

# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: Second Round - Texas vs Tennessee

Saturday, March 23, 2024  
Charlotte, North Carolina, USA  
Spectrum Center

## Texas Longhorns Rodney Terry Dylan Disu Max Abmas

Media Conference

Tennessee - 62, Texas 58

RODNEY TERRY: I'd like to start out by congratulating Tennessee on a well-fought victory tonight. A lot of respect for Coach Barnes, family to me. Happy for him and his team.

But I'm really proud of my team and my guys. I love these guys. These guys had a heck of a year. We got better and better as the season went along. They really persevered through some adversity at times, and they just stayed the course.

I'm just so proud of how they carried themselves all season long, on the court, off the court, and I can't be prouder of a group that I've had a chance to be a part of and work with every single day and coach. I love my guys, and I love their effort tonight.

We came up a little short, but these guys are winners, and they're going to be winners for the rest of their lives.

**Q. For Max, I know that the numbers on paper for Tennessee's defense are what they are. In terms of getting looks, how much more difficult was it for you tonight than it maybe normally is?**

MAX ABMAS: I thought they were a good defensive team. Kind of were in the gaps a little bit, trying to prevent driving lanes. So just sticking with it, knowing when I got open looks, just shooting it.

Yeah, good defensive team for sure.



**Q. Dylan, I guess the way that you all fought back there, it's one of those games where nothing is really easy for either team. Any time you get down double digits in that situation, it can be tough, but you all fought back. What was the belief in your team there?**

DYLAN DISU: We felt like we were playing solid defense. We gave up a couple of offensive rebounds, too many offensive rebounds in the first half. So we wanted to kind of buckle down on that.

But we felt like we were getting good looks and we were playing good defense and getting stops. As long as you continue to get stops, eventually we'd make enough shots to get back in the game. That's what we did, and unfortunately they just didn't fall for us down the stretch to finish it.

**Q. For the student-athletes as well as for Coach, just what the run this season has been for you, what this team has meant to you, specifically this year. I know this is a tough moment, but, Coach, you talk a lot about faith. Just what it means to you to have these guys. Guys, what it means to make the run that you made.**

THE MODERATOR: We'll stay with the student-athletes for now and get the coach in a second.

DYLAN DISU: It means a lot to us. Us two, I wasn't even originally recruited by Texas coming out of high school, and Max was a very under-recruited player, went to Oral Roberts. So I'm sure it means a lot to him as well to be kind of an underdog.

And then throughout the season, just the way the media talked about us and their disbelief in us and the fact they didn't even think we'd get to the tournament when we had a rough 1-3 start to the conference slate.

So to be able to push through as a team, come together, and be as connected as we were down the stretch to get to this point, it means the world to all of us. I'm so happy I was able to come to this tournament one more time with my teammates for this university, for the state.



MAX ABMAS: I'm super grateful for the opportunity to compete at Texas. Never in high school would I have guessed I'd be at Texas in college. So super grateful for our team and the whole coaching staff for believing in me and wanting me to come in.

The team itself, just fighting through a lot of adversity through the season. We start the season with our two big men injured, get them back, and find a way to continue to prove people wrong. They continue to count us out, but we never paid attention to that. We just focused on us.

So just really proud the way the guys competed all season to get into the tournament again and win a game. It's a great feeling.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, maybe you can continue to answer that question.

RODNEY TERRY: I give God glory every single day for every opportunity we have every single day that we have. We don't take any day for granted, and I always express that to our guys how it's a great day to be alive every single day. We're not promised tomorrow.

I said to our guys just in the meeting this morning, it's bigger than basketball. The three people you don't ever want to disappoint in life, don't ever want to disappoint God. You don't ever want to disappoint your family. You don't ever want to disappoint your friends. I live by that every day.

I also gave them a 9-9-9 rule. You're always going to have 9 people like you, 9 people dislike you, and 9 people on the fence. The moral of the story is you're not going to please everybody, but the most important person you need to please is yourself, love yourself, and you'll have a great life.

**Q. Congratulations on your season. I just wonder if I could ask you about Tennessee. Having Dalton there, is that the type of guy that maybe they need to break out of that Sweet 16 and advance? Is he the type of guy that can get them deeper in the tournament?**

RODNEY TERRY: I think any time you have a guy that can carry a team -- I mean, tonight he had 18 points, and he had to take 18 shots to get those 18 points, but he's a terrific player. Any time you have star power with a guy that's a really hard one-on-one matchup that could take over a game, that gives you an opportunity to be elite.

They have that. They have a guy that on any given night he could go for 30 in a game, and he could change the

outcome of a game. Yes, you ride your guys this time of year, just like we're going to ride our guys. Max Abmas has been at this stage at this level, Disu's been at this level on this stage. We're going to ride our main guys down the stretch, and those guys had terrific years for us, and they're guys that can carry you into the next weekend.

For sure, they've got a bona fide star in Dalton, and he could definitely carry those guys away down the stretch.

**Q. Rodney, what is it about Rick's defenses that are so consistently successful year after year? Do you feel like that was the difference in a game where you guys were able to hold them to, I think, 33 percent shooting?**

RODNEY TERRY: I think, again, both of us really have a stable point of trying to have a really good defensive team. You're trying to play physical. Coach plays extremely physical, teams have always been physical on the glass, trying to keep you out of the paint, force you into tough twos, tough threes, and then try to limit your second-chance opportunities.

It's always been great -- Coach has always taught a great help-side defense, gap defense, where it's really hard to get into the teeth of the defense without guys making competitive plays. We try to do the same thing ourselves and thought that the first half they did a really excellent job of that in the first half. We had some unforced turnovers that kind of put us behind the eight ball at the half a little bit and everything.

Give them credit, they sped us up a little bit. They played hard, really tough. Coach gets guys to play really hard and really tough, and that's a talent, and that's coaching. If you can get your guys to buy into playing really hard -- defense, rebounding, being physical -- that's coaching. Coach has done it for a long time at a very high level.

**Q. Rodney, in a game like this with the familiarity there and it's this point in the season, y'all played three times in three years, how difficult would it be for either one of these coaching staffs to throw a wrinkle that the other one would just be sort of shocked by?**

RODNEY TERRY: I think playing every year in the last couple years, obviously we're very familiar with one another in terms of the way we play and what we try to get done from an offensive standpoint. I think one thing I thought we did really good tonight that maybe they weren't prepared for, we threw zone out there, which we had to because they were doing such an excellent job with their offense versus our man. We needed to change the game up and change our rhythm a little bit in terms of the pick-and-roll.

They were really attacking us in the teeth of our defense. So we needed to try to protect elbows and blocks and try to change the game and limit their second-chance opportunities. I thought that change really gave us a chance down the stretch to win the ballgame.

**Q. Just from your perspective, how much of a hand does Zakai Zeigler have in what Tennessee does on the defensive end?**

RODNEY TERRY: Dalton is a big-time player. The head of the snake is the little dude. The little dude causes a lot of problems out there. He's all over the place defensively. He's Defensive Player of the Year in the SEC. He's causing all kind of havoc on that end of the floor. Then you throw in that he can get into the teeth of the defense and get something for himself or create for a teammate.

Dalton's had a special year, but he probably didn't have that special year if it weren't for the little guy who can get into the teeth of the defense and create scoring opportunities for him. He's the head of the snake. He's a really terrific player and one that we had a lot of respect for.

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