

# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: Second Round - Oakland vs NC State

Friday, March 22, 2024

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

PPG Paints Arena

## Oakland Golden Grizzlies

**Jack Gohlke**

**Trey Townsend**

**DQ Cole**

**Greg Kampe**

Media Conference



my time at Hillsdale. It was amazing, five amazing years. Obviously different than this. This is really awesome, too. But I made some tremendous relationships with the coaches and players, some of my best friends. So I can't say enough good things about them.

So I didn't really want to leave, but they don't have graduate school programs for business-related stuff. And I knew I wanted to do that in my future, and I knew I wanted to keep playing basketball and challenge myself at the next level. So it made too much sense not to try to jump up to Division I here, and everything has worked out pretty well so far.

MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

**Q. Jack, I think you said last night that you probably weren't going to check your phone, you turn it off multiple hours before the game. But what have the last 20 or so hours been like for you? How do you stay locked in with all the March Madness happening?**

JACK GOHLKE: Yeah, it's definitely been crazy. When I finally did open my phone, it was overwhelming, to say the least, which I definitely appreciate all the support of all the people sending me messages and things like that. It means a lot. But to be honest, I'm kind of putting it all off until Sunday. I really want to win this next game and I know my guys do as well. So I just gotta put it away and forget about my phone for the next 48 hours and then we'll take care of it.

**Q. I did some calling around about you this morning. I talked to Coach Tharp. I talked to Kevin. How difficult was the decision to leave? They said you had exhausted your options academically and they said you came to them almost asking for permission in a way to leave. How difficult was it and what are you studying this year?**

JACK GOHLKE: Yeah. So I got my accounting undergrad at Hillsdale and I'm doing my Master's of Business right now. So I'll be done with that this summer. And it was really tough. They're right. I was kind of asking for their permission even though they were very gracious and they weren't going to say no or anything like that. But I loved

**Q. Jack, I'm not sure what the last six months maybe looked like, but have you had any random or weird NIL offers in the last 12 hours or so and what did those look like?**

JACK GOHLKE: To be honest, I've definitely gotten a lot of messages, but I haven't -- I just haven't been able to comb through them. Yeah, I want to make money. I want to go through them. But I care more about winning the next game. So like I said, hopefully those opportunities will still be there on Sunday, and I can figure that out, but, to be honest, for now I've only looked at like one or two things.

**Q. Kind of along those lines, what has the most surreal moment been since the game ended? I know you were The McAfee Show this morning. But of all those things, what jumps out as, wow, I can't believe this is happening?**

JACK GOHLKE: It was probably being on SVP late night. That was really cool, going on with Coach Kampe. And I got back to the hotel. It was pretty late, and I turned on the TV and I was like, oh, I guess I'll check ESPN right now and I saw myself on Scott Van Pelt. That was pretty cool. It's a show I feel like a lot of people grew up watching and seeing him talk about his sports takes. So that was something that was really cool.

**Q. Greg Kampe called the play of the game the Rocket Watts' pass to you, DQ. I'm just curious, both of you, what you thought of that play. He could have gone to**



**the lane, taken a shot himself. He's taken on a different role this year. What do you make of what he means to this team and that play in particular? What does that show about him?**

DQ COLE: Definitely, Rocket's taken everything in since the beginning of the year. No matter what's been thrown at him. He's been ready for whatever task coach throws at him, if that's scoring, if that's just coming in, getting a game-winning stop, getting a game-winning rebound, Rocket hasn't budged. He's been a great teammate, a great player all year for us, so we expected that out of him and I was just deep corner. Rob reached, and Rocket made the right play. And he believed in me. Everybody on the bench believed in me. All the guys believed in me. I knew I could knock it down. So shout out to Rocket for making that pass with me.

JACK GOHLKE: I just want to add to that. Rocket is my roommate this year so we've been through a lot together and just can't say enough good things about him. Like you said, he's had a windy road as have a lot of us in our basketball careers on this team. But he shows up every day to work. He does what's asked of him and he always makes the right play. So he's just another tremendous part of our team.

**Q. Jack, the official attendance for Hillsdale's regional final last year was 117 and there were 18,000 people here watching you last night. As a competitor, was there any difference as a basketball player and did you sort of realize and embrace maybe the immensity of the stage?**

JACK GOHLKE: It's kind of one of those things like once you're out there on the court, you don't -- me personally, I don't really notice what's going on around me, and I think that's important as players. I don't think any of us really notice too much about what's going on, but I will say that yesterday was the first time ever in my career that, especially in the first half towards the end, I noticed like if I caught the ball, like I could just hear the crowd like kind of collect their breath. And that -- I had never noticed that on the court, anything like that. Just hearing that big of a crowd, that type of thing go on, that was kind of cool, but also just a surreal experience of everyone's kind of on the edge of their seat whenever I touched the ball.

