

# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Four

Tuesday, March 17, 2026

Dayton, Ohio, USA

UD Arena

**SMU Mustangs**

**Coach Andy Enfield**

**Jaron Pierre, Jr.**

**Boopie Miller**

**Corey Washington**

Media Conference



**Q. You guys are playing a team that is playing 42 miles from its campus. Do you have to sort of prepare yourself this is going to be almost like a road game? Is that just part of the challenge you're going to have to face?**

BOOPIE MILLER: Definitely. I feel like they're a great team. They're an hour away from home so definitely it's going to be like a home game to them. All we can do is just go out there and play our hardest and stick to the game plan and come out with a win.

JARON PIERRE JR: I would piggyback off what Boopie said, that it's a home game for them, it's 42 miles away so they'll have a home crowd but we've been on the road a lot and we've had tough games like that, so we'll just have to be ready for them.

COREY WASHINGTON: That's definitely true. It's going to be more of a home game for them but as long as we take care of what we need to take care of, shouldn't be no worries.

**Q. Corey, your favorite March Madness moment?**

COREY WASHINGTON: Favorite March Madness moment? I would say the Villanova shot.

JARON PIERRE JR: My favorite March Madness moment? Piggyback being off what he said, I liked the Marcus Paige shot.

BOOPIE MILLER: I would say definitely Trey Burke when he was hitting a lot of deep threes when he was in March

Madness. I used to love watching him play, Trey Burke.

**Q. You mentioned this is going to be sort of like a home game for them. What do you think you can do to combat that that will give you the edge over Miami?**

BOOPIE MILLER: I would say just going out there, playing hard. Everybody playing with confidence, just listening to the coaches, staying calm through all the madness, all the noise. But just staying cool, calm, and collected throughout the whole game and going out there and playing hard.

JARON PIERRE JR: Piggybacking off what Boopie said, but just staying together, knowing what the game plan is and just sticking together the whole time.

COREY WASHINGTON: Just being where our feet are, listening to each other and playing as a team. There's going to be noise regardless.

**Q. Corey, take us through the emotions of seeing your name pop up looking back to Sunday?**

COREY WASHINGTON: Just in shock at first. But also a sense of just confidence. These guys and the coaching staff, we worked. This is not something that was just easy and just handed to us.

**Q. Jaron, your feelings seeing the Mustangs on the board?**

JARON PIERRE JR: It was nothing but excitement for me. Like Boopie said in his last interview we had, it took me six, took him five. Just happy. I was soaking in the moment, but it's time to handle business.

BOOPIE MILLER: Pray for times like this, making March Madness. I feel like my team and coaching staff worked hard for us, so it was definitely an exciting moment that we made it.

**Q. Boopie and Jaron, Corey, I know you've played in the tournament. Boopie and Jaron, how hard was the last few weeks there, life on the bubble, knowing this is the last chance to get here to the NCAA Tournament?**



BOOPIE MILLER: Very hard. Without having B.J. those were tough games without having him. But I felt like it helped our team come together as a whole. So just believing in each other, just listening to the coaching staff and going with the game plans. I feel like that helped us get to March Madness.

JARON PIERRE JR: I would say not having BJ like he just said, so there was some hard games, but it helped our freshmen step up and mature a lot for us and it helped me and Boopie lead in a great way and a good example.

**Q. Jaron, when is SMU playing its best basketball?**

JARON PIERRE JR: When we're sharing the ball and we're believing in each other.

COREY WASHINGTON: Also agree, but I just want to add, just playing with a lot of energy.

BOOPIE MILLER: Definitely when everybody is playing hard on the defensive end and we have a lot of assists in our game.

**Q. I wanted to ask you about games on the road this year. How do you feel like you can turn that around, and is there anything you can point to? Why do you think you've played better at home and how can you flip that tomorrow?**

BOOPIE MILLER: It's 0-0 now. It's going to be a regular court at March Madness. We're not worried about being away, at home. Just following the game plan. Just trying to come out with the win and having fun while we're doing it.

