

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - Georgia vs Gonzaga

Wednesday, March 19, 2025

Wichita, Kansas, USA

Intrust Bank Arena

Gonzaga Bulldogs

Ryan Nembhard

Nolan Hickman

Graham Ike

Media Conference

THE MODERATOR: We have the Gonzaga University Bulldogs with us. Ryan Nembhard, Nolan Hickman and Graham Ike. Questions, please.

What do you know about Georgia?

RYAN NEMBHARD: I know they're a good team. They play in one of the best conferences in the country. They've got size. They're athletic. They've played a lot of tough games this year, and they won a lot of tough games.

So looking forward to getting out there and competing to them.

NOLAN HICKMAN: Yeah, just piggybacking off of what Ryan said, real good squad, talented. Really big in the post position. Yeah, man, that's pretty much all I got for Georgia.

GRAHAM IKE: Yeah, these guys hit it on the head. Pretty physical team. They play a good brand of basketball, so we are expecting a physical game on both sides of the ball. Long team, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: In the last interview session there was a lot made of Georgia not being in the tournament for 26 years, playing against a program that's here every single year. Do you think that makes a difference in the student-athletes' minds?

GRAHAM IKE: It probably does make a difference. I don't know about for them, but for us we've been here before, so we have the experience so we're kind of used to these kind of games and environments. I think it does help us.



NOLAN HICKMAN: Yeah, same what G said. He pretty much said it all.

RYAN NEMBHARD: I agree.

Q. Like a lot of the other teams talk about their culture and how they're working together to get ready for the big game tomorrow? What's your motto for the games tomorrow as a team?

RYAN NEMBHARD: I think our culture just starts with who we are as a program, the tradition in the Gonzaga program. I think the culture here is second to none, you know. That's built through years of different teams, camaraderie, and especially the way Coach Few is just so consistent every year and every day on what he brings to the table.

So I think the culture is in us. I think as a team we're just getting closer and closer as the year has been going on and we're playing our best ball at the right time. Yeah, we're excited for tomorrow.

NOLAN HICKMAN: Just to piggyback off what Ryan said, I think Coach does a great job of giving us insight on previous teams before us, just how they approach every game, how they approach every practice down the stretch when they hit March and everything. I think he does a really good job with that with all the teams. At least all the teams I've been a part of. I think he does a really good job at explaining that and making us understand that.

GRAHAM IKE: Yeah, they hit it on the head.

Q. Coach said the other day that there was a point in the season where he had to mention you could play with a little more desperation, there's a lot at stake. Maybe there are streaks in the balance. Do you guys remember him talking about anything like that? He said, particularly the seniors could feel it. Any thoughts or remembrances of how he approached guys with that?

NOLAN HICKMAN: I think he honestly lets us know that around this time of year, it's always desperate. You know, you have to have a different urge to win when it comes



down to this time of year. Yeah, he does a great job at trying to push that point through to us at practice. Even when we're having film sessions, you know, we don't have a lot more of these left. So yeah, he just tries to make that a point to let us seniors know.

RYAN NEMBHARD: If you're not desperate at this time of year, you're going home. Win or go home at this point, and your season is done, so you have to be desperate. Every game matters. Every game is important. It's win or go home at this point.

The least desperate team is probably going to be going home and chilling on the couch.

Q. How different is it for guys who have played in this tournament before versus all the guys on teams who are making it for the first time?

NOLAN HICKMAN: Honestly, man, I would say just the whole experience. When you hit March Madness, you hit the first round and everything, just this even media, all this plays a part in the experience of March Madness. I think the first-timers, it's a challenge for them. It's something that they just haven't experienced before.

With us being here already, I think this is something that's usual, and it's easy for us. I don't know. We understand how this thing goes. So I think that's pretty much the difference between newcomers and us seniors that's been in it for a while.

RYAN NEMBHARD: Yeah, for sure. I think the extracurricular, the media, the open gym practices and all that is just -- those are the things that you experience for the first time. Those are the things that are a little bit different. At the end of the day when you get on that court, it's basketball. So after the first four minutes probably everyone settles in, jitters will probably be gone, and it's basketball at the end of the day, so yeah.

GRAHAM IKE: Yeah, to piggyback off these guys, I think for newcomers like when you get in, I feel like something that can be new for them is maybe the highs and lows of March Madness. Not getting too high, not getting too low, but just trying to stay in the middle with it because anything can happen around this time as we saw last night.

Q. We know with football players a lot of times they'll say, hey, that first hit, it's the chance to remember, hey, it's football. We're back. It's the game we've always played. What is that play for basketball players?

RYAN NEMBHARD: What was the first part?

Q. For football players a lot of times you'll hear them saying that first hit, when you hear the pads clicking, that's when you realize, okay, it's football. It's the same game we've always played. What's that play in basketball?

GRAHAM IKE: I think it's like Nolan just said, either the tipoff or the first four minutes that sets the tone.

NOLAN HICKMAN: First media, something like that.

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