

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: Second Round - Gonzaga vs Houston

Friday, March 21, 2025

Wichita, Kansas, USA

Intrust Bank Arena

Gonzaga Bulldogs

Ben Gregg

Michael Ajayi

Ryan Nembhard

Media Conference

THE MODERATOR: Ryan Nembhard, Michael Ajayi, Ben Gregg are here with us. We'll open it up for questions.

Q. Michael, just starting off, how did it feel to experience your first March Madness minutes? What are you looking forward to in the next matchup?

MICHAEL AJAYI: Yeah, I felt great. Playing a good team like them, it was great. We started off 20-3 run. When I got in, I just provided a spark off the bench, rebounding and playing great defense for my team. Just adjusting to that, I feel like we all did great to get that W.

Then looking forward to Houston, really excited. I fell like that would be our hardest game of the season, but I think we're battle-tested for that. Can't wait to Duke it out.

Q. I'd like to talk about that point guard matchup tomorrow. Coach Sampson was really high on talking about you, Ryan. Just can you talk about what it's like going up against a team that has another good point guard? What is your mentality as a point guard?

RYAN NEMBHARD: Honestly, I respect all those guys over there. I think they're great players. I think they've got a great program, great tradition, great coaching. It's a great program.

I'm really not too worried about that one-on-one matchup. I'm really worried about the team matchup and getting a win. He's a great player and has done some great things for them during the year, but I don't think it's a matchup of me and him. I think it's two great teams, and I think it will be a full team effort to go get this win tomorrow. That's



how we're looking at it.

Q. Can I just do a follow-up with that. Coach said you have the ability to make the pass to your big men even before they realize that maybe they're open. What is that? Is that just a timing thing? Is that just the connection you have with your big men?

RYAN NEMBHARD: Yeah, I think it's first just the connection we have, for sure. Two years playing with both those guys. Pretty easy. All you have to do is get them the ball in the right spots, and they'll do the rest.

I think it's the combination of the sets that we run, our system, and the positions that the coaches put me in to execute some plays.

I've played a little while in college basketball now, so I feel like the game is really slowing down for me, and I'm able to see all my reads pretty easily.

Q. I know you are always taught to take one game at a time, but when the brackets came out, not that you ever overlooked Georgia, but in the back of your mind were you looking at that matchup with Houston being the No. 1 seed and thinking about them a little bit?

BEN GREGG: It was definitely easy to see Houston on your side of the bracket and know that if you win on Thursday, you're going to have to face them on Saturday. I mean, it really is taking one game at a time because this time of the year if you overlook anybody, your season can be over.

All our attention was focused in on Georgia and taking care of business yesterday, and thankfully we did. It's a quick turnaround now. It's going to be hard to prepare for a team like this in a day and a half, but our coaches do such a great job of breaking down film and getting our game plan ready to go.

So a little bit of time on court today, and then watching a lot of film. We're ready for this matchup and excited for it.

MICHAEL AJAYI: Yeah, to piggyback off of Ben, yeah, just taking the game game-by-game and treating each game like it's our last. You know, with Houston I feel like we want



to treat it like it's our last game against Georgia. Just playing hard, being aggressive from the jump, defending well, and rebounding and just playing 40 minutes of basketball. If we do that, I feel like we have a great shot at any team.

RYAN NEMBHARD: Yeah, I think they said it perfectly.

Q. I've been dying to ask this since yesterday. When Battle, when he jumped the table yesterday and then he jumped back, does he just show off like that?

BEN GREGG: He knows when the couple are as are on him for sure. He is just a character, man. He's one of a kind, goofball. Yeah, it was kind of a show-off thing yesterday. I think he showed off his bounce a lot this year, but a little cherry on top yesterday jumping over a table.

RYAN NEMBHARD: He's a (indiscernible), you know. That's just that. No, we love him, man. That stuff ignites us and gets us going. We love that he brings that spark and that character and that energy to our team. We need it, so we love that about him.

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