

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - UNC Wilmington vs Texas Tech

Thursday, March 20, 2025

Wichita, Kansas, USA

Intrust Bank Arena

UNC Wilmington Seahawks

Takayo Siddle

Donovan Newby

Nolan Hodge

Bo Montgomery

Sean Moore

Media Conference

Texas Tech 82, UNC Wilmington 72

THE MODERATOR: UNC Wilmington Seahawks are with us. We're going to ask Coach to make a statement then go to questions.

TAKAYO SIDDLE: All the credit to Texas Tech. Heck of a team. A lot of respect for their program, a lot of respect for the coach. Very proud of these guys for how they fought.

I thought the game was a game of runs. I thought the last eight minutes really changed the game up. They got to the foul line. We had some breakdowns that led to layups and clean threes, but I thought our guys fought.

I'm so proud of every last one of them. We didn't come here to get a moral victory. We came here to win. We fell short, but Texas Tech had a lot to do with it. We're not going to hang our head. I'm definitely not going to hang my head. I'm so proud of these guys.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. In that last 6:11 in the first half what did you feel like was really working?

TAKAYO SIDDLE: I thought that we were able to get clean stops. Up until that point they were getting second-chance opportunities that led to threes, stick-backs. I thought we were able to get some clean stops. We were able to get



out and run a little bit. We were able to get out against a broken floor and make some plays. I thought that was the difference. I thought that's how we closed the gap.

Q. Coach, in the lead-up to this game Coach McCasland talked a lot about a time when he was coaching UNT, and you faced him. It was in the Bahamas and you won that game. What was it like to get a rematch on this sort of stage?

TAKAYO SIDDLE: It was fun. It wasn't about that. It was about these guys having an opportunity to go out there and compete. They earned the opportunity to go out there and compete.

You know, we talked about it leading up to the game. It was a physical game that we played against them in the Bahamas. It was competitive. We knew it would be that tonight, but I thought both teams came out and they had a great physical disposition. They were just the better team tonight.

Q. I just want to let you know, so Grant McCasland talked a lot about loyalty with some of your players and stuff. Can you kind of talk about the leadership that you saw throughout the course of the season as well as tonight that kind of allowed you to get back into the game throughout the course of the game?

TAKAYO SIDDLE: We've been player led over the last month, month and a half. That's the only reason we're in this position right now. These guys know that I talk to them about that a lot.

We go through ups and downs, but what they started to figure out later on in the year is that they had to figure it out on their own. You know, when you look out there in the huddles, they're commanding the huddles. When they are talking to each other coming off the court, they're connecting at half court. It's their team, and they took great ownership in it.

We wouldn't be here if we weren't player led, so very proud of them for that.

THE MODERATOR: I'm going to ask Donovan and Nolan to talk about loyalty on the team as well. I think it should



come from them. Go ahead, Donovan.

DONOVAN NEWBY: Yeah, in today's era, it's so easy to just to put your name in the transfer portal, but I feel like when you have a staff like Coach Siddle and the staff that he has brought here, they really care. It's really bigger than basketball.

When you got people in your corner that want you to do well not only on the court, but off the court, for me it's like a no-brainer to stay and be loyal to that because I feel like at the end of the day it will benefit me in the now and in the future.

NOLAN HODGE: I would say I'm big on relationships. I've always been a loyal person. I keep my circle tight. But those close to me, I would do anything for them. Never transferred high schools. Played with the same AAU team my whole life. So coming here they took a chance on me when not a lot of schools would. So for that I feel like I owe them the world. So why would I run when things get hard? I have to keep pushing through. My parents taught me better than that.

Like Donovan said, the staff will do anything for you, and they put you in positions to be great on and off the court. You just have to respect that and do the same for them.

Q. Coach, you said you came here to get a win. Other mid-majors like Drake from one-bid conferences and McNeese State got wins today. How loud are those statements made on behalf of the one-bid conferences?

TAKAYO SIDDLER: I think they made a very loud statement. With us, with those other two programs, they have a culture of winning and not having moral victories. Like I said, we showed up here. We have a great team. We have a great culture, great program, and we came here to make a deep run. We fell short. Texas Tech had a lot to do with it, but these guys know how we operate. We come to win it all.

