

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: Regional Semifinal - Texas vs Purdue

Thursday, March 26, 2026

San Jose, California, USA

SAP Center

Texas Longhorns

Coach Sean Miller

Jordan Pope

Tramon Mark

Dailyn Swain

Sweet 16 Postgame Media Conference

Purdue 79, Texas 77

THE MODERATOR: Opening statement, please.

SEAN MILLER: There's a stark contrast between being here after a loss and being here after a win in this tournament. And just having done it three times already with these guys, you know, obviously this is the tough part of it all.

My thoughts about just our team would be this: I don't know if I've been a part of a team that's come so far in such a short period of time as these guys. I've used the word "resilience" to describe our guys, our group, our team. I think it's very appropriate.

Tonight's game against Purdue embodies it. I mean, it was on full display. Jordan has a lower leg injury. It was his choice to play. I don't know how many guys that I've coached under these conditions on this stage would have chosen to play. It would have been very easy for him just to say, made the Sweet 16, I'm not going to be 100%, I don't know how I'll look, and because of that, I can't go. But he gave us everything and gave us the opportunity to win.

Ditto for Tramon. He landed on a Purdue player's foot. Really just tough ankle injury. He could have done the same thing. You know, I've had a good run, I've played well, it's killing me.

But in both of their cases, they played for University of



Texas. That's really what makes me the most proud; that when you can get these guys to play for the team, for the program, something bigger than themselves, that's something obviously they take with them forever.

For Dailyn, the season that he had, these two guys I know will shake their head, is remarkable when you consider that he led us in five categories and just really did just virtually everything for our team, which included even today. Just a remarkable season from start to finish.

So, you know, very, very proud of these guys. It ends in a really tough way when you lose these close games, but I would much rather lose a heart-breaker than go away the other way. I thought it was a terrific game. Wish Purdue a lot of luck moving forward.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Jordan, we talked yesterday, but what did it mean to, like Coach said, be able to fight through this injury, come out there, have the performance you did and play in front of friends and family here in San Jose?

JORDAN POPE: It meant a lot. A moment that I'm sure I'll remember for the rest of my life, something that's a lot bigger than myself and my play. Just being able to go out there and fight and battle with my teammates, my coaching staff, and just give it my best and live with the results, and that's what we did tonight.

We played really hard, played to the best of our capabilities, and we came up short, but this is something I'll remember regardless of the outcome given Sweet 16, the way we played, family and friends in the crowd. I couldn't have asked for anything better, and I'm just proud of myself, proud of my teammates for having my back.

Q. Jordan, was there any question that you were going to play in this game, and physically how did your ankle feel throughout the night?

JORDAN POPE: It was definitely up in the air. I think I can clear the air now. Five minutes left against Gonzaga, I broke my foot, a complete break, so it was definitely tough.

I'm not sure a lot of guys would have went out there and



... when all is said, we're done.®

played, but credit to my training staff, Warren and our doctor. They did a lot of work the last, whatever, four days, 24/7, giving me treatment. Just giving me a chance really to be questionable for the game. So just credit to those guys that got me ready. Thankfully I was able to go out there and play.

I felt good somehow. Yeah, I mean, I had a lot of fun. I thank the Lord that I was able to get through that.

Q. Jordan, following up on that, how difficult of a decision was that? Were you worried about re-injuring it or injuring it more? It seems like it's risky.

JORDAN POPE: After conversations with the doctor, I couldn't break it any more, so there wasn't much of a high risk in terms of the actual injury. Obviously you could hurt other things, but I had nothing to lose. It was the Sweet 16. I'm back home in front of my family. I'm playing for my teammates, my coaches. I'll never have this opportunity again. I couldn't let that pass.

I think I would have regretted that a lot if I would have. Thankfully, like I said, I was able to get out there and give ourselves a chance to make an Elite Eight.

Q. Tramon, you could tell that injury bothered you. How much pain were you in, and how much were you able to play through? Seemingly it just didn't look like you were injured the rest of the game.

TRAMON MARK: Just being a competitor. You know, just being a competitor. I wanted to play and wanted to advance with my teammates. I wanted to keep this thing going. I wanted to have another practice, film session, all that type of stuff that we get to do if we would have won.

But, yeah, just being a competitor. I was on a hobbled ankle, but I'm just thankful that I was still able to go out there and produce and do things for my team and give us a chance to win. That's all I can ask for.

Q. Dailyn, prior to that last sequence, you were the guy in the building who had the big-time moment with the and-one late. Can you walk us through what you were seeing on that drive, and ultimately what got you guys from a tough position into a tie game?

DAILYN SWAIN: I mean, we were down three points. Coach said we needed a quick two. We ran a play we always run, just trying to get downhill, be aggressive, and he fouled me. I made the shot, made the free-throw, and really just trying to finish the game and send it into overtime, maybe get a stop.

But, yeah, just trying to do what I can to contribute to a win.

Q. Jordan, I'm just curious, I don't know how much you can reveal, but when you say a complete break, like, how did they even get your foot so you could run around and do all that stuff?

JORDAN POPE: It was a lot of icing, a lot of, you know, bone therapy. You know, things just to keep the swelling down, because it was going to hurt. I mean, it was a break. There was no fixing that, but just being able to get the swelling down, which will help ease the pain a bit and just make it tolerable.

Like I said, our staff was able to do that. Did a great job, unbelievable job. Somehow I was able to get out there and play. Again, I'm thankful. I couldn't have asked for a better team, staff to have my back and to trust me and to make sure I'm good to go.

THE MODERATOR: We'll let our student-athletes go and open the floor to Coach Miller.

