

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

Friday, March 21, 2025

Wichita, Kansas, USA

Intrust Bank Arena

## Gonzaga Bulldogs

## Mark Few

### Media Conference

THE MODERATOR: We have Head Coach Mark Few of the Bulldogs. We'll start with a statement from Coach.

MARK FEW: Well, as I shared with the team before the tournament, there's no better feeling than moving on and having another day together and just the excitement of preparing for a huge, huge challenge like the one we face during the NCAA Tournament.

You know, we'll tee it up here in practice and get over some stuff. Again, it's funny the way things turn out. I think the players were already fatigued about how much I talked about Houston during this year to them and referenced Houston and Kelvin over and over again. Then lo and behold, here we end up with a chance to play them.

Incredible amount of respect for Houston and their program. It's just amazing what they've been able to build down there and just kind of captured the whole city and the way they've done it. It's just a unique style of intensity and toughness and accountability. They do a great job of accountability, and their players understand that. You can tell there's a lot of love from the players to the head coach.

I'm so happy for Kelvin, man. He's one of the great ones in our profession and one of the fun ones. He really helped me out when I was first getting going on those old Nike trips. Kind of took me under his wing. I always remember him and Karen doing that for Marcy and I.

**Q. Since you raised it, was there anything in particular he did on those trips to get you going?**

MARK FEW: No, you're in -- there's a lot of those guys once you get one-on-one with them around them who are great. Roy Williams did the same thing for me, Jim Boeheim. You're looking up at these guys, and they treat not only me, but my wife, who is nervous on those things



too, and golfing outings and dinners and things like that.

You find out they're just great people. In many cases just like we were, and fun. We've stayed in contact. Heck, we get Christmas cards from Kelvin every year and excited to watch his family grow and expand.

Then, again, with Kelvin you got to understand now, man, nothing was given to him. He coached at Montana Tech. He started at Montana Tech. Unless you're a big fly fisherman like me, there aren't many people getting to Butte, Montana. It's on the way to a couple of the greatest rivers in the lower 48, but that's about it.

Great success there. Then he's down the road from us at Washington State and had awesome success there. I mean, he just wins everywhere he goes. He's just an amazing guy, amazing coach. It will be an honor to tee it up with him tomorrow and see what we can do.

**Q. The outside notion is that you guys kind of got hosed, underseeded, and now you have to play a 1 seed in the second round. Is there a positive, though, from your standpoint that you get to play a 1 seed this early versus maybe later?**

MARK FEW: We don't even look at it like that. Once the tournament comes out, you know, all the speculation where you are going to get seeded and all that, I think as you get older, you are, like, whatever. You're going to have to play great teams or hot teams or probably even scarier than that, probably really lucky teams if you win and advance in this thing.

One of my first teams we ever had. We were focused on 1 seed and didn't get. In fact, got seeded really low. I thought that kind of brought our whole aura down and everything. We went into the tournament with the wrong frame of mind.

At some point, like I said, you are going to play a great team, and this is a great team, and it's a great well-coached or greatly coached team. It will be a huge challenge.

I mean, I think our guys are really looking forward to it. The staff knows it's a daunting preparation in 24 hours to



try to put it all together, but a lot of things we've been doing all year hopefully will help us against them.

**Q. Mark, both you and Kelvin have extensive national team experience, but particularly you. I've noticed since 2015 you haven't paused to take a breath. I wonder how beyond patriotism and everything else that you have committed yourself that much to it?**

MARK FEW: It's been awesome. It's really been awesome. I just consider it the highest calling you can get as a college basketball coach. Then to be able to kind of top it off with a gold medal last summer was like one of the coolest things I've ever done.

It wasn't even so much the accomplishment. It was just the journey with people you did it with. I mean, everybody is probably tired of me talking about it, but just Steve and Spo and Ty and Grant Hill and Sean Ford, who is like the unsung hero. Anybody who has ever done anything with USA Basketball, Sean Ford is the most amazing person I think I've ever met in this whole basketball world with what he's done and what he's accomplished with all that.

But the players, the players were awesome, man. Incredible. Great guys. So focused. So dialed into just winning the gold and doing whatever it takes. Made for a really, really special time. So it wasn't like anything, but yeah, that's what's so great about having a family that supports you because, I mean, they were able to go around and follow us around and do some things and kind of sacrifice time at home, time at the lake, and everything to do that.

**Q. Given that you have done literally everything in the profession, if the time comes and you're done and you retire years from now, if you don't get there, because you've got two coaches tomorrow who have done everything but win the national championship, how is that going to sit?**

MARK FEW: I don't know. It's fine. I've had a great life. I'm fine (laughing). Listen, I'm as competitive as anybody, too crazy competitive. I think I referenced that last night. You get hooked on winning. You want to win everything. You want to win at everything you do.

But, you know, I think coaching is about getting your team prepared and being ready for them to play the best and each individual player achieving their highest potential. Not only individually to move them on from Gonzaga, because I think that's really important, but just also, you know, for our teams. Then you just let the chips fall where they may, you know.

We've been right there several times. We've had several teams that should have got to a Final Four and beyond that didn't, but blessed to have been able to be a part of those and get us that far.

**Q. Having known Kelvin for as long as you have, did you notice or see a change in maybe the style of how he coached when he spent the time in the NBA those six years and maybe how things evolved from when he was at Oklahoma to now?**

MARK FEW: Not really. Guys, he was a great coach at Washington State. I mean, that was back in the day when the Pac was really rolling now, and he was going against Lute and some of those teams and playing them even.

I think he just adapts to the level of players that he's able to get at each spot and coaches the heck out of them, and that's why they're so good. They do a great job evaluating. Like I said, they do a great job of finding guys that want to play their style and hold them accountable. Everybody understands it, and that's why they're so incredibly successful.

**Q. Coach, Kelvin was kind of talking about when he was at Washington State, the relationship that he had with you and Fitz and Dan and talking about trying to build programs and how young he was and thinking back to those times. Do you think back to the times when you were assistant very often?**

MARK FEW: Yeah, yeah, for sure. Especially with Dan Monson living in Spokane and coaching at Eastern now. We always bring up some stories and talk about them. I mean, I share them with our team. I think it's valuable stuff to know nothing was ever gifted to Kelvin on his journey and all this. Nothing was ever gifted to the Gonzaga program. I wish everybody in college athletics would kind of understand that.

You know, we played in that crappy little gym through an Elite Eight and two or three Sweet 16s. Then we finally built an arena. The worst locker room in America. Nobody ever just built it to us just because we complained or thought we needed it because everybody else was winning. I mean, we earned it. Same with coaching salaries. We earned it. Nothing was ever given until we did.

Recruiting budgets and travel and things like that. Kelvin has lived that same life.

Massive respect, and it's great to be able to shear those stories not only with Kelvin, but with Dan and Billy and Leon and all the guys that have kind of went through it with



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