

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

Thursday, March 20, 2025

Seattle, Washington, USA

Climate Pledge Arena

Maryland Terrapins

Julian Reese

Ja'Kobi Gillespie

Media Conference



JA'KOBI GILLESPIE: They're a really good team, they have a lot of really good players, and I feel like they're older, so they have a lot of experience. So we got to come ready and locked in.

Q. When you came here the starting lineup the Crab Five has taken on a life of its own. Is that sort of a vision you had for this group that that lineup in particular could be really good and maybe stand where you guys are standing now?

JA'KOBI GILLESPIE: Yeah, I didn't really know the lineup before I came, I knew Ju and Derek were coming here. I didn't know about Rodney and Selton. So, no, I didn't really know that the Crab Five would become a thing.

Q. (No Microphone.)

JA'KOBI GILLESPIE: Just because we're all really good players but also unselfish and like to see each other playing good and succeeding. So I feel like we all like to work together.

Q. You had the opportunity to come back to Maryland next year, are you thinking -- I know you're focused on this moment and this game tomorrow, but what do you think this tournament could mean for the trajectory of the program under Coach Willard and the future of the expectations that you guys have set here?

JA'KOBI GILLESPIE: I mean I don't really know what the future holds, but, yeah, we're just really locked in on Friday and trying to win as many games as we can.

THE MODERATOR: All right, we'll let you guys go. Thank you very much. We'll have Coach in shortly.

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THE MODERATOR: All right. We'll get started with questions for the student-athletes.

Q. Obviously you're here, it's been a great season, but how do you make sure this continues, this is a season that folks out there will remember for a long time to come, what's the mindset heading into all this?

JULIAN REESE: I think just sticking to the basketball we play, just staying in our brand of basketball and just keep playing together like we have all season and we'll be good.

JA'KOBI GILLESPIE: Yeah, same thing. Just sticking to what we do, just playing really hard, playing as hard as we can, I feel like that will help us win.

Q. You've been here with this team, I know it's one thing to see your name go up on the bracket and be celebrating that, but has there been anything in the last day or so since you've arrived in Seattle where this experience feels very real and you're sort of grasping the magnitude of this tournament?

JULIAN REESE: Yeah, kind of when you get to the hotel you see all the March Madness stuff on there. Here, first press conference and all eyes on you. This is the only basketball where everybody in the country is watching.

It's a blessing but we got to lock in and focus on the game and the task at hand and get it done.

Q. It's such a whirlwind you find out the opponent Sunday and focus on what you're doing but what do you know about the other guys in this short time that you've been able to break down film?