JARON PIERRE JR: Piggybacking off what Boopie just said, us just believing in each other, sticking together, sticking to the game plan and bringing our whole energy the whole time.

COREY WASHINGTON: Most definitely agree. No matter the setting and previous records, it's the NCAA Tournament; players gotta play.

**Q. Corey, what's the best game SMU has played this year?**

COREY WASHINGTON: As a collective, I would say the North Carolina game, our first conference game.

BOOPIE MILLER: Yeah, I would say North Carolina, too.

**Q. When people talk about the NCAA Tournament, one**

**of the more colorful parts of it not only that long ago was Dunk City in Florida Gulf Coast. You guys were in elementary school, but have you gotten to know anything about it because it certainly is part of a Coach's past. Is it something you guys have ever looked into? And if so, what was your reaction to whatever you learned about it?**

COREY WASHINGTON: Most definitely. It actually popped up. I was watching TikToks. It popped up on my page not too long ago. I took a moment just to soak that in. It's a shock. It was really lob city, Dunk City. It was actually true.

JARON PIERRE JR: I don't know nothing about Dunk City. I know I'm Dunk City, when you talk about Dunk City.

**Q. Boopie, have you been able to watch some film on Miami, and if you have, what sticks out from the RedHawks?**

BOOPIE MILLER: They're a great team. Everybody on their team can play. They can pass. They can shoot. But you know, just listening to our game plan and how we're going to guard them, I think it's going to be a great game for us. Leading up into this game, I feel like we're focused and we're ready to go.

**Q. Jaron, your first thoughts on the RedHawks?**

JARON PIERRE JR: Just like Boopie said, everybody on their team with pass, dribble and shoot. They're a good team and they play as a whole as a collective, but I feel like ain't nobody like me 3 and 2.

COREY WASHINGTON: Most definitely. One of the things that stuck out to me was their attention to detail and how hard they played.

**Q. You guys didn't end the season the best. What are the lessons you can take from those games going into the tournament now?**

COREY WASHINGTON: Most definitely. There's parts of every game that we've lost that we needed to come back to the drawing board and go out there again and apply those things.

But I feel like at this point, we definitely are guiding everything that we need to learn.

JARON PIERRE JR: I would say that we have to step up, lead. Me and Boopie had to take on a bigger role just from B.J. going down, but we were able to lead our freshmen.



So yeah, we lost, but it was more like lessons, so we learned a lot throughout those games. We played very well on the defensive end both of those last two games, so I feel like that's going to lead into this game for us.

**BOOPIE MILLER:** I feel like I grew into a better leader from these past games, through all the emotions, just learning how to talk to my teammates, especially the freshmen because they had to get put in a different role and step up. So just learning how to talk to them in different certain ways and just learning how to push the button so they can play harder.

**Q. Being here in March Madness and seeing your name called and now arriving in Dayton, Boopie, what are you looking forward to most tomorrow night when the ball goes up?**

**BOOPIE MILLER:** Just having fun, going out there, having fun. I know my team is going to go hard. Just going out there, having fun, just trying to come out with this win.

**JARON PIERRE JR:** Control what we can control, but just like Boopie said, just having fun and just coming out with this win.

**COREY WASHINGTON:** Exactly, just having fun. That's the most important thing.

**Q. Coach, before we open up for questions, just a statement of the Mustangs being in March Madness.**

**ANDY ENFIELD:** SMU Mustangs are really excited to be here. Our players are pumped to play in this game tomorrow night.

It's been a long time, a long season. There are a lot of highs and lows. But to be here, can't say enough about our players, how proud of them, our coaching staff and the SMU community are of our players, and we're very excited to be here.

**Q. You know what it's like to prepare for an NCAA Tournament game. Is it any different when you're preparing for what will be in a lot of ways a road game? And when you saw the pairings Sunday, was one of the first things that went through your mind how close Dayton, Ohio is to Oxford, Ohio.**

**ANDY ENFIELD:** The first thing that went through our minds is we're happy to be in March Madness.

I think once you started to dive into who you play, we're really impressed with Miami. To go 31-0, how incredible is that? They deserve to be here. They had one of the best

years in college basketball history. The odds of going undefeated are pretty small. Congratulations to them.

I think the first thing that we thought of after being excited to be in the tournament was, wow, Miami is a great team. And then we realized that it's Miami of Ohio, not of Florida, so they're going to be pretty close driving distance to Dayton.

I think it's going to be awesome, a great environment. Dayton supports this tournament regardless, but to have a local team in it is going to be a lot of fun.

**Q. Going off of that, you have some players who very clearly feed off the home crowd at Moody and it's helped you guys win some games this year. On the road your record hasn't been as good. How do you take the energy of the crowd and feed off of that here and how are you talking about that to your players before tomorrow?**

**ANDY ENFIELD:** I think our players feed off of energy, and there will be a lot of energy in the arena tomorrow. They're excited to be here. I expect Miami to have more fans than us. I hope they do; it's an hour drive. Someone told me that. I've never been there before, but it's close.

We hope there's a lot of energy in the arena. I think March Madness fans go both ways. They'll root for the underdog. So I'm sure the arena tomorrow will be Miami fans because even though they have a great record, they are still a mid-major team and we're out of the ACC.

I know that from my days at Florida Gulf Coast, my first head coaching job at FGCU. That's what March Madness is all about, to give the non-power conference teams an opportunity, and Miami has that tomorrow against us. So do many other teams in this tournament. That's very exciting. It's very exciting to be part of it.

Yeah, I think our players do feed off of energy, as you said, particularly the ones I'm thinking about right now. I hope they play well.

**Q. A lot of the national attention has been on Miami and that undefeated run. You guys come into this game maybe a little bit under the radar as national media are focused on the Miami storylines. Have you enjoyed that position as kind of being able to fly under the radar?**

**ANDY ENFIELD:** It's been pretty quick since Sunday we found out, boarded a plane yesterday. I'm not sure what people are thinking. We're kind of oblivious to that. We just need to go out as a team and play as hard as we can



and play together on both sides of the ball and I think we'll be fine.

As I said before, we're excited for Miami, as well. Obviously we want to win the game, but we're really excited for a team to be able to do that in college basketball. Just happens we're playing them. We would be Miami fans if we weren't playing them.

**Q. You mentioned your first coaching job at Florida Gulf Coast, obviously that magical Sweet 16 run and then at USC you had some tournament success. How do you hope your players who haven't been in this situation before kind of stay focused and locked in even though it's the biggest stage in college basketball?**

ANDY ENFIELD: We have seven freshmen on our team, six upperclassmen. Out of those six upperclassmen only two have been to the NCAA Tournament. Two out of the 13 players, 15 players.

It is a new experience for most of our team. But that's what you play college basketball for, to get to this point, have a chance to compete for a National Championship on this stage. They need to be loose. They need to play together. Once those lights go on, you've got to be ready to go.

We've had a very tough schedule. The ACC has been exceptional this year from top to bottom. We've been in a lot of big games, a lot of close games against very, very talented players.

I think tomorrow will be another one of those big-time games, and we're looking forward to it.

**Q. This time of year whenever you would see a film on great storylines from the past, Dunk City is always included. I'm sure a tournament more than a decade ago is not real big on your radar screen right now, but if you take a moment, how important were those two weeks to your life as it's turned out?**

ANDY ENFIELD: Well, thinking back to 2013, FGCU Dunk City, we were very confident going into the Georgetown game, number one, because it was in Philadelphia and we realized that people in Philly don't really like Georgetown, so we thought if we could play well, we might be able to get the crowd on our side.

Second, our team was very confident. And then thirdly, they were very talented. We knew because we played road games against high major teams, guaranteed games at the time. We knew that we could compete at that level. We just had to go play well.

So that's what we told them. You don't have to go play perfect, just go play well and go have some fun doing it. This is the time of your life. So we were very focused but very loose at the same time, meaning we just were going to go out and play, and that's what they did. They played together.