**Q. I can tell based on the way you've answered most of these questions that you haven't thought about this yet, but I don't know where basketball ends up taking you in the future, either of you, but have you thought about at all what maybe the future will look like when you look back, that you had these moments and you knocked off Kentucky and made people start**

**questioning a lot of things about Kentucky and it was you guys that did all that?**

JACK GOHLKE: We've talked about this with Coach Kampe. I think when I think about it right now, the thing that I'm most excited about -- and this is because of my time at Hillsdale. I go back to Hillsdale once or twice and I'm excited to see my guys. I can't wait to come back and see all these guys in five, ten years, however many years it is and talk about these memories we're making right now. And that's why we want to keep making more of them, because we know we're going to get together down the road and it's going to be such a fun experience to reminisce.

DQ COLE: Ever since we went to Italy, it's just been love. It's like, I would say love at first sight. It was like we went to Italy and it was just -- we hit it off from there. Everybody on the team loved each other, and we got this saying between the players, it's like we'll die for each other. So it's like anything, whether it's defensive slides, free throw at the end of practice, we may have to run sprints, whatever it is, we're all going hard and we're all willing to die for each other. And we take that on the court, and it shows.

**Q. Jack, I was wondering, I looked at the stats this morning, I was wondering, is it written in your scholarship you're not allowed to shoot two pointers, only threes?**

JACK GOHLKE: No, it's not in my scholarship. Coach Kampe might tell me to stay out of the paint if there's some big guys down there. I've said it a couple times but I told my teammates I used to shoot twos in the past but they don't believe me. I don't know how I'm going to change that. I'm just playing my role, man. Coach does a great job of putting us in position to succeed and if I play my role, then I know my guys are going to play theirs.

**Q. Obviously Jack made a ton of threes. You made the three that really put the game away, but DQ, no one is going to talk about you had eight rebounds yesterday. Rebounding from the guard spot, it's something that you've done all season long for this Oakland team against a huge back court with Kentucky. Where does that dog in you come from, because rebounding is a want-to proposition?**

DQ COLE: Honestly, it's just my natural instinct. Ever since I was as kid, I was the smallest, most unathletic. So I had to make a way to get rebounds. I always wanted the ball. I knew I had to rebound. I knew I had the skill when I was younger. I didn't have the work ethic. I didn't know what it took. And just working my way up, I learned that if I can affect the game in any way, that it'll help our team out.

So ever since middle school I can say I've just been a great rebounder. I just -- ball tracker, gotta get every rebound, any rebounder, a ball tracker. Any rebound that I can get, I gotta get it, especially in big situations like this, March Madness, we need those rebounds to get good wins against good teams.

**Q. Quick followup to that. How does this feel to you being from Pontiac, you can practically walk to Oakland's campus from Pontiac. How does it feel for you to be doing this on this stage?**

DQ COLE: It's crazy. It's a dream come true. Every day I'm learning new stuff every day. I'm seeing stuff I've never seen before. Jack Gohlke, I've never seen that before ever in my life. I've shot with good shooters but this is by far the greatest shooter I've ever shot with and it's just been surreal, just taking in every moment I can and just going with the flow, just enjoying it.

**Q. DQ, just kind of being around this guy all season long, what is it sort of like for you and the guys in the locker room now that he's kind of becoming this overnight celebrity from his performance last night?**

DQ COLE: It's crazy. Me and some of the guys were up late last night. We were on his Instagram and we were just watching how many followers he just -- people just following. He had Antonio Brown and famous people just -- they've just, in disbelief. It was just amazing to see. But like I said, we all knew this all along. We've been believing in him since Italy. We know he can shoot the ball. We know that he can make any shot out there on the court. So we believe in him. He believes in us, and we're going to continue to believe in him and he's going to continue to believe in us.

**Q. Jack, I know you're from Pewaukee. Do you know the Watt family? I know it's a decently small area, and what are the odds that the Watt family and you're from there? Do you guys have any kind of relationship?**

JACK GOHLKE: The closest I have is like my mentor growing up, he's best friends with JJ Watt. I've met him once or twice but I wouldn't say he really knows who I am or I really know who he is. He's obviously a legend from Pewaukee and Wisconsin in general. It's pretty cool to see a shout out from him.

**Q. And DQ, a couple days ago, Kampe was saying that if you guys won the first game, it would change your lives, it would change his life, Oakland's life. We kind of know how it's starting to change Jack's. How, for you, are you kind of wrapping your mind around a life-changing win like that?**

DQ COLE: I'm still kind of -- my adrenaline is still kind of pumping. I mean, it was crazy, just to be out there, even being on the bench. Like everybody on the bench was in shock. It was something we knew we could do. It wasn't like we just -- we got lucky or anything like that. I would say we prepared for it. We all believed in each other, and we went out there and we got the job done. But for me I would say it's just coming from JUCO, it's been a long road. So it just felt good to maybe get the biggest win of my life. Hopefully I can get more to come.

**Q. This one's kind of for both of you. Life in the Mid Major, you guys don't win that conference tournament, you're not here right now and all of this isn't happening. How are you guys going to handle and go about your business in that first four months to even get to this point where the second you lose it's just done?**

JACK GOHLKE: It's all about just preparation, and Coach Kampe just preached, especially during the regular season, it's just stacking hurdles. We had 20 regular season hurdles in the Horizon league and he just said we had to stack one more than the next team, and we got 15. I think the next team had 14 or 13. So we got that one seed and that helped us out in the conