

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - Liberty vs Oregon

Thursday, March 20, 2025

Seattle, Washington, USA

Climate Pledge Arena

Liberty Flames

Jayvon Maughmer

Taelon Peter

Zach Cleveland

Media Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right, we'll take questions for the student-athletes, please.

Q. We just saw a 12 seed take down a 5. I know you guys have had a lot of confidence and belief this entire season, no stranger to being an underdog in a few games this year. Zach, for you, why do you think this team has a belief that it can pull off an upset tomorrow night?

ZACH CLEVELAND: I think our coach has built a confidence in us that we're the only team that can beat us. When we don't beat ourselves, we put ourselves in a good chance to win against anybody in the country. So we really believe that and Coach has built that confidence in us.

Q. Jayvon, why would you think that this team has the bond the chemistry to be able to take down a team like Oregon?

JAYVON MAUGHMER: This is what we've been practicing for since June. Getting connected and Coach talks about us being the most connected team on the floor. So we just got to go out there and play connected.

So I think if we play connected and take care of the ball that we'll have a good shot.

Q. Taelon, walking in this arena for the first time, where are your nerves and how do you manage those in the next 24 hours?

TAELOP PETER: Yeah, I wouldn't say nerves, I would say excitement. Seeing all the March Madness stuff, things



that you dream about growing up, it is very exciting. But I can't wait to get out on the floor and get some shots up and prepare for tomorrow.

Q. Can you go down the line and answer, how is the preparation different going into a tournament game than a familiar conference opponent or non-conference opponent earlier this season, how has the prep been different?

ZACH CLEVELAND: I think just a lot more film. You get pretty comfortable with the teams in the conference playing them a couple times. But playing a new team from a new conference, there is always a difference in physicality, plays, coaching styles. So just dialing in the film room has been the biggest difference.

TAELOP PETER: I would say also just taking care of our bodies, knowing that we could potentially be playing a number of games in a short amount of days. So locking in on taking care of our bodies and making sure we're ready to go one, two, three games in like a week or so.

JAYVON MAUGHMER: Yeah, I think they both said it, just with film and taking care of our bodies and just going out and playing our game in who we know we can be. So I think that's just really important is, you know, Liberty being Liberty and just going out and playing our game.

THE MODERATOR: All right, well thank you very much. We'll have coach in, in a few minutes. FastScripts by ASAP Sports