

# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - McNeese vs Clemson

Wednesday, March 19, 2025

Providence, Rhode Island, USA

Amica Mutual Pavilion

## Clemson Tigers

## Coach Brad Brownell

### Media Conference



It's also been really good for this year's team. Guys knowing what they're playing for, Chase and Ian especially. Chauncey Wiggins, Dillon Hunter, guys who were part of last year's run. That kind of success fuels you and you want to continue to do it. You want to be in big-time games and play significant games in March, and I think it helped grow our team and fuel our team a little bit throughout the course of the season.

THE MODERATOR: Anything off the jump for Coach Brownell?

**Q. It's been reported you're getting a big new deal with Clemson. Can you give us some details? Your thoughts on this commitment from them to you?**

BRAD BROWNELL: Yeah, very close to ironing it out, extremely grateful. I have had a bunch of meetings with Graham really as the regular season was coming to an end that last week, he got with me and we started having conversations, preliminary conversations. They've heated up over the last week or so and it's been really good and we're close to being able to finalize something.

Obviously I'm extremely excited about it, happy. Clemson has been a very special place for me and my family for 15 years and just have thoroughly enjoyed building the program. Love what Clemson stands for as a university and proud to be a part of it, certainly sent my daughters there, so we're all in as Dabo likes to say, and excited about where my program is. I think we've done an unbelievable job from facility improvements all the way to success initiatives on the floor, off the floor, and excited to try to continue this level of success.

**Q. The run you guys made to the final eight last year, how much do you think that maybe has kind of helped change the perception, and then to carry it over with the season you guys have had this year?**

BRAD BROWNELL: Yeah, I think it helped in recruiting, certainly the transfer portal. We had some success. We went to a Sweet 16 back in '18 and have been competitive in our league, but making another run like that in the NCAA Tournament, high visibility, high exposure at exactly the right time and the portal is opening and all the things you're dealing with.

**Q. Will Wade has been successful at a bunch of different schools. He's now been linked to a school in your conference. He told us here he was talking to them. I guess, what makes him successful as a coach and maybe what are some of the hallmarks of his teams?**

BRAD BROWNELL: Yeah, very aggressive defensively. A lot of pressing and changing of defenses, 1-3-1, 2-2-1, 1-2-2, diamond-press. Five-way switching this year's team, so they run the gamut at you. He's done that probably... I know he did it at VCU and probably LSU, as well. Obviously has recruited very well and I think he gives his guys a lot of confidence on offense. They play with a lot of freedom and guys certainly are aggressive in making plays.

**Q. How has this week been for someone like Chauncey Wiggins whose role has been elevated with Dillon Hunter out of the lineup? What have you seen from him as you've ramped up preparation?**

BRAD BROWNELL: Yeah, I mean, Chauncey has been a starter for several games this year. I mean, he's fine. He's fine starting, coming off the bench. He's a confident scorer. I think he's a guy who will play well. I don't think anything really changes. Obviously losing Dillon is a little bit of an issue just from the standpoint of he's the ultimate glue guy and he does all the little things that coaches love that don't always show up as points. But, you know, we've got other players that are going to get more opportunity. Jake Heidbreder, Del Jones. They don't play exactly like Dillon, but they certainly fill a role and can be productive in the minutes that they do get, and I expect those guys to play well.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Coach. Anything else?



Coach.

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**Q. I asked Ian and Hunter this question, as a coach, what do you see Dillon's role now being?**

BRAD BROWNELL: Yeah, he needs to be a leader and everything that goes with that. Cheerleader at times. He needs to have serious conversations with his teammates every once in a while. I joke, but he's one of the few guys on our team that will confront his brother. His brother is probably our best player, and a lot of times the guys on our team don't like to confront the best player. Your little brother will. So there are times... it doesn't happen often, when I have had Dillon get after Chase on some things, like maybe you got a little bit more in the tank. So it's kind of fun to watch those two guys play together and have conversations together.

But he can be a big leader for our team. He can really help talk to guys like Del Jones or Jake Heidbreder when they're on the bench, Chauncey Wiggins whoever it is, and he'll be very involved. I think it was hard in the ACC Tournament because it just happened and it was gut-wrenching. These guys dream of playing in this tournament and his role has continued to grow. This was his first time starting for us, so I think that was hard for him in the ACC tournament, especially the Louisville game. Now that he's had a week to process, I think he understands more, and I actually talked to him about what we need from him in his new role.

**Q. Was your locker room door open today?**

BRAD BROWNELL: Was my locker room --

**Q. Here. It wasn't locked?**

BRAD BROWNELL: Oh, I'm sorry, yeah. We were fine. We'll see at halftime tomorrow. (Laughter)

**Q. The way the ACC tournament ended for you in a controversial way, coming up short. I know you were thinking ACC tournament championship, but what kind of fire, what kind of inspiration maybe do you take from that going into this? Is there some kind of little edge, a little chip on the shoulder type of thing?**

BRAD BROWNELL: Yeah, a little. I think we're onto new things, though. We're not using that as a super rallying cry. It's a little different than last year when we played so poorly against Boston College. This year it was more that we didn't play as well as we'd like, made a ferocious fight there at the end but came up a little short. It's really more learning about why we didn't play as well during parts of the Louisville game and how we have to correct that.

THE MODERATOR: Anything else? All right, thanks

