

# Southeastern Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Wednesday, March 12, 2025

Nashville, Tennessee, USA

Bridgestone Arena

**Texas Longhorns**

**Coach Rodney Terry**

**Tramon Mark**

**Tre Johnson**

Postgame Press Conference

Texas 79, Vanderbilt 72

THE MODERATOR: We're ready to begin with Texas. We'll ask Coach for general thoughts on the game, then take questions.

RODNEY TERRY: First of all, I'd like to start off by congratulating Mark Byington on a great first season at Vanderbilt. He's done a fantastic job this year.

Tonight's game was a lot like games we played all year long in this league, where you've got to try to play for 40 minutes. We knew we were going to get a team tonight that was going to play a physical style of play in the glass. We knew rebounding was going to be a big deal for us. Our transition defense was going to be really big for us and our one-on-one defense. This is a team that puts a lot of pressure on you in terms of attacking the paint.

I thought we did a great job of attacking the paint tonight and really set the tone early with that. I thought we guarded really hard tonight. I thought we had a team full of selfless guys that came in and played for one another, played extremely hard for 40 minutes.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions for the student-athletes.

**Q. Tre, you played 38 minutes today. You're used to playing. Do you feel the need to be able to ramp up the minutes played now that we're into the post-season? How are you feeling?**

TRE JOHNSON: I don't control my minutes. Just whatever the team needs. If I have to stay out there longer than usual, that's fine. I have to make sure I'm playing as



hard as I can play and not giving up on plays. If that is the case, I need to come out so I can still help my team on the defensive end.

**Q. This was a pretty comfortable margin for you guys. They started to push back late. What did they start doing differently to make this competitive?**

TRAMON MARK: Yeah, they changed up a little what they were doing on the offensive end. They noticed we were going under, so they started scooting their screens back more and more. That's when they started to get downhill and get some easy layups.

Basketball game, we adjusted. We eventually got some stops. They adjusted again, and we were able to get the win.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, guys. We'll continue with questions for Coach.

**Q. You got off to a pretty quick start. How important is that, especially now that the pressure levels have ramped up?**

RODNEY TERRY: No, absolutely. I think this time of year you always want to try to get off to a good start, I think most importantly defensively. I thought a big difference in the game tonight, in the previous time we played 'em, we did a great job of taking care of the basketball. We finished with eight turnovers in the game. Another key point was Karris had a great game against us at their place. He didn't score the basketball tonight. He had nine offensive rebounds in game one. They had nine offensive rebounds tonight as a team.

Really trying to protect the glass tonight, taking care of the basketball with ball security was big for us, and then attacking on our terms. I think that allowed us to get off to a great start tonight.

**Q. The conference is on the verge of making history, getting the most teams into the NCAA tournament. You are on the bubble right now. How important was**

**ASAP** sports . . . when all is said, we're done.®

**this for your squad, and how important is tomorrow's game against Texas A&M?**

RODNEY TERRY: Well, I think the thing we try to focus on over the last two weeks, give or take, three weeks, is just live in the moment, live where your feet are. Every possession is really important. I think if you start worrying too much about the big picture, you lose focus on what you have to do that's right in front of you right now.

That's the thing I really try to instill in our guys over the last couple weeks. Control what you can control. But more importantly live in the moment. It's about every possession.

We go from possession by possession. We go from walk-through to walk-through. Win every walk-through, win every film session, win every practice. Everything else takes care of itself when it comes down to games, winning four-minute games within games.

**Q. What do you think this does for you in terms of the NCAA tournament?**

RODNEY TERRY: Again, we're just happy to still be playing right now. A lot of respect for Texas A&M team we're about to play right now. Coach Williams has had a great season. His team is extremely well-coached. They play really hard. They're a physical team. We're just excited about another day and another opportunity. Again, just controlling what we can control at this moment right now.

**Q. You mentioned the urgency that comes with this. You need to improve your standing. Were you pleased with the urgency you saw tonight?**

RODNEY TERRY: Yeah, I think this time of year you really have to start playing March basketball really mid-February. By the end of February, you should be playing March basketball already because the urgency you have to play with.

In this league, this year, you've had to play NCAA tournament basketball every night. Every night you have an NCAA tournament game, NCAA tournament opponent. Every possession really mattered in terms of how hard you had to play, the urgency you have to play with.

For us, I tried to instill in our guys from mid-February on, Guys, we're playing March basketball right now. You've got to play with a lot of urgency, close halves. In March you have to finish halves, finish possessions, finish games.

**Q. How does this league this year compare to the**

**toughest league schedule you've gone through as a player or coach?**

RODNEY TERRY: I've been blessed enough to do this for almost 30 years. We've had some really good Big 12 Conference races and things of that nature there. This has been easily the hardest and most challenging conference race of my coaching career.

Every assistant, every head coach, will tell you the same thing in terms of just the level of play in this league. We could have a couple No. 1 seeds. We've got a couple teams that are good enough to win a national championship in this league.

Every night, great coaches. We have really good players in this league. Older, strong players. Great venues to play in every night.

This league has been off the charts in terms of what you had to bring every night. It was very unforgiving if you didn't have a short memory. If you didn't have a short memory, you have a hangover to the next game, you got another quality opponent coming right at you. You really had to have a short memory. You were really challenged to keep your guys up throughout the course of this race.

There were really good teams that lost two, three games in a row in this league. Again, it's been the toughest I know for myself in almost 30 years of Division I basketball.

**Q. The SEC seems like the coaches are all very complimentary of each other. This is your first year in the league. How do you think you've been received among the coaching fraternity?**

RODNEY TERRY: I think we're all highly competitive guys. Got a great group of guys, got coaches that coached in the Final Four, coaches that won a national championship.

At the end of the day, I think we all value friendships and relationships and respect what one another have had to go through in this league this year because we know it can be a little lonely at the top sometimes in terms of you're going through what you're going through.

Coach Barnes is a mentor of mine. He and I at the start of this race said, You put your seat belt on, you're going through a gauntlet in terms of what you're going to deal with every night.

A lot of respect in terms of what other guys have done to their career to this point, but what they do with young people, the legacy they're leaving behind in terms of having the passion to work with this young generation right now.



**Q. A lot of people would make the argument it's harder to win this conference tournament than make it to the Elite Eight. What are your thoughts on that?**

RODNEY TERRY: I would agree with them on that (laughter). Every night you're going to get a Sweet 16, Elite Eight-caliber, Final Four-caliber opponent in this tournament right now. The farther you advance, that's what you're going to face every night, a team that has a chance to win the whole thing.

Again, with that, that raises your level of play. Obviously what you have to do, what you have to be prepared to face.

I say this time of year if you're a college basketball player, you're a college basketball coach, it doesn't get any bigger or better in March. It's like Christmas.

I love the song the "Most Wonderful Time of the Year" at Christmas. College basketball player, college coach, it's the most wonderful time of the year. It really is. It's why you do all the things in summer, in the fall, to get to this time of year where you have lifelong memories that you'll make the rest of your life.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports