

# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: Second Round - Utah State vs Arizona

Sunday, March 22, 2026

San Diego, California, USA

Viejas Arena

## Utah State Aggies Coach Jerrod Calhoun

Zach Keller

Garry Clark

Drake Allen

Kolby King

Media Conference



### Tournament?

**KOLBY KING:** It meant a lot. I appreciate Aggie Nation and Calhoun for taking me in, especially all the sacrifices we made as a group. It's probably been like the best team I've been on so far in my career. And I appreciate what Logan has done for us.

**ZACH KELLER:** From the time I got on campus this summer, I understood it was a standard and expectations that I wasn't used to. Dealing with the returners, they got us in tune with how things are ran. And they did a great job.

We understood how things should be run and how we gotta handle things. I just want to thank the returners for embracing us new guys as much as they did.

**GARRY CLARK:** The culture at Utah State is the best part about what's going on from the fan bases to the culture we have on the basketball team, a brotherhood a great community and if you don't want to play for a great community, then I don't know why else would you play college basketball.

From the day we all stepped on here, we were welcomed with open arms and it's been a blessing to play in this uniform.

**DRAKE ALLEN:** It hurts. I don't want to take the uniform off. Knowing it's going to be my last time wearing it it means so much. And it really just feels like family, everybody in Logan, it feels like one big family.

I really want to give glory to God just because I feel like nothing -- everything happens for a reason. I think that these group of guys were put together for a specific reason, a special reason, not only these group of guys but these coaches as well.

I think that everything happens for a reason. I think God has put us here. It's all according to His plan. I'm just very grateful that we've been able to experience this in Logan, being Aggies. It doesn't get better than that.

**Q. Drake, this run you guys did in March kind of showed a lot of people about what Utah State is all**

Arizona - 78, Utah State - 66

**JERROD CALHOUN:** Proud of our guys. All year long to do some of the things that this group was able to accomplish is not easy. One of the most connected teams I've ever been a part of, from our managers to our staff.

To our administration, to our players, the most important guys in the program, they truly loved one another, wearing the Aggie uniform, wearing the Utah State uniform truly meant something to these guys. I think you saw that in their fight the last seven, eight minutes, their refuse-to-lose mentality.

But hats off to Coach Lloyd and the Wildcats. Obviously we didn't like our seed, whatever it was, a week and a half ago. I think we played certainly better than a 9 seed and didn't deserve that.

But we didn't pout. We didn't sulk. We rolled up our sleeves. We had great prep. And these guys laid it all on the line. Really proud of how hard they've played.

**THE MODERATOR:** Questions for the student-athletes.

**Q. Quick thought from you, this is your last game of your career. What it's meant for you playing for the Aggies, being able to play in the Spectrum, hold up the standard of the program, win a Mountain West championship and win a game in the NCAA**



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**about, a lot of noise about you guys as a program, the history. What do you think this season and this postseason did for your guys' legacy as just a program?**

DRAKE ALLEN: Obviously it hurts right now to go back and look at everything you've accomplished just because I think we wanted that game pretty bad. I think we know that you know we could have beat those guys if we would have maybe played a little bit better.

But this group of guys right here next to me and the guys back in the locker room, we've accomplished so much. Just being so connected. The experiences on and off the court winning a conference championship, regular season championship and tournament championship at Utah State is something that I think that will be remembered for a very long time.

So I think that, you know, we should keep our heads high. We should be proud of the year that we had, no matter what the way it ended, the way it went right here in this last game, we should hold our heads high and be proud.

**Q. The Arizona players in the locker room, pretty much every single one just said that they were impressed by how tough that you guys were. How important is that in just how, Coach, how you build the program and the mentality you guys have each game out?**

KOLBY KING: I'd say that's the standard of us every practice from the summer to now. That's what we hound on is being tough on the defensive end. And it gave everybody our best fight.

So I feel like that's the culture of us, and that's what the coaching staff implanted in us, to be tough on defense and let everything work out.

**Q. Garry, can you talk about the comeback? You're down by 18. Coach calls a timeout and seems like you guys came out and you held them for over seven minutes without a field goal.**

GARRY CLARK: It's a gritty team. We had a bunch of dogs in the locker room. They made runs; we made runs. We believed that we belonged here. So it wasn't a surprise to us, just clawing back, possession by possession.

And it didn't end how we wanted it to, but I'm proud of how everybody fought.

