

# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: Second Round - Washington State vs Iowa State

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Omaha, Nebraska, USA

CHI Health Center

**Washington State Cougars**  
**Head Coach Kyle Smith**

**Myles Rice**

**Isaac Jones**

**Jaylen Wells**

Media Conference



**you would rather score a little more, play a little faster. I'm curious, though, with you guys kind of grinding out a win today, do you think you guys can win playing that slower kind of offense? I'm curious about the style you guys can win with.**

JAYLEN WELLS: Yeah, as long as we're scoring more than the other team, I think we'll be all right.

I mean, obviously, yeah, we want to pick up our offense, but I don't think offense has really been our identity throughout the season. It's been more on the defensive side. So, I mean, some days we have games where our offense wins the game. Some days we have games where our defense wins the game.

I think our defense just always needs to show up, and I think we'll be fine on the offensive end.

**Q. For any of you guys, and he just happen to be in here watching this. Andrej's defense on DeVries, how much of a difference does that make when you have a guy like that who can take on the best player on the opposing team and do that not just with his steady defense, but with his size and match him physically?**

MYLES RICE: That's our captain. He's the fourth-year guy here. They emphasized that if we make it hard for Tucker, then it would be a hard game for them. I think 61 might have been one of their lowest point totals all year as a team collectively.

He went 6 for 18. He made a couple of passes out of the blitz where we came off the ball screen, but I think overall just having that presence on him, having that bigger body on him throughout the game kind of wore him out.

Just shout-out to Drej. He always does everything we need for him to do.

ISAAC JONES: That was a great effort by Drej. It's something really hard to do. He made catches for him tough. You could just see it in the game. You could hear both of them just huffing and puffing because he is hawking him the whole time. That was huge. I'm thankful for that, bro.

THE MODERATOR: The Washington State Cougars are here. We have Jaylen Wells, Isaac Jones, Myles Rice. We'll go right to questions.

**Q. Less than 24 hours now since you guys came back from winning against Drake. What's been the last several hours been like digesting everything about that game and also getting prepared for Iowa State?**

JAYLEN WELLS: Yeah, I think we kind of have a next game mentality, take one game at a time. Just looking at their film, we figure out what we have to do and what the game plan is.

MYLES RICE: For me, I mean, I enjoyed it. I know the whole team enjoyed it. Pullman community back home, I know they enjoyed it.

We have the next-game mentality. We have Iowa State, 2 seed. They've been playing really good basketball all year. It's going to be another challenge for us to showcase what we can do, and we're going to go out there and get it done.

ISAAC JONES: It was definitely fun in the moment after the game, but I think we all flipped the switch pretty fast and moved onto the next game because we know we have a big one tomorrow, so yeah.

**Q. Jaylen, three of you guys the last four games have been these kind of slower offensive games. Obviously**



**Q. That section behind the bench that was all Cougs that came here, that traveled. What did that mean to you guys during the game during time-outs when you went back to the bench?**

ISAAC JONES: Man, that was huge. We came out to boos, but we heard their cheers. Thankful everybody came. As I said before we carry the pride of pullman, and so did they, and they came and showed out for us.

MYLES RICE: I think it was beautiful, man. Just seeing everybody can have their families out there, seeing other Coug alumni or just people that support us from all around the country to be out here when they don't have to, but it was just, like I said, beautiful to see.

They said it was kind of like a home game for Drake, but I think throughout the game sometimes it felt like a home game for us as well. So like I say, it's just beautiful for us to see.

JAYLEN WELLS: Definitely great to have that support. I mean, I love the chants. Sometimes I'm on court just singing it myself. I like the little "shark" chant. What else do they got? The "Go, Cougs, Go"... that's my favorite one.

**Q. Isaac, when you are playing a little slower, how do you kind of take advantage of that and how do you fit into that offense when things are kind of going slower on offense?**

ISAAC JONES: I like playing slow. I'm a player that says I play at my own pace, and I play it slow, and I like to see the floor. Especially since I get doubled a lot, I think playing slow is good because I can see the floor, scan, make a skip pass, and get open shots off of it, and I think that's what's important about playing slow and not being sped up by other teams.

**Q. For any of you guys. How many times do you think Isaiah has watched the replay of his shot by now?**

MYLES RICE: Knowing Isaiah, he hangs out with me a lot, so I probably would have did the same thing, watched it a couple of times. Rough estimate. The game ended at 11:30. What time is it now? 3 o'clock. At least 15 times probably.

JAYLEN WELLS: That's a good estimate. I watched it a lot of times, so I'm sure he did as well. That's a big shot. Probably a shot that will live in Coug history for a while.

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, thank you for your time.

We have the Head Coach of the Cougars, Kyle Smith. Please make a statement and then we'll go to questions.

