

# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - Boise State Colorado vs Florida

Friday, March 22, 2024

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Gainbridge Fieldhouse

**Colorado Buffaloes**

**Tad Boyle**

**KJ Simpson**

**Eddie Lampkin Jr.**

**Tristan da Silva**

Media Conference

Colorado 102, Florida 100

TAD BOYLE: Well, can't ask for much more out of a game in March than the one you just saw. These guys and the way they battled -- I thought both teams battled. Hats off to Florida. They played well.

To show the poise and composure that we did down the stretch when they made their run back at us, it was a tough, tough game.

I thought to myself at halftime, if we don't start guarding better, midway through the second half, if we don't start guarding better, we've got to score 100 to win tonight, and we needed 102. Actually we only needed 101 but we got 102.

Just enough at the end, great execution, great play by KJ. Every one of our players that played made plays. Bench was great. Just a hell of a game in March. What else can you say?

**Q. KJ, can you take us through the last play and how that sequence unfolded?**

KJ SIMPSON: Yeah, we always go through preparation, time and score situations like that in practice. It was just another one of those times where we had to execute. Obviously it was a play that was set up. There was multiple actions out of it, happened to break free and was



just looking to drive, create something, whatever was the best play, and noticed the defender got a little bit off balance, and that's a shot I shoot a bunch of times.

Credit to my teammates, and Cody threw me a great pass that was able to guide me and lead me in that direction, and just stepping up and hitting a shot.

**Q. Tad, walk us through what happened there at the end of the second half. What kind of enabled them to get back into it, and what did you say to them in that time-out going into that last possession?**

TAD BOYLE: Well, look, we went with a small lineup because we knew they were going to try to get threes and really put pressure on us off the dribble. We didn't do a great job down the stretch. Again, you've got to credit Florida. They drew some fouls. Look, that was a tough game to officiate. We were going downhill, they were going downhill. It really was.

But I thought we didn't do a great job of guarding them off the bounce. They got some and-ones. We wanted to take away threes. That's one of the reasons we went small, so we could switch everything. But they kept coming, and we weren't great. Had one big turnover there in the press offense.

But our guys kept their composure. In terms of the last play, last time-out, like KJ said, we go through those plays. We don't always need them, but you have to have them in your bag when you're ready. And that was a play where we tried to get him an iso drive with six seconds to go with Eddie at the rim to clean things up, and then Tristan and J'Vonne got two-man action up top. So if that's not there, there's a next option. Then have Cody take it out that made that read. Because KJ wasn't originally open and then he came back to him. Credit to him, like KJ said.

All five guys got to do their job in those situations, and they all did.

**Q. Eddie, you went through a lot last year with your family, exiting from TCU. How special is this moment scoring 21 points one win away from the sweet?**



EDDIE LAMPKIN JR: It feels good. I was blessed to find somewhere I could call home real quick. I told Coach and KJ -- me and KJ been having a relationship for the last two years, and I was telling him, I'd love to play with you one day. At the beginning of the season I just told him that, and then when I got in the portal I hit up Coach, and he was like, I'd love to have you. Now look where we're at.

I'm just so blessed to be in this position. We've got to keep winning. We ain't satisfied yet.

**Q. Under Tad you guys have had -- you've built kind of a legacy of producing great point guards with guys like Spencer and McKinley and Derrick and now, KJ, after that buzzer-beater you kind of cement yourself on that Mount Rushmore of Colorado point guards. What does that mean to you?**

KJ SIMPSON: First off, appreciate the compliment. That's real special. Obviously I'm grateful to be here given that recruiting process and everything. Having Colorado to call home, like Eddie said, it's real special. Been here for three years and having to fill tough roles and tough shoes with previous guards that have been excellent under Coach Boyle. Credit to those guys, they reached back out and they're just great advisors and great role models for me, and always give me advice and have helped me be in this position.

But I feel like ultimately I'm so grateful to be around this team. My team is the reason that I have so much success. They find me when I'm open. They always encourage me when I have off games.

So just to be in the conversation with those guys that you named, it's real special, and I'm thankful.

**Q. You guys are on quite a hot streak here down the stretch. You're showing a level of basketball where you continue to fight in games. What kind of changed midway through the season the last 10 games where you guys kind of turned that around mentality-wise, where you continue to bring that level up even in those down moments?**

TAD BOYLE: I don't know. It's a long season, and the one thing as a coach, you know when you've done it for 30 years like I have as an assistant or a head coach, is especially sometimes at the level we play in the Pac-12, a Power Five conference, so much scrutiny is given to the November games and December games, and that's just part of it. But you can't lose sight of the fact that you just have to keep concentrating on getting better and better and better.

Sometimes you can put so much pressure on those games, and maybe as a coach I put too much pressure on them, I don't know, but I do know this: We kept talking about, guys, we've got to keep getting better, and to these guys' credit that's what they did.

I've known in practice that we've had a very competitive group all year. I've seen it every single day. These guys are what I call everyday guys. They come to the gym to try to get better.

Looking back, that UCLA game in Poly where we lost a really tough game was a heartbreaker. These guys were down. They felt like their backs were against the wall, and they came out fighting two nights later against USC and won a double-overtime game on the road against a really talented team. That gave us some confidence, gave us a little spark, and we've just been on a roll ever since.

**Q. For Eddie and Tad, you've played a lot of college basketball, you've coached a lot of college basketball. What was 102-100 in an elimination game like?**

EDDIE LAMPKIN JR: I would just say I'm used to playing fast, so it was like, I just felt comfortable. When I was at TCU we was the No. 1 transition team every year. I was there for some of my freshman year. A high-scoring game is really just another game to me.

We didn't have that many the last couple games because we've been playing a lot in the half court, but Coach told us they was going to try to outscore us and we had to defend, and that's what we did.

TAD BOYLE: Look, we play at a mile high, so we always want to play fast. We love to get out and run. We're a good transition team when we get stops.

Unfortunately tonight we were taking the ball out of the net a lot, which is a little bit more difficult. But we still want to push the pace, and Florida did the same thing.

We anticipated a game like this, but the one thing about these games, you'd better keep scoring the ball. You'd better keep scoring it. You'd better be efficient. I haven't had a chance to look at our second half. I know in the first half we shot 50 percent from the field, we had 14 assists on 17 baskets, and you go in the locker room like that, you expect to be up 10 or 15. It was a tight score because we couldn't stop them.

Just got to keep scoring in games like this. That's the bottom line. It's not what we want to talk about and do, but that's what we had to do tonight to win, and we did.

**Q. Along that point, Walter Clayton in particular I think he had 16 of the last points. What makes him a particularly tough cover for you tonight?**

TAD BOYLE: Well, they run good action for him. He's got a quick release. He's got great balance in his shot. He's one of those guys that's better in person than when you watch him on film. He's a good player.

I thought KJ made some -- I thought he was right there a lot of times. We were right there. He just made some tough shots. That last three at the end, I don't think it was bad defense, we just came down and raised, and he's a good player.

You get into this tournament, the deeper you get in, you're going to be playing against better teams and better players, and Florida, you can see why they had a lot of success this year, but our guys battled their tails off.

This team knows how to win in different ways, and we just proved that over the last two games.

Now, I don't know anything about Marquette and what we've got in front of us. We'll figure that out tonight. But whatever it is, we'll be able to compete because this is a competitive group, and we're happy to be moving on.

**Q. Eddie, how did those chants from the fans, how does it feel hearing that, and does it feel like you were brought to Colorado for moments, for games like this today?**

EDDIE LAMPKIN JR: For sure. God put me here for a reason, but I'm used to that. I don't even hear it half the time. I just get going and I can make one lay-up, ten lay-ups, they show us support. Shout-out to Buff Nation. They're showing us love, and that's all you can ask for at the end of the day.

**Q. Tad just alluded to this, what does it say about your group that you can win that kind of rugged battle that you did a couple days ago and turn around and win a game like this?**

TRISTAN DA SILVA: Yeah, we're a really tight group. We love playing with each other. We love hanging out around each other. As I said, we're a really tight group. We love each other. We fight out there for each other. I feel like it shows on the court, the hustle plays, the extra efforts, playing together, moving the ball, and we trust each other. I've been talking about trust a lot these past couple weeks, and that's what it ultimately comes down to.

KJ SIMPSON: Yeah, credit to the teams we've played against. Everybody around this time of year, as you know, is difficult in their own way, and they all have their strengths. It's just tough rugged teams, great players on both sides.

Boise State and obviously playing Florida, couldn't credit Zyon and Walter enough. Those are great guards to go up against and have nothing but respect for them. But ultimately we've shown that we can compete with any team in the country, and something that's never questionable within this team is our fight, and we're going to keep fighting until the end.

We would not like to be in those type of situations, but we're more than prepared to be ready for whatever happens with this group.

**Q. I'm curious what has Eddie brought to your program as both a player and a person?**

TAD BOYLE: I'm glad you asked that. He's brought unbelievable toughness, a spirit, a competitive spirit, energy. He's brought so much to this team. Toughness. Our guys believe in him. He believes in them. It's been, like said -- you get somebody for just one year that kind of has to fit in with guys like Tristan and KJ that have been here for three or four years, he fit in like a glove. He's unselfish, he's a pass-first big.

And my man was 5-for-5 from the foul line tonight, and to see him put in the work and to see him succeed, because that's something he's struggled with in the past, but I don't even think about him missing free throws. I expect them to go in now, and I think he does, too. But I'm really, really proud of him.

**Q. Tristan, you've heard the coaching staff and the program preach fundamentals of defense and rebounding over and over. This was the first tournament game in 20 years where both teams scored over 100 points. For you guys to win a game like that, what does that say about your team and the ability to score the basketball?**

TRISTAN DA SILVA: Yeah, as Coach said, this group kind of figured out different ways to win games. This time it was kind of outscoring the opponent. We would like to not be in situations like that because we pride ourselves on defensive rebounding. As I say, we just figured out different ways. We've got really talented guys on this team, and once again, we got the ultimate trust in each other.

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