

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - Omaha vs St. John's

Thursday, March 20, 2025
Providence, Rhode Island, USA
Amica Mutual Pavilion

Omaha Mavericks
Coach Chris Crutchfield

JJ White

Tony Osburn

Marquel Sutton

Media Conference



St. John's 83, Omaha 53

CHRIS CRUTCHFIELD: First of all, I would like to thank everyone here for the warm welcome we have had. Staff have been really, really good. I thought we got off to a great start, 7-0. Gave our guys some energy and confidence that we could play with a good team like St. John's. As the game wore on, the physicality of that team just wore us down. I thought we held our own on the rebounding. St. John's is a very good rebounding team. I think their physicality just wore us down. We didn't make any shots tonight, but great effort by our guys. I'm proud of our guys for how they handled everything to get to this point, to get to the NCAA tournament. So very proud of them.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions for all participants at this time.

Q. Congrats on that historic season. To the players, how has this season impacted each of you not only now, but for the future, as well?

TONY OSBURN: Yeah, obviously we made history. The first Omaha team to win the Summit title and regular season tournament and I think it just kind of sets a foundation for the people that come after us. I was told in the locker room, I remember the day I committed on Twitter, people were kind of clowning me, laughing at Omaha basketball. It's not going to be like that anymore. People are going to be proud to be part of it.

MARQUEL SUTTON: Piggybacking off what he said, lay the foundation for people who come after us. Personally I'm thankful for making history, grateful for the opportunity. Yeah.

JJ WHITE: Got a lot of emotions right now, but it's a sense of gratitude. What we did at our school nobody else has done. I told them in the locker room, just hanging out with the older guys when they come play pick-up with us and them telling us stories about going places and almost won it but never did. We did something nobody else did. When we come back with our kids, we show them banners hanging up there so we just got to be grateful.

Q. Coach, what has this emotional roller coaster of a season been like and what's your message to the guys and what do you hope to see from them in the future?

CHRIS CRUTCHFIELD: It's definitely been a roller coaster ride when we started in non-con and how we finished out the regular season in our league and winning the tournament kind of put the cherry on top of it all. I'm so proud of these guys, what they've done. Whenever you make history, there's a special, special season. We got a special group of guys. I often talked about our chemistry and how connected these guys were and they've been that way all year. After a loss, after a win, they stayed together. So I'm very, very proud of what they've done.

Q. Coach, is there kind of a sense that this is just the beginning for Omaha basketball and any idea how you could potentially build on this season?

CHRIS CRUTCHFIELD: No doubt. I think it is the beginning. We kind of laid a foundation. This has been a three-year process for us, so we're in year three of still building, trying to become something special. Hopefully this can be a continuation of us winning the Summit League and that's the foundation that these guys have laid since they've been in our program over three years. So hopefully this becomes something that we can do all the time.

Q. I want to ask about early on in that first half and really throughout most of the game, that defensive game plan. It seemed like you were almost baiting them to take the three-point shot. Obviously you know

they don't shoot it great from the arc. They did tonight, but what was the game plan there going in?

CHRIS CRUTCHFIELD: That was the game plan, to protect the paint, kind of force them to shoot contested jump shots. It worked out in the first half, then they got their heads up and got some confidence in the second half and by the time we made the adjustment defensively, they had their confidence up and everyone was making threes, but we want them to shoot the three ball. They shot it great tonight.

Q. I want to ask about Isaac. I feel like all season he's flown under the radar, but especially tonight in that first half, he had ten rebounds in the first half. Could you speak on his grit, not just tonight but throughout his whole season?

CHRIS CRUTCHFIELD: He's a guy that's gotten better. I think our last eight games he's been really, really good for us on the rebounding and he's gotten to a point where we can throw the ball inside to him. He's playing with great confidence. I thought he did a great job tonight rebounding and playing with energy and going after balls. He did a great job.

THE MODERATOR: Fellas, thank you so much for your time. Congrats on a great season.

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