

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - Grand Canyon vs Maryland

Thursday, March 20, 2025

Seattle, Washington, USA

Climate Pledge Arena

Grand Canyon Lopes

Bryce Drew

Media Conference



having won a tournament game, whether that's sort of the impression of the program or just sort of the way guys carried themselves knowing that they had gone to the Tournament and gotten a victory?

BRYCE DREW: Yeah, all of the above. I think it put our program in a different space as far as recruiting, as far as I think just nationally people knowing our program. Not just winning the game but again we were up on Alabama with six minutes left and they end up going to the Final Four. And we didn't back down, we played up and down with them the whole game. So I think it gave our guys a lot of confidence and we kind of left the season on a high last year.

This year's team we have a lot of returners, it's been a different feeling, kind of a different vibe that we have, and it's taken us a while to figure it out, but this last week was our best week of basketball. So we're hoping we can continue that trend and keep playing really good basketball.

Q. A lot of returning faces from last year, what has one of the new faces JaKobe Coles meant to you?

BRYCE DREW: He's been spectacular. We put him in a tough situation. We had every other starter back except him and he's done a really good job finding his way and being himself, and I think our team has understood his game much better.

About three-fourths through the season we just saw JaKobe get way more comfortable with his spots on the floor and our team get way more comfortable with him playing through him some with his catches. So he's been an awesome addition and tournament MVP was well deserved, he played that well for us.

Q. Arizona wildcat question for you, what do you remember about Liam Lloyd's time at GCU?

BRYCE DREW: We loved Liam. When I first got to GCU Liam was signed to come there. So I got to coach him for two years and be around him. Loved his energy, really tough player on the court. Knew the game like a coach, and we were, you know, happy coaching him for two years. We're happy that he's with his dad, Tommy, right now.

THE MODERATOR: All right, we'll start with an opening statement from Coach and then take questions.

BRYCE DREW: Yeah, excited to be back in the NCAA Tournament. We got a group of seniors that played in the Tournament last year. They have been looking forward all year to this opportunity. Happy to be in Seattle on the West Coast and excited to play tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. You mentioned your guys, a bunch of 'em were here last year, what do you take away from last year's experience and what do you think guys who have not been in this environment before might struggle with without that experience?

BRYCE DREW: I think last year's experience helped a lot of our guys to want to come back this year to Grand Canyon. It's really hard to retain players in college basketball today. And the success that they had, the energy from our fan base, that was a huge part to get a lot of our guys to come back, so we're thankful for that.

I do think they know the routine, they know what's expected, and a lot of 'em came back for this reason, for the conference tournament and hopefully the NCAA Tournament. So we have seen a different level of focus, different level of energy from our older players, because this is what they have been looking forward to for a year.

As far as the newness, there's as long as an excitement to the newness when it is your first time or second time going, it does bring you a renewed energy because even though it's your first time, it is a lot of fun and sometimes it makes you play better.

Q. Did you notice any notable changes last year



And whatever he decides to do, if he wants to coach, we'll definitely be calling him, if he wanted to come back to Grand Canyon and help us coach or if he wants to do something else he'll be successful. He's a great young man.

Q. I know you haven't been here long but have you felt a different air about especially your starting lineup, the guys that have been in the Tournament and even when you're in practice back home and then getting here, is there a different feeling?

BRYCE DREW: It definitely helps that they have been here. I think they know the routine, they know the steps to get to the game. They're excited for every step, but obviously they know how to prepare themselves for the game. As a coach some games you have to use a lot of motivation to get guys excited to play. It's nice when you get to this stage, the guys are looking forward to it themselves. And I think collaboratively together they're helping each other in the process to make sure that we're connected as a team.

Q. This time of year all the highlights from past tournaments come around and your shot will always be brought up. Do you use that in any way to motivate your players about how anything can happen in this tournament?

BRYCE DREW: Unfortunately they weren't even born then, so they don't have any clue really about it.

The answer would be no. But I'm very thankful for that moment and I obviously love the NCAA Tournament. It's been such a big piece of my life, my family's life through the years, so it always gives me a warm heart seeing that clip, but it also gives me a warm heart when I see Gabe McGlothan last year pumping his fist on commercials for what's done for Grand Canyon.

So it's such a fun time this time of year and we're just thankful to be part of it.

Q. Derik Queen is such a unique player for Maryland and you know a lot of offense goes through him, 31 points in his last game. Have you seen a big, I mean obviously not a lot of bigs like him, but have you seen a big of a facilitates like he does and what do you point to your team as some of the things of the ways he can hurt you?

BRYCE DREW: The more you watch, the worse it gets when you're the opposing coach. You watch a couple clips and you think okay, well, maybe we can try this or do this,

the more film you watch. Well, they tried it and didn't work. They tried it and didn't work.

So he's just an excellent player, that's why he's a lottery pick. He has great feet, he has great hands he has great feel. He sets great screens. Looks like a great teammate out there. So I don't know if he's the type of player that you stop, he's just that talented and that good, but obviously we're going to do our best and throw some different things and do the best that we can on him.

Q. Fifth year at GCU, fourth tournament, what do you attribute that success to over the time you've been here?

BRYCE DREW: Thankful for obviously a tremendous administration, from the president down, we have the president here, President Mueller, and his vision for basketball the day one that he hired me was to get to moments like this. They have walked step by step with me the whole way and really helped support our program, support athletics, which is so important, especially in today's world.

And our fan base, our fan base is spectacular. We don't get to where we get without the support we get from them.

THE MODERATOR: All right, thank you, Coach.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports