your preparations the next 48 hours? And also your thought process to keep the team sharp with another game on Sunday?**

TOMMY LLOYD: Well, I mean, I think that will go without saying. Our guys know where we're at. And they know where we want to go. And they know what our purpose is.

I'm not worried about the focus not being there. Listen, I want to get this press conference over. And I want to commend you young Arizona students, you guys are asking great questions. You guys are doing a great job, and I love it. You guys should come to more of our stuff we do on campus instead of being out at Bob Dobbs or wherever you guys hang out, come to press conferences. You guys are doing a great job. But, listen, I want to get this press conference over. I want to get back to the hotel, and I'm going to watch the game and start preparing, and we'll have a great afternoon of preparation today that will lead to a strong day of preparation tomorrow, and hopefully

a good performance on Sunday. We're just going to kind of take it hour by hour.

**Q. At the end of the game for LIU, Eddie Munyak hadn't played all season. Hits the bank. 3, obviously March means a lot to some of these teams. What did you think of that moment for him?**

TOMMY LLOYD: I mean, listen, you feel good for that young man. That's an awesome moment in his life that he'll never forget.

I mean, college basketball is special, and I think in this NCAA Tournament, there's a lot of amazing stories. That's what makes it great theater.

And you also know some teams advance and we're a team on a mission. We are. But we also have a team we played today that their season ended. And they've had a magical season. And there's guys on that team that didn't get to play very much.

So for a kid like that to be able to put that in his back pocket and pull out the video with all his friends, you know, down the line it's going to be something really special. Glad I'm a part of it.

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