Q. Coach, I wanted to ask you about the defensive philosophy at the end of the game, taking out Matas. I wanted to ask about the decision to take him out, and what were you kind of hoping to do on that last possession?

SEAN MILLER: Yeah, well, the big fellow, Cluff, fouled out, so Renn would have played the five. He just is a really difficult match-up for a game-winning play, especially from Matas. I think a strong drive putting him in a position to do that and Matas having four fouls on top of that, it had not worked out very well for us in the game.

So by playing quicker or smaller, we could switch that and really defend the drive in a better fashion, because Matas can't really switch. You can't put Matas on Braden Smith on a switch.

Look, we did get the stop. They got us with their size on the offensive rebound, and many times a game is won and lost not on the first shot, but on the second. We could have done a better job of blocking out or competing, but the number one thing for us to have a chance today was to rebound with Purdue.

If you look at the stat sheet, it became about even, but I just felt like we really, really struggled to rebound on defense. In the first half especially. They just got a bunch of second shots. Ironically, they ended up winning the game with their second shots.

They're big and physical, and we really felt that throughout

the game.

Q. Coach, when you see your players put their bodies and their futures on the line for a game, what does that say about the team that you've built over the course of Texas, and how does that contribute to the program that you want to build here?

SEAN MILLER: Yeah, you know, in the first year at University of Texas, there's so many different things that you hope to accomplish. You want to go, first of all, as far as you can, and hopefully it's in this tournament.

But I think the bigger picture is really just trying to instill a way of doing things, a way of practicing, how we compete in games, a style of play, and allow everybody to kind of feel it, see it, hopefully grow and improve while they're doing it, and get to a good place, which I think sets a great tone for the future. Really all of that came true through these guys' effort.

Watching us kind of evolve and grow through the year, it has never been easy for us ever, and there were so many different times through the season where it looked like, man, if they don't get this next one, they're in trouble. We just found a way to get that next one or stayed the course.

That also was true at the very end of our season. We played a difficult schedule, played against two really good SEC teams that were playing great basketball -- Oklahoma and Ole Miss. Lost to both of them. Again, it was the moment of truth for us, but we bounced back in a big way. I would say Purdue would probably shake their head when I said this, but tonight's game could have gone either way.

We played at a very, very high level the last couple of weeks. Gave ourselves a chance to compete for a Final Four. But when you see Jordan Pope sacrifice, Tramon Mark sacrifice, so many different guys do that, I think it's a great sign that they really grew and cared about each other. They cared about the University of Texas, and that's really what all of us try to do as a coach.

One final comment I gave those guys in the locker room is there will come a day when I believe everybody in that locker room will watch us at Texas take this next step, and in large part, when we do, a big reason is the tone that they set in our first year. I think there's a lot of good things that have happened.

Q. Two things about Jordan. How difficult a decision was it to let him play with a broken foot? Widen the scope, and sort of what has he meant to this program? Can you encapsulate his career at Texas, I guess?

SEAN MILLER: Well, number one, I'll just start with this, there's no player at the University of Texas that would be put at further risk. It doesn't sound right when an injury like that happens, but that's the first thing to rule out. If there would have been a chance of that happening, then he wouldn't have had the choice to play.

Then, secondly, then it really comes down to Jordan and his family making sure that they have all the correct information from our doctors and medical staff and then really leave it up to him. Then once that happens, you know, really work together as a team of doctors and us and just try to make him and prepare him as best we can so that if he is able to play, that he can be effective.

Just watching him out there tonight, it was really remarkable. Really was what he did, how he played under those conditions. Now he'll go and get healthy for the long-term.

Q. (Off microphone.)

SEAN MILLER: I'm not sure about that. I think that's going to be a decision that will be made in the next couple of days.

Q. Sean, you've made the second weekend a number of times. I know you really desire obviously, like every coach, to make a Final Four, but to get to this stage after squeaking through into the First Four, how do you sum up how it feels to get to this point and to get so close and fall short of making yet another Elite Eight in your career?

SEAN MILLER: Yeah, a couple of things. I think it feels really good to be a part of what we did. That's the one thing that I would say. I remember being in Maui over Thanksgiving and having gone there a number of times, you know, it's an amazing trip and experience, playing three games in three days on national television in this wonderful, beautiful place.

We went there this year. I remember thinking on the trip, like, God, nobody knows each other. Like, we just -- the circumstances of being so new. That was our starting point, but these guys, they kept working together.

I think we definitely grew closer together, and obviously getting to this round is not easy. I think it's an accomplishment of itself. You know, the one thing once you get here, though, there's no moral victory of that's okay, because there's no guarantee you're coming back any time soon.

Our goal is to obviously make that happen, to come back



soon and build a program and a team that can get to this round and go beyond, but you have to take steps to do it. I thought this year and what our team accomplished was a real necessary step for a bright future.

Q. I know earlier in the season you were talking about the fouling, and that was like a plague for this team and felt like some of that in some moments your team was starting to pick up on the fouls, especially Matas. He had to be benched for large swaths of the game. How did that affect going into the game plan with Nic Codie being the only big on the court for you guys?

SEAN MILLER: Yeah, I mean, first, I'll credit Purdue. Those two big guys are very physical on the offensive glass. Obviously the way they screen on and off the ball, the way they post up, they put you in a position to foul.

I thought they did a good job attacking Matas. Matas is a young player, and he has grown by leaps and bounds this year. It's been remarkable to watch his rise as a player. He has other levels he has to get to in terms of being smarter, making better decisions at times, but I thought Purdue did a really good job.

Other than maybe the offensive foul, you know, Matas fought hard. It was a tall order against those guys.

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