

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - Duquesne vs BYU

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Omaha, Nebraska, USA

CHI Health Center

Duquesne Dukes
Dae Dae Grant
Jimmy Clark III
Jake DiMichele

Media Conference

THE MODERATOR: The Duquesne student-athletes on the dais are Dae Dae Grant, Jimmy Clark III, and Jake DiMichele. We'll start off with questions.

Q. This one is for all three of you. I want to know what's been your initial reactions to getting to Omaha, finally getting to walk through the venue and everything? Because I know it's a cool experience for all of you.

DAE DAE GRANT: I think it's been a great and exciting experience as well as emotional because not many of us have been here in this position, so I will just say it's very exciting and just mind-blowing to me right now.

JIMMY CLARK III: I would have to say the same. It's definitely been emotional being able to be a part of something that I was never a part of and being able to make history with these guys. So it's definitely been good.

JAKE DIMICHELE: Piggybacking off what they said, I will say it's kind of a dream come true. I feel like this group of guys deserves it after all the adversity and everything we went through this year. So, yeah, it's been great to enjoy it with these guys.

Q. From winning the tournament to Coach's announcement on Monday, can you describe how hectic these last 72 hours have been and how you're sort of trying to ground yourselves before the game tomorrow?

JAKE DIMICHELE: It's been kind of a whirlwind of emotions the last couple of days. But, again, I think it



works for us in a positive way because it just bonds us closer together, increases our brotherhood.

In terms of Coach D retiring, I think it kind of gives us another incentive to win this game because we want to send him out in the right way. He's never won an NCAA Division I tournament game. So we want to get that for him.

JIMMY CLARK III: Definitely, I'll say the same, honestly. Being able to be a part of this winning culture and be able to do something that we never have done, especially with Coach, it's good. Especially being on this level at the Division I level being able to win.

DAE DAE GRANT: Definitely an exciting experience. I'm really just blessed to be in the moment with these guys, man. We really just want to continue to take one step forward and try to complete our goal.

Q. For Jimmy, first going back to the A-10 tournament. I know in the last three games there was at least one scoring lull in each game that you guys had to endure and fight off. Can you talk about how you managed to do that, whether it be second half against VCU, late first half against the Bonnies, how you managed to fend that off and still win the games. For Dae Dae, how do you avoid that this time against BYU?

JIMMY CLARK III: I'll say we just stuck to our game plan. It wasn't more offensive-based. It was more defensive-minded. I felt like just coming together with the guys and just locking down on defense and making that our main goal and main mindset. I feel like that helped us get through those tough wins.

DAE DAE GRANT: I believe helping to avoid that really is just sticking to our game plan, sticking to the way we plan basketball, the way we defend, the way we ricochet our offense and gel on and off the court. I feel that will just take place and take care of everything that's not going well in the moment.

Q. This program's first trip to the tournament in about 50 years. Has that kind of history sunk in yet? What was it like to get to interact with some of the fans at the send-off yesterday, and what have you maybe



heard from them about what it means to get back?

DAE DAE GRANT: It was a great interaction with the fans. Unbelievable experience. It was just great. Just enjoying that moment with my teammates. What were your other two questions?

Q. (Off microphone.)

DAE DAE GRANT: Yes, the history, I don't think the emotions have sunken in for me all the way yet on the history aspect of us accomplishing that goal, winning that championship, but I'm sure it will hit later on down the line when we just look back onto the moment and just elaborate on it.

JIMMY CLARK III: Yeah, I'll say the same. For the sendoff, it was definitely emotional for everybody, being able to be a part of something and be a part of history. So that was good for us.

JAKE DIMICHELE: I feel like in terms of the history, I don't really feel like it's sunken in for us yet because I feel like personally we always believed as a team that we could get here, so I don't really think we ever viewed it as a historical type of thing.

Yeah, in the sendoff, you know the fans and seeing their pride for us and the university, I think it just gives us another extra level of motivation to try and get a win and give them even something more to be proud of.

Q. Dae Dae and Jake, can you speak to the impact that the guy in the middle of you, Jimmy, has had on getting you guys to this point and just the team in general.

JAKE DIMICHELE: Speaking of Jimmy, I mean, he's a great leader I will say. He's a lead-by-example kind of person more than a vocal leader. Just seeing how he prepares every day, seeing how most kind of star players on the teams really only worry about the offensive end, but this guy is one of the best defensive players that I've personally ever seen.

Having a guy like that who is unselfish and willing to sacrifice anything for the team in order to win, you know, it just makes everybody's job that much easier.

DAE DAE GRANT: Really agreeing with Jake, man. I've never played on a team with someone just that unique style of defensive play not only, but offensively as well. Just similar to myself, I feel like.

It just means a lot to have somebody along your side, as

well as Jake, too, to just be able to play, play with that guard, play and go out there and just dominate and try to just lay your hands on other obstacles other than offense.

And Jimmy has helped me in that way to make me a better defender. He makes me want to play defense even harder and show me aspects and different kind of key tips to be a better defender.

I'm just appreciative to have him and Jake on my team to just rock out with.

Q. For Dae Dae, you know your team and your teammates. What should BYU be concerned about about Duquesne?

DAE DAE GRANT: To be honest, man, that would be on them and their scouting report, to be honest. I don't think I really or we really focus on what they are focusing on for us. We really just game plan to do what we have to do to try and stop them and get our things done.

Shoot, we're an up-tempo team. We like to defend and be physical as well as try and execute on offense. We have guards that can go as well as guys who can score in the low end and in the post as well. I mean, you could look for all-around aspect. We have guys who can shoot, guard, defend. It will be a fun game, man.

Q. For all three of you or whoever feels, now that you have had time to look at BYU, what stands out, and other than what you guys need to prepare for yourself, but what stands out about their team and the challenges that they pose?

JAKE DIMICHELE: It's kind of a game of contrasting styles I would say. They're a very up-tempo team. They like to score the ball at a high rate, and we hang our hat on the defensive end. It should be interesting.

I feel like the key to the game is trying to get them to play our style and not fall into their style of play.

JIMMY CLARK III: I'll have to say the same thing. You know, just focusing on our style of play. Something that stood out to me about their team was they have a passing five-man. So I feel like, if we can get a couple of deflections in the route, that type of style that they would like to run and get off and run their shooters off the line, I feel like we'll be good.

Q. Being from the Pittsburgh area, does making it to this point make it that much sweeter for you? What does it mean to you to be doing this for Western Pennsylvania, your hometown?



JAKE DIMICHELE: Yeah, it means a lot. Especially just from a personal standpoint, being able to see my family at every game and stuff and seeing how much joy and pride I've brought to the people closest to me, it means the world to me.

I hope that I can just continue to keep going and keep making them more proud with every moment.

Q. This is for Dae Dae and Jimmy. Each of you came to the Dukes from another school. Is this week the payoff each of you had hoped for?

JIMMY CLARK III: I would say this is definitely the pay-out that we deserve. I feel like this is what we deserve. This is what we came here for as well.

Just being able to come here and with different styles of play and being able to connect with these guys coming from different schools, and a lot of us were much older. So sometimes that can be a bad thing, but sometimes it can be a good thing as well with the maturity. So I feel like the maturity part played out to our favor and helped us get to this point.

DAE DAE GRANT: I also feel that this has played out very well. We do deserve this moment, although the process of getting here was the -- I feel like the process of us accomplishing that championship and just getting here is not the end, but it is what built us and our program, our team throughout these two years to just become what we are right now.

We're just living in the moment, but we're not finished in the mindset as well.

Q. This is for Jake. Earlier you guys have talked about the history, and it's sinking in. With you being a Western Pennsylvania native, does it resonate with you perhaps more than your teammates?

JAKE DIMICHELE: I mean, I wouldn't necessarily say so because once you go to a school, whether you are from there or not, you kind of become part of that family. So I know for these guys they feel like they're a part of the Duquesne family too.

Just speaking of being a Western Pennsylvania guy, it just means a lot to me, and I know going forward, even when I'm older and stuff, I feel like I'll still get recognized for that accomplishment and helping bringing Duquesne back to the tournament.

Yeah, it's a great and fulfilling feeling for sure.