What it meant to my life is obviously beat Georgetown and then I think at the time there were only six 15 seeds that had beaten a 2 seed and we were either the sixth or seventh. No 15 seed had ever won the next game to go to the Sweet 16, and went out and beat San Diego State to go to the Sweet 16 to become the first 15 seed to do that.

The way they did that with the passion, the swagger, the flair and also the really impressive style of basketball that they played was fun to watch and meant a lot to the university.

FGCU at the time was a brand new school. The amount of marketing dollars that March Madness provided, that run, just to the university itself was incredible.

Then on the basketball front, every player wanted to go to FGCU because of what it was. It really helped the program for the next many years as far as recruiting and just the passion of the local southwest Florida community about Florida Gulf Coast.

As far as myself, I was able to get hired by USC and spent 11 incredible seasons in Los Angeles with the Trojans, and that really set us up as a coaching staff and me as a head coach to be able to recruit elite players. Went to the Elite 8 one year and almost to the Final Four. Ran into an undefeated Gonzaga team that beat us, and now SMU.

So really, that whole March Madness run meant a lot to everybody involved, but also meant a lot to me as a coach because it springboarded me into some other jobs.

**Q. In your second year with the Mustangs kind of guiding them into that transition to the ACC, already in the NCAA Tournament, how do you reflect on the success that you've had leading this program?**

ANDY ENFIELD: Well, it was an exciting time to leave USC to go to SMU. I grew up an ACC fan. I'm from southern Pennsylvania. That was exciting to take a university as a coaching staff, to build a program at the ACC level.

Can't say enough about the support from David Miller, head of the board of trustees, and Jay Hartzell, our president, Rich Templeton, Damon Evans, our new athletic

director.

It's been a great transition because we came to SMU to try to compete at this level and do it quickly.

Last year we won 24 games, and we were probably one of the last few teams out of the tournament. This year the ACC was much better. It gave us much more opportunity to play more quality games that meant something on a national scale, and our guys did a great job.

To see Moody Coliseum sold out and the energy that we have around SMU and the students now showing up for our games and the community, it's been great. We love the support we get from the administration, from the student body, and certainly from the city of Dallas.

**Q. Coach, Miami is a team that's a rarity, that scores more points per game than your team does. They've got six guys that average double digits. What's the magic of offense and do you kind of have to pick your poison defensively with where you focus?**

ANDY ENFIELD: The good thing about doing scouting report, they're virtually all the same player. They're all really good and they can all pass, shoot, and dribble.

Doesn't really matter who you're guarding you have to guard a guys because they can all shoot threes, put the ball on the floor, and make plays for each other. There will be probably a lot of switching, a lot of rotations, and we just have to try to guard them and make them miss.

Use our size. We have a size advantage. We have an athleticism advantage at certain positions, we also score 85 points a game. They score 90, so you'll see two very good offensive teams play.

As far as defensively, I think both teams are hard to guard, and we're a little different than they are, but both teams are very hard to guard, and I think you'll see probably some points on the board.

But our shot making is going to be very important. Also our big guys have to play well.

**Q. Coach, what can you say about B.J. Edwards and his availability in this game?**

ANDY ENFIELD: Well, B.J. has been a great player for us all year, the most improved players we've ever coached or one of the most improved. So he's had a terrific season. He's helped us win a lot of games the last two seasons.

He had an unfortunate injury. He fell into Cal basket

support. The basket support is too close to the baseline and there's not enough clearance. It's like a Paul George type injury where he hit the basket support and hurt his ankle. But he's made a lot of progress.

By the way, I don't see how in today's environment you don't have enough clearance under the basket at a power conference school. But that's an avoidable injury.

As far as B.J. has made a lot of progress. He works every day with our trainer, Ray. Yesterday he looked really good. He made a lot of shots. He's shooting the ball well, moving well. We feel great about it.

Obviously it's going to be a situation where if he can go, great. But we're always going to do what's best for the student-athlete, so we feel great right now, and he looked great yesterday.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