One of my dreams is to win a national championship, and that wasn't going to stop coming into this tournament this time. We fell short. We get back here next year, it's going to be the same thing. We're going to try to make a deep run.

Q. This one is for the players. Just what can you say about the Seahawk fans that came out to support you guys in Wichita tonight?

BO MONTGOMERY: They're the greatest fan base in the nation to me. Coming from a small school and coming to

UNCW, it was a shocker just how loyal and how crazy the fans are here. It was a blessing for them to come and support us today.

SEAN MOORE: Just to pick up from what Bo said coming from a small school and coming here, they've always been great since day one. Even on my visit they showed a lot of love. We appreciate them for being here every step of the way, and I couldn't ask for anything better.

NOLAN HODGE: Yeah, we had a lot of people here supporting us tonight, but we also had a lot of people back home in Wilmington supporting us at watch parties and stuff. Support just really fuels us. You know, it makes us feel more important than we probably should feel, but it's really special.

DONOVAN NEWBY: Wilmington is a special place. It almost reminds you of a high major if you come to one of our games. Like it's sold out, standing room only. The student section going crazy. It's just a very fun environment to play in, and I'm so grateful for it.

Q. For the players, talk a little bit about the journey to get here.

DONOVAN NEWBY: The journey to get here, it was a long one. A lot of days just digging in, just trying to stack our days, keep getting better and better. It will never be like an even-keel. It's going to be ups and downs with everything, but we stuck with it. We came together, and it was a good journey. It was fun. I wouldn't have it any other way.

NOLAN HODGE: Yeah, God is good for our journey. It was hard. We started back in June, and we were competing, and we had days where -- they were terrible days. We had a lot of terrible days, but we also had a lot of good days.

I think we finished off on a good day. Like Donovan said, I wouldn't have it any other way. With this group of guys, it was a lot of fun. We genuinely all love each other, so yeah.

Q. This is for Coach. Texas Tech shot 45 threes tonight. First off, did that surprise you, and second off, did that change the game plan at all during the game?

TAKAYO SIDDLER: It did surprise me. It did surprise me. I thought they would try to be imposing in the paint, driving it, posting it. They were pretty imposing on the glass. But they shot way more threes than I thought they would 24 was clicking a little bit, but I was certainly surprised by that.



I thought it would be a different game. It didn't change anything that we were trying to do. We were prepared for any type of game. They didn't shoot a great percentage, but I thought the ones they made were timely.

We didn't make enough tonight either, so hats off to them.

Q. For the players: What does Coach Siddle mean to you, and how has he changed you as a man?

BO MONTGOMERY: He taught me how to win a lot. Haven't won much in the past, so it took a lot for me just to break through. I was a little stubborn, a little hard-headed, so it took a lot for me to break through and give everything I got for my team and actually just learn how to win games.

It's hard, but we got there.

SEAN MOORE: Personally he helped me grow as more of a vocal person because I'm a little quiet behind the scenes, but he helped me become more of a man outside of basketball since day one. In the summer he had us do the little things, like, let me see, NIL and all that, how to manage your money and stuff like that outside of basketball and keeping our faith in God as well.

Being a family, have great relationships with people as well. So just it's more than basketball when it came to him, so that's what he got a lot of respect from me. I love him.

Q. Coach, I notice some emotion on stage. Can you talk about how much this team means to you beyond the game of basketball?

TAKAYO SIDDLE: This is my fifth year coaching as a head coach. You have a ton of different personalities on each group that you have. Some teams are cliqued up. Some teams are a little closer than others, but this group right here, you could see it very quick that they were going to be extremely connected with each other.

You know, we went through so much. We had so many new guys that we brought in, and credit to the returners. You know, they rallied. They rallied behind those guys and showed them the way.

When we were going through down times, they connected in a major way, and then the last month of the season you could really start to see how close they were. The month of February is a tough month for all basketball teams at the college level because those are the dog days really. Everybody is tired. Everybody is beat up.

Some people may be ready for the season, but these guys

connected, and it really helped us get to this point. It helped our practices be better. It helped just the overall vibe and energy to be better. This is the most connected group I've had since I've been here at UNCW. This group right here, they left a legacy.

We hadn't been to the Tournament in eight years. This was the group that got us there, and it wasn't just on the court. It was how they connected off the court and how they became brothers. So this group will forever be special to me, and I'm forever indebted to them.

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