

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - Oakland vs Kentucky

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

PPG Paints Arena

Oakland Golden Grizzlies Coach Greg Kampe

Jack Gohlke

Trey Townsend

Media Conference

Oakland - 80, Kentucky - 76

MODERATOR: We'll start with an opening statement from head coach Greg Kampe.

GREG KAMPE: For us, we played, and I got asked this a couple days ago. You don't blow anybody out, you don't -- you know, you won a championship, but your numbers, you're in the middle of the pack and everything. We just win close games. We've done it all year. We lost a very close one to Ohio State and a very close one to Illinois. We learned from those games. When we beat Xavier in a close game, we knew we were a special team, and we just have different ways to beat you, but our zone is -- man, it's good, and we defend. That's so much different for me. I've always been a coach that won games with offense, and this year it's all been defense, and great players making plays down the stretch. And we just win close games. If you would have been in our huddles the last seven, eight minutes of the game, we said if we get it -- if we're ahead with the six minutes to go in the game, we will win, and they believed that and they did, because they've done it all year. We win close games. We make plays. Trey with a fade away jump shot. DQ Cole with a shot in the corner when it looked like all hell was breaking loose. We had a 7 point lead and all of a sudden it's two and we're in a panic. Shot clock is running down and Rocket gave it up. Rocket Watts gave it up and DQ buried it. We just do those things, and that's how you win, and we won.

MODERATOR: Representing Oakland student-athletes are Trey Townsend and Jack Gohlke. Questions for student-athletes.



Q. Jack, in the midst of that performance, are you even able to appreciate what's taking place or are you just kind of too locked in to the game itself?

JACK GOHLKE: I'm always pretty much just locked into the game. Obviously I'm feeling the emotion of it, for sure. But just focused on trying to make the next shot, trying to win for my teammates. I pretty much -- I'm always mad if I miss one, even if I was 10 of 11. So I'm just always looking for the next play, like Coach Kampe always says, and just living in the moment.

Q. Jack, I think fifth player in the history of this tournament to make 10 three-pointers. You guys just beat Kentucky. Kampe just beat Cal. Things you were saying this week, but now you just did it, and I guess, Trey, after on what Jack did. And big chops for you. You guys did it.

JACK GOHLKE: Yeah, I mean, like you said, we weren't trying to talk anything disrespectful at all during the week. We were just trying to say that we believed we belonged here as well, and like you said, we proved it, and we've been a solid team all year. We've won close games, like Coach said, and we just believe in each other as teammates that we're always going to make the next play because things are going to go wrong but we know we're going to make the next one.

Q. Trey, watching Jack, I mean obviously you're playing with him, too, but at what point did you realize that, oh, he's on one tonight, this is his night to kind of light things up.

TREY TOWNSEND: I mean, going into every game I just feel like any of my teammates are capable of that and it just makes me play much more comfortable out there. I don't have to put too much stress on myself, but once Jack makes three it's, okay, he's got it going. It could be him. It could be Blake. And like Kampe said, today it was Jack. I think that's the great thing about this team, is that any given night any one of us can do that. But it's definitely a special thing watching him just three after three after three and he gets so hype out there and it just gives us all momentum and excitement to keep playing hard, so it was

great to see.

Q. Jack, you obviously had a lot of confidence throughout the entire game, but what was your mind going into the latter half of the second half?

JACK GOHLKE: Obviously, if I make that many shots in the first two-thirds of the game or whatever it is, they're going to start guarding me different, and I probably forced one or two that I shouldn't have taken. But I was trying to calm down a little bit and let my teammates carry me from that point. Obviously, like Coach said, Trey made a huge shot. DQ made a huge shot down the stretch. At that point, they're going to kind of force two guys to me and pay a ton of attention, and at that point if we're playing four on three -- I trust my teammates playing four on four, but if we're playing four on three, I know we're going to win for a fact. So I'm going to let them do that all game long.

Q. Jack, you said in your post-game interview with CBS that you guys around a Cinderella team. Can you elaborate on that?

JACK GOHLKE: Yeah, I've always had an interesting mindset about that. Obviously, we come in, we're the underdog by all measures, but you just gotta -- as a player, you can't think that way. You gotta go out there and think you have the same talent level as them. I know they have draft picks and I know I'm not going to the NBA, but I know on any given night I can compete with those guys and our team can. That's why I say we're not a Cinderella because when we play our A game, we can be the best team on the floor.

Q. Jack, you shot your last round of warm up shots and then I think your first 4 all from that same spot on the left winning. For those of us just seeing you for the first time, is it safe to say that's your spot?

JACK GOHLKE: Yeah, I definitely prefer the wings, but I'll shoot it from anywhere. You probably saw that during the game.

Q. Jack, you said you get mad when you miss one shot. Are you mad?

JACK GOHLKE: I was literally telling Trey T as we were walking in here I should have made 13.

Q. As a follow-up, you said you're not going to the NBA. What is your plan whenever this ends? What is your plan after this?

JACK GOHLKE: I mean, don't get me wrong, I would love to go to the NBA. But I want to keep playing professionally

wherever that takes me, if it somehow is the NBA, that would be great, but if not, overseas, wherever it is. I've worked too hard to stop playing after this year.

Q. Trey, you grew up around this program. You watched a lot of Oakland basketball in your life. There's only been one tournament win in NCAA. It was a playing game. How special is it to finally get a round of 64 win for this program you grew up around?

TREY TOWNSEND: It's such a great thing and to see our fanbase travel. We wanted Pittsburgh and Indianapolis because we knew they would travel if they could drive, and to see the support that was here tonight that pushed us over the edge on top of Jack carrying us on his back for most the game. Seeing them out there, my parents are here, my dad is right back there. To win with them here was a special thing for sure and we're definitely not done yet.

Q. Jack, I know we're in the immediate aftermath of this game and you've got a game Saturday and you have more desires in this tournament, but what you did here tonight, people across this country are going to remember for a very long time and you've kind of etched your name in the pantheon of the NCAA Tournament. Has any of that set in here for you in the first few moments after this game?

JACK GOHLKE: I would say not really. More so what I was thinking about is how Coach Kampe has always talked about doing this kind of for Oakland and the university. That's kind of more what set in is that we just did a big thing for the university and the basketball program and I want to continue to do, like you said.

Q. So was there any extra motivation added in just hearing all week once you got Pittsburgh, but so did Kentucky, with Tre Mitchell, even Cal being from Pittsburgh and a lot of the focus on Pittsburgh natives coming back, a wild Kentucky contingent here? It almost felt like the only place in the country outside Kentucky might have been Pittsburgh not rooting for the Cinderella because of the Pittsburgh natives. Did you guys feel any of that?

TREY TOWNSEND: For me, I didn't know how many people from their program were from Pittsburgh area. I just saw that and knew our fanbase was going to travel. They've been great, especially this latter half of the season and, like I said earlier, just having them here I knew we were going to be able to do it and we didn't really care, honestly, who we were playing but playing a school like Kentucky in March Madness is such a crazy thing but I just gotta shout out to our fans and everyone that traveled out.

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It was so special to see them there.

Q. Jack, what's it feel like knowing that tomorrow morning you're going to wake up and you're going to be a celebrity?

JACK GOHLKE: (Laughs). That's funny. I don't care too much about that. I don't know. I want to be a bigger celebrity after our team wins the next game. That's really all I'm thinking about is tomorrow, our prep for either NC State or Texas Tech and we're going to go out there and we're going to win again.

Q. Kind of a similar question, have you had a chance to even check your phone yet? No, you haven't been able to see, like, anything on social media or how many texts you got or anything?

JACK GOHLKE: I'm a phone totally off a couple hours before the game and don't look at it for a while after, just soak in the moment because that's what I'm here to do with my teammates and my coaches. So I'll probably check it in a couple hours. I guess, yeah, I probably won't respond to a lot of the messages until tomorrow or maybe even next week.

Q. Jack, when you were a scrawny freshmen at Hillsdale, did moments like this ever -- I don't know, when you were in the gym, just working out, trying to get bigger and better and stronger, did something like this even -- was it even a fantasy?

JACK GOHLKE: Once I got to Hillsdale, the Division II level, I was very focused on just being the best Hillsdale player I could be because I didn't know I was going to have extra eligibility or anything like that. So when I was in the gym, I was focused on big moments in the Division II tournament. And luckily I was able to do that with my teammates at Hillsdale. Shout out to them. And then I was lucky enough to get an extra year and join a terrific program with Trey T and Coach Kampe here. Obviously, as a kid, that's always a dream, but once I started college, it wasn't as much. But I'm happy it's materializing right now.

MODERATOR: Thank you, student-athletes. Questions for Coach Kampe.

Q. Greg, did you speak this into existence yesterday with the talk about Hoosiers and Jimmy Chitwood?

GREG KAMPE: That's my boy right there. Jimmy. Jimmy Gohlke. No, I just -- I got a lot of crap about what I said, and I was shocked by that. People just couldn't believe that I said I wanted Kentucky. And they took it all wrong. I

mean it was -- we had a chance to play on Primetime, and I knew my team's good, and I knew that they deserved the chance to not play in somewhere out where nobody's paying attention and, oh, that team won and showed the highlights. I wanted them to be Primetime, and I knew they would -- there was never a doubt in my mind that this wasn't going to be a game. There was doubt that we would win, but there was never a doubt that this would be a game because I've been with this team since June and I know who they are.

I mean, did anybody think that was lucky? I mean, that's the worst we've shot from the free throw line all year, and we missed point blank shots early, but Gohlke put us on our back. And then we did -- our defense carried. Defense travels, it carried us. Right?

You know, I brought that up, the only reason I brought that up, honestly, is because just before I came into the press conference that day, somebody tweeted it at me. And so I knew that. I'm not that big of a nerd. All right. I just knew it because I had just read it and it seemed the right thing to say. But honestly, the Kentucky fans that thought I was -- that was the biggest compliment I could give you, that you're the blue blood, the blue blood, that your fanbase is the best, that you have the best coach and all that kind of stuff. That was just a compliment. It didn't mean anything but that.

Q. Greg, for these guys, this is a lifelong accomplishment. But you've been coaching twice as long as they've been alive.

GREG KAMPE: Of course, we gotta go there. Yeah. Okay.

Q. It's a good thing. And you've been -- I guess we're going to keep going down that road. You were talking about the other day when you walk into the Pitt you get chills about the close losses and then the bad draw against Texas a dozen years or so. So many times you've almost had this moment. When you are now sitting on the other side of this moment, what is rushing through you?

GREG KAMPE: Longevity. You stay around long enough you're going to get lucky, right? I got lucky to have this group of kids. My staff recruited them. They're the greatest group of kids. I mean, they're just unbelievable. You heard these two guys. I mean, unbelievable kids, and that's why we win.

But I did say this in the press conference, I forget who asked me, but would this be the greatest win and I said it would be for Oakland but not for me because of the



Michigan stuff. I don't know if you heard that or not. But I lied. This is the greatest win that I've ever been a part of. As soon as that horn went off, I changed my mind immediately. This, on Primetime, against the great coach, the great program and all that. And just the way we played. I'm going to say it again. We led the whole game, right? And every time they got the lead we came right back. If we were pretenders, we would have folded, and that's what Jack meant by that Cinderella thing. We don't look at ourselves that way. We're not pretenders. We believe that we belong here. Trey Townsend physically in the second half went to work. Right? And I mean, we shot five free throws in the first half and they had 14. Yet when the game was over we made more free throws than they do because that's how we play, physical. And we belong. I agree with Jack. We don't want that Cinderella slipper. We want to be known as when we're playing on Saturday, whoever we're playing, we want the respect that this is a good basketball team.

Q. Coach, over the years you've had a lot of good teams, a lot of good players. What does this win mean for this program that a lot of people have to remind it's in Michigan and not California?

GREG KAMPE: Yeah. I wanted to say something, but I won't. I'll be classy.

I think a few years ago, Michigan State was number one in the country, and we had a chance. The ball rolled around the rim, it didn't go in and we lost in overtime. That, I've said many times, I have had nightmares about that game, and if that ball had gone in, it would have changed everything for Oakland basketball because we would have beaten the number one team in the country on national TV. Would have changed the amount of money that came in, maybe I'd have a practice facility, you know, all that kind of stuff.

This changed everything tonight. There's nobody in the country that doesn't know what Oakland basketball is. And I'm really proud of that. I'm really proud of our school. I've spent a lifetime there. When I got there we were 9,000 students with 1500 on campus. We're 20,000 now. With 5,000 on campus. We're thriving. We have a great president. I have a great athletic director. Everything is in place for this program to take off, and maybe this is the ignition for it. So yeah, it means the world.

For me, a lifer there, you know, it's just really special.

Q. Coach, you said yesterday that this win would change the lives of the guys on your team, and obviously we've seen on social media just how much exposure you've gotten and people, like all kinds of

people have just said how impressive Jack played and just how impressive your team played. What does that mean to you that you guys are getting that recognition from these big time people of how talented you say you know your team has been all along?

GREG KAMPE: First of all, I think it's because of the way we play. I think we handled the win, too. D.Q. got a little carried away with about 14 seconds to go or something, and he got it. I punched him right in the stomach, you know. Not physically. Verbally.

But they saw the great kids and they saw really, really good basketball. But what I meant by that it would change their lives, in the lure of Oakland basketball, I mean they're going to be back for a 10-year anniversary, a 20-year anniversary, a 30-year anniversary. They're now the team. Jack Gohlke, as you just said, somebody said you're a celebrity, and that's what we've talked about. The whole thing down the stretch has been, once we knew we had won a ring, the whole banter in the locker room has been what's it going to say on that ring. Right? What's it going to say on that ring, just Horizon League Champ? NCAA? Sweet 16? Final Four? I've put that thought in their mind, and they've really battled for it, and they understand that their life got changed tonight, but it could get changed a hell of a lot more if we keep this thing going.

MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach. Congratulations.

GREG KAMPE: Can I say one more thing?

MODERATOR: Absolutely.

GREG KAMPE: I'm having a hard time and when Cal comes in here, you know, that was a hard thing for me. And he was unbelievably gracious after the game. Unbelievably gracious. Because it has to be a hard thing for him, too. And I feel bad because I didn't know what to say to him. I just stared at him. But what he said to me, he was unbelievably gracious, and I want you to remember that's a very good man. Thank you.

Q. What did he say to you?

GREG KAMPE: I'm not sure I even remember, because I was -- honestly, I didn't know what to say.

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