

# GEICO Players Era Men's Championship

Monday, November 24, 2025

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

MGM Grand Garden Arena

**Gonzaga Bulldogs**

**Coach Mark Few**

**Steele Venters**

**Tyon Grant-Foster**

Postgame Press Conference

Gonzaga 95, Alabama 85

**Q. What are the keys coming in tonight that you wanted to accomplish to beat Alabama?**

MARK FEW: I thought we had to take great care of the ball, which, for the most part, in a high-possession game, we did, even although the ones we did have were the bonehead nature.

And then I thought our shot selection was going to be really, really important, the shot discipline. And we really wanted to establish our defense, which I thought we did a nice job, especially late in the second half. Had a good little run there, about the 9:00 mark down to the 1:00 mark, and then the rebounding. Rebounding was key.

**Q. You haven't had Tyon for a long time, but does it feel like it's getting a little comfortable when he does? How does that change your team?**

MARK FEW: He has already changed our team with some of the plays he makes. He has this ability, when we have a breakdown on defense, he comes flying out of nowhere to pin it against the backboard or steal it or just make plays. He's got a real gift. His basketball intellect on that side of the floor is really high. His shot selection sometimes is moronic on the offensive end. So we're working on that.

Just his will, his heart, his fight. We weren't running very good offense, and the plays he made in the first half were just courageous and tough and just winning plays. Just mano a mano, just going and getting the ball and grabbing it and putting it in.



You need that in games like this. Nate's got great sets. I think we have really nice, good sets that make sense. But this game is about after the sets, the possessions and the broken plays and things like that. And that's where Ty really shines.

**Q. Mark, you've had a lot of really great teams. I know it's early, but maybe how does --**

MARK FEW: We have. I don't know if Jeff always acknowledges that, but, yeah. Blue-blood-level teams. Anyhow.

**Q. This group early on compared to some of the others early, think about November. How do you feel about where they are?**

MARK FEW: Actually probably I feel great because I think there's room for growth. There's a lot of stuff I feel like we have to clean up right now that I feel gives us a higher ceiling, whereas our '17 team was pretty good to go by this time. Certainly our '21 team was clicking on all cylinders way back in the first tournament we had.

It's really encouraging and really exciting from that point of view, but I give these guys a lot of credit. We played an arduous schedule so far, and they found ways to win.

**Q. And Mario, what did you think? The most minutes he played so far. What did he give you tonight, and what does he give you big-picture?**

MARK FEW: I thought he gave us -- again, he plays with great spirit, and it's contagious. And he's far from perfect, but that spirit and his toughness and his size.

And then, again, he can really shoot the ball. And I think that's going to be really important for us. We're still ironing out some things with the crazy-ass jump passes and such. But like I said, those are the room-for-growth areas.

But he brings that spirit. He sees things. And then also anybody that steps up, he goes 10 for 11 at the line. That's big, beyond the stretch. And then it gives us a little bigger guard.

Our wings are bigger than we've had, and we're a bigger team. Almost like that '17 team. So I think that's really



helped us defensively.

**Q. Mark, you mentioned that defensive stretch from about nine minutes down to the last minute. I think you guys held Philon without a shot for over minutes during that stretch. What did you like about what you did during that time on him specifically?**

MARK FEW: Well, the best thing we did was, especially for a group where we're throwing a lot of stuff at him and seem to suffer from attention deficit disorder when we throw stuff at him, but we switched defenses three different times. We switched our coverages, and they hit coverages every single time. Every single time.

Those little steps, I'm saying because, man, you get to March, we're a team that wants to switch our coverages, we want to switch our defenses. Everybody's got to be on the same page, everybody's got to do their job, and everybody -- we got to execute, just like you do on offense.

And these guys, even though Ty was playing the four, playing the three, and we had Huff and G, and we went small with Jalen, and Steele is in there, they're playing different spots on the zone because Alabama rushes it up so fast, they hit their coverages. That was huge. I think that was a big key to extending that lead there.

**Q. Yeah, for Steele, everything you have been through the last few years to come through and with a few big shots in the second half, what did that feel like?**

STEELE VENTERS: Man, it felt amazing. But my teammates do a pretty good job getting me open shots. My job is pretty easy when you have Graham and Tyon doing their job. So it just felt amazing to be back out there.

**Q. Ty, what does it feel like? You have faced some good opponents, but Alabama objectively is the toughest opponent so far in your schedule this season. To square up with a team of this caliber, you know how dangerous that backcourt and those guards can be, when you reflect on the result right here and now, what are your feelings on the competitiveness of your teammates and the ceiling for this group this season?**

TYON GRANT-FOSTER: I just feel like this team, as Coach would say, we play with a lot of force. And I feel like when we do that, we're one of the best if not the best team in the country. We have a lot of maturity, and I feel like that's going to carry us a long way with how hard we play.

**Q. Yeah, Mark, I just wanted to ask about Philon. A big night for you guys, but you slowed him down a**

**little bit. In the last ten minutes, I don't think he scored in that stretch. What did you do differently, if anything, to kind of limit him there?**

MARK FEW: We switched our defenses three or four times, and that was solely because of him. He was cooking us pretty good. So we had to go to some different coverages.

TYON GRANT-FOSTER: I just feel like Philon is a really, really good player. But it came to a point in time when it was time to win, and down the stretch we knew what we needed to do. And that's when we, you know, padlocks.

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