**Q. How much did the center for Arizona, Mo Krivas, affect your shots? Did you feel like you had to alter**

**things when you were getting into the paint?**

ZACH KELLER: He's a buying guy. He's 7'2", I believe. So we just can't willy-nilly, just throw up a layup. He affects all of it, so just play off two and we've got to go up for looks. But he does affect what we can and cannot do in the paint.

**Q. You got to within four on three occasions and I think they broke the press and had that three-point play. The other two, Drake hit those 3s and you got close, you could never quite get over the top. Do you feel like you were one or two plays away from maybe changing the outcome?**

JERROD CALHOUN: Yeah, obviously, Burries' 3 was a dagger. I thought we guarded that possession really well. It was a six-point game. They missed that. We come down, make a shot -- a couple of the fouls out front were big calls.

There's a lot of plays throughout a 40-minute game that could impact it. And I thought that 3 by him was just a big-time shot in a big moment. And that really kind of carried Arizona to the win.

I thought our pressure bothered them. We were able to speed them up. But you can't simulate the size. I thought his question was the best question up here so far. That's the difference, right? That's the difference in the game is their physicality and their size.

To get outrebounded by 28, I've never been a part of that, and still I have a chance really within two possessions, and our two best players from the field struggled.

So that's a test to our, just overall what the game needs, keep pushing, keep playing, try to speed them up. You'll have some bad shooting nights.

We picked a couple of games to not shoot the ball great. And you've got to credit Arizona. They made the winning plays in the last five, six minutes.

**Q. Can you talk a little bit about what you said in that timeout with like 14:40 to play when you're down 18? I know a lot of times you talk about seeing it in the eyes of your players. Didn't seem like they wanted to give up. Did you see that in their eyes?**

JERROD CALHOUN: Yeah, we were just juggling every big we could. I thought when we finally went to Garry that's when we clicked. Garry has a great set of hands. I thought he got his hands on some basketballs. I thought our ball pressure was much better.

We trapped them multiple times, which led to some steals. And it finally looked like Aggie basketball. We were playing on our heels instead of our toes. We got some run-outs and steals. And just get to the rim.

When you can't find it, the ball won't go in from 3, you've got to get to the rim. I was really proud of our effort around the rim. I thought we were pretty efficient.

But to beat a 1 seed -- when you're a 9 seed, you've got to make those 3s. And our guys knew that. They knew at halftime, we were, what, 1-of-10 I think at half. We showed them every shot. We showed them every clip.

The thing about the game was we didn't let our inability to score affect our defense the last eight, nine minutes. That's the maturity. That's the want-to. That's your seniors. That's a team. To battle those guys and play as bad as we did offensively is really just a test to the character of the group and not to give up. And I was really proud of that.

**Q. You're big on messaging. What was the message and who gave the message pregame? What's your message postgame to your guys?**

JERROD CALHOUN: First of all, you wrote a great article. That was a tear-jerker article. One of the best articles I've read. I read it on the bus.

Jordan Love gave the message. And he was awesome. And the message after was just be proud of what we were able to accomplish.

**Q. What can you say about the defense, where for most of this game they were holding Arizona to 30 percent shooting. I know there were some fouls and Arizona kind of took off at the end. For most of this game you guys were holding a top-five defense to well below their averages?**

JERROD CALHOUN: I think this is going to be a great study the next two games for Arizona, or if it's one more game, two more games, four more games.

The way Tommy recruited, everybody has their system. He went very big. He went two, probably, lottery picks. Each coach has to be convicted of how they want to coach their team and run their program and what works.

So far, they're 2-0 in this tournament, and they live in the paint. They chew the paint up. They play '80s, '90s basketball. The number of physical plays in the game, we haven't seen that all year.

San Diego State, UNLV, they're close to that. But I really respect it. I think everybody's style is different. And it's working.

But our guys did a tremendous job, I thought, the last nine minutes of really locking in on some of those details. You've got to be at least eight or 10 difference in the rebounding. Can't be 28.

If you're not going to rebound, you've got to make shots. So it was just a couple of margins we couldn't overcome.

**Q. You mentioned their size and physicality inside. One area that was really prominent was the fouls. Really struggled to guard without fouling -- 39 free throw attempts to 11 for you. What did you see there, struggling to guard without fouling and then struggling to draw fouls on the other end?**

JERROD CALHOUN: Yeah, I think what you're seeing in college basketball is the size discrepancy, right, for mid-major-plus to Power Fours. Not only the size but you're seeing the spending. You're seeing the amount of dollars that are spent on these guys, their bodies, their size.

