

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

Thursday, March 20, 2025

Seattle, Washington, USA

Climate Pledge Arena

## Colorado State Rams

## Niko Medved

### Media Conference



navigate that a little bit better for your guys. But, man, I want 'em to look around a little bit and say, man this is the NCAA Tournament, this is great, and then be ready to kind of, hey, now we've got to play basketball.

**Q. Are you able to read how they're balancing those or is that a thing you don't know a hundred percent for sure until tomorrow?**

NIKO MEDVED: Great point. I guess the only data I have is how they have managed this whole season and how they just managed the Mountain West Tournament and have done a phenomenal job, in my opinion, of shutting out whatever talk is out there of anything and have just really focused on the moment. So it would give me confidence to say that we have data that we just played in a lot of big games and situations that way and they have handled it so beautifully.

So I have no reason to believe that they won't do it tomorrow, but, man, you're as good as your last game. We've got to go do it tomorrow at 11:00.

**Q. Over the last couple of weeks CSU has taken on an image of, look out for CSU, they might bust your bracket. Why do you think that is that people are saying that?**

NIKO MEDVED: I don't know. I mean, probably because we've been playing really well lately. Have kind of -- people weren't talking about the Rams earlier and now more people are talking about the Rams nationally. So that kind of a thing.

But I think it's really important to understand is that what's allowed us to be successful is we tuned out all that early when people were saying the other thing and we didn't focus on NET rankings, bubble, any of that stuff. We just focused on ourselves.

I think now as the narrative turns and people want to say the other, don't listen to that either, you know what I mean? That doesn't matter who picked us to win maybe tomorrow or all of that stuff, none of that stuff matters at all. I think that because we've done such a really good job of tuning that out, that allows us to focus on what's in front of us.

THE MODERATOR: All right, we'll start with questions for an opening statement and then open it up to questions.

NIKO MEDVED: Excited to be here. That's an understatement. I know I'm biased but I think this is the greatest sporting event on earth. It's what everybody in our business, players, coaches, dream of being a part of.

We've been fortunate to be here three of the last four years, they're all really rewarding. This one's incredibly special. Just thinking about what our guys have gone through to get here. The best teams in the country are here for a reason and we've always stepped up to the challenge and we're really looking forward to the challenge tomorrow against Memphis.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Third in four years, do you have a ritual or anything you like to do at these or memento or anything that you kind of do to commemorate being at these?**

NIKO MEDVED: I think it's a balance, like I told the team. I mean, I really want 'em to enjoy the moment. This is really, really special. Everyone of these guys has their own unique story and journey and dreamed of being at this point and families travel long distances to come here. I want 'em to take that all in and enjoy it.

Then it's that balance between that and an understanding at the end of the day it's a basketball game, right, and there's certain things that you've done to allow yourself to be at this point. How are you able to walk the line between both and allow 'em to have those moments, and then when it's time to lock in, lock in and be ready to go?

So I think, you know, as you have a little bit more experience being in these situations, hopefully it helps you

**Q. Speaking of tuning out the outside noise, we talked to Nique Clifford about the hype of the matchup between him and P.J. Haggerty, two of the best players in college basketball in the country. I asked him if he has a chip on his shoulder to prove himself and he kind of deferred and said, "It's not about that." Is that just who he is or do you see him have some kind of fire in him in this moment when the lights are bright against a guy like P.J. Haggerty across the way?**

NIKO MEDVED: Both. Nique is just exactly that, he's an amazing human being, an amazing team guy and all that stuff like that. I know Nique is not thinking about, hey, it's me and P.J. Haggerty; it's the Rams versus the Memphis Tigers.

So he knows the lights are bright tomorrow but the lights have been bright for him for a while. So, no, I don't think he gets into any of that. P.J.'s a tremendous player, Memphis is a tremendous team all the way around. But, no, it's not about that at all, it's about him just doing the things that he needs to do as an individual to help our team be successful. I think that's what he means by that is just, no -- the worst thing you could do is try to get into that kind of a game and because he hasn't this season, I think that's really helped us.

**Q. With Memphis' uncertain point guard situation, with the Hunter and Harrison injuries, how does that impact your scout and your prep, and does it complicate it exponentially or do you just handle it like usual?**

NIKO MEDVED: Of course it's always easier to know a hundred percent who is going to play and who is not going to play. But I don't think it changes it a lot. Coach Hardaway does such a great job with his guys and obviously whether they play or don't play impacts them, but I mean they have got a lot of really good players. They really guard you, they make it difficult to figure out what they're doing.

So we haven't focused a ton on that. Our guys, we played Hunter last year in the NCAA Tournament at Texas. So we played him, we have a familiarity with his game. But, no, I don't think it's changed it a bunch for us.

**Q. Not your first dance, obviously the lights a lot brighter, the cameras, a lot of attention. What do you have to say about your senior players on this team getting them ready for the big stage? Obviously it's the coach's job to do that, but are there any players stepping up to help those younger guys get set to go out there in front of millions of people?**

NIKO MEDVED: This will be Ethan Morton's fifth straight

NCAA Tournament. A guy on our team, Jalen Lake, who this will be his third, this will be Nique Clifford's third, our other young guys last year played in it.

I don't think it's talking about it so much, it's just the way that those guys go about their business and how they will handle today, how they will handle practice, how they handle the whole season of again striking that balance between really taking the time to enjoy it and understanding the accomplishments of being in this tournament, but then being able to flip the switch and realize we have a basketball game to play.

So we've got several veteran guys I think who will help with that.

THE MODERATOR: All right, thank you, Coach.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