KYLE SMITH: Yeah, it was a great win for our program. I haven't won an NCAA Tournament game I believe since 2008 and quite the foe in Drake. Really competitive game that we were able to outlast them there.

Then we've got a tremendous opponent tomorrow. We have Iowa State who won the Big 12 and No. 1, No. 2 defensive team in the country so, we'll have to do a good job taking care of the ball and handling their defensive pressure.

**Q. How good was Jaki defensively against DeVries?**

KYLE SMITH: He was tremendous. It's probably understated how much he impacted the game and making DeVries work. I think DeVries is a really good player, and Andrej hit a big three for us, but really where he did his work, just wearing him down. They kind of wore down each other, but that was to our advantage.

**Q. You talked about it a little bit last night. Just talk a little bit about Isaiah Watts, the freshman stepping up and hitting that big three late in the game.**

KYLE SMITH: Isaiah has been a spark plug for us most of the year, and he's had -- he's been coming on lately the last half of the season, last one-third of the season. He has been really helpful for us.

He's got a really magnetic personality and kind of brings that energy, and he plays very carefree and loose and not afraid of the moment. I don't think anyone on our bench was surprised him taking that shot and not surprised that it went in.

He had a refuse go in the conference tournament, for whatever reason. It was out of character. He really bounced back this week. They're small, quick bothered us, so we had to match up a little bit, and his 22 minutes were awesome for us. That was a big shot, to say the least.

**Q. To follow up, Drake had more fans here last night. Iowa State is going to have even more fans tomorrow night. Is that something you can feed off of in some way?**

KYLE SMITH: I don't know feed off of, but we have experience a little bit playing down in Tucson. I was a little surprised, to be honest, last night. Normally in the NCAA Tournament you're not worried about being able to coach your guys because it's usually a neutral kind of vacuum, but it was loud in there. Just couldn't hear.



Probably because Creighton has a great home -- I know why they have a home court advantage. It will be a road game. No secret there. We kind of have a little chip. They sent us out here to the Midwest, which has been very hospitable, and I found out what a Runza is, incredible sandwich. I want to get that on record. It's like a Midwest Philly Cheesesteak. Put that out there. They tell you eat them with mustard. I would have thought ketchup, but anyway.

I forgot the question.

**Q. I didn't really have a follow-up, but I'm glad you enjoyed that Runza. Take some home with you.**

KYLE SMITH: I'm just mad at myself I didn't know that it existed in my 54 years, but I do now.

**Q. Is Isaac underrated nationally or in terms of --**

KYLE SMITH: I would say nationally. I'm sure he's not a household name. It's kind of how -- you know him very well. He's such an understated person. Very low-key. Never too high, never too low. He has that ability to take over a game and just hard to cover, man, and he is not afraid of that pressure to take it on his shoulders.

To keep advancing, we need some guys to really step up and play, maybe punch above their weight class and step up in the moments. Your stars have to play well, and he's definitely one of ours.

**Q. The lateness of that game last night, did you feel that maybe was a little bit of an advantage, or maybe used to it a little bit more than the Midwestern team?**

KYLE SMITH: Maybe. Our body clocks. It's the old folks like me, our body clocks stayed there. Players, I don't think that age it probably doesn't affect them too much either way.

Maybe that was our advantage being able to try to -- we've been sleeping in a little bit trying to stay on the same rhythm. 9 o'clock tip was a 7 o'clock tip for us, so that might have helped.

I would have rather had the home fans like they did. The bus trip in here. Proud of our Cougs. They showed up. We had a good turnout.

**Q. Three out of the last four games have been slower offensive games. Obviously you would rather score a little easier, but what's your comfort level playing that style, and how do you make that work tomorrow?**

KYLE SMITH: Well, against some of those opponents it's been to our advantage. Like a Colorado and Washington, and you don't kind of want to -- we would rather wrestle with them than some of those speed teams.

I thought actually last night would be a little more up and down. Probably Iowa State it will be lower scoring if we take care of the ball. If we don't, they'll -- if they turn us over, which is what they're good at, they'll get up and down a little bit.

We'll take our shots at them too and our advantages, but we'll see. I don't think -- they really don't run as much off transition -- off misses as they do just turn you over and get numbers.

**Q. I'm curious how Isaac kind of fits into that. I feel like that's kind of his style anyway. Do you anticipate them doubling him as much as he --**

KYLE SMITH: It doesn't matter. They double the post every possession. Doesn't matter who catches it. They really swarm you. They're almost like a really athletic, quick Tony Bennett team where they double the post every time. It doesn't matter who catches. It will be hard. We have to find different ways of getting the ball different places I think and get on the glass a little bit. We have somewhat of an advantage there I hope.

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