It's a big, big difference in the last five to -- really, the last four, five years. So for what we did with what we had, pretty remarkable.

**Q. This is the last time your players are going to have the Mountain West badge on their chest. How do you think this fight that you guys put up is a testament to the level of play that we'll see in the Pac-12 next season?**

JERROD CALHOUN: Yeah, I mean, listen, the Mountain West is a storied conference -- Brian Dutcher, Leon Rice, Richard Pitino, Niko Medved -- all the great players. Over the years. I mean what Brian Dutcher's done in Mountain West is unbelievable. What Danny Sprinkle and Ryan Odom and Craig Smith and what we were able to do.

The history of this league is really rich. It's a basketball conference. It really is. The fans, the environments, it's been a joy to coach in for two years.

Obviously the Pac-12, Gonzaga, they've got it figured out. They don't have football. They have got some built-in advantages financially. So I think every institution, we'll have to figure that out.

But it's an exciting time for Utah State. Going into a new conference. You're adding Washington State and Oregon

State, Texas State and all the great teams in our league.

I think our university, our new regime, our president, our AD, our board, they get it. We made the change. It was really the old regime that did it. But the new guys are doing a phenomenal job.

So I think it is exciting. Change is hard. I think at first everybody was, you know, kind of bummed, but now everybody's excited.

**Q. This is four straight tournaments. This is two second-round appearances in the last three years. As you guys move to the Pac-12 with Gonzaga, I understand you break it down day-by-day trying to do the best every day. Do you have like a concrete goal for where you want to be next year? Is that a top, six seed, or are you just thinking about finishing top two in your conference?**

JERROD CALHOUN: Well, what we learned this year from the committee, it's very hard for us, I guess with 28 wins and a regular season title and a tournament title and pretty good metrics. I don't know where you can go, to be honest with you. I'm still flabbergasted we were a 9 seed.

**Q. You just spoke glowingly about the Mountain West and Utah State's a part of it. Was it disrespectful that no one from the Mountain West was here at this tournament? Every other team had conference representatives here?**

JERROD CALHOUN: Well, I think, let's call it like it is a very ugly breakup. I'm not in on those meetings. It's way above my pay grade. That's Cam's department. I think that's a question for Gloria and Niko and them.

But I think we did the best we could the way we represented this conference, beating a Big East school and taking a 1 seed to a pretty close game.

We can only do our part. We can't worry about that stuff.

**Q. For the players, the offseason will take them who knows where, either they're graduating or potential transfer portal or staying here. What do the next two weeks look like for you, though?**

JERROD CALHOUN: I think anytime -- it's very hard for a season to end. It just comes abruptly. It's one of those things that you don't ever want to end. You just want to coach these guys another day, another game. We wanted to get to San Jose. Weren't able to do it. So just take it day by day.

**Q. You mentioned him briefly but Garry Clark, team high 13 points in 18 minutes. He's really kind of come into form and played really well the last kind of week or two. What have you seen from him this tournament, Mountain West Tournament?**

JERROD CALHOUN: I think him and Drake and obviously MJ and Kolby and Zach, those are the guys that -- that's why we wanted them up here -- those are the guys that this is their last time ever doing it.

So I thought all of them gave us everything they had. They should be really proud.

I thought Garry, in particular, just found a groove. His motor was operating. He's battling -- Garry's probably 6'7" -- he's battling a 7'3" guy. It's a difficult task.

And I thought he just went after every rebound. He set good screens. And he just never gave up. His attitude was unbelievable over the last two weeks.

**Q. You held Jaden Bradley to 6-from-16 from the field and Ivan Kharchenkov 3-from-11. What did you like most about your defense on how to stop the Big 12 Player of the Year and a great solid forward --**

JERROD CALHOUN: Yeah, I mean that's probably the frustrating part. I have got so much respect for Bradley. You know, the guy's a winner. He's kind of you know what college basketball is supposed to be. He sees the game, he's got great demeanor. He's good in pick-and-rolls.

He struggled from the field but when the game was on the line he made huge plays, to be honest with you.

And then I thought, with the other kid, I thought we did a great job of really kind of walling him up.

But if they're going to win a national championship or get to the Final Four, in my opinion, Bradley's going to get them there. I really believe that. Games are going to be going down in the final two, three minutes. They're going to put them in a high pick-and-roll.

Their schemes aren't that complicated. It's going to be a side-ball screen with a duck-in or a middle pick-and-roll and let him get downhill. And he made those winning plays tonight. He got to the foul line at the end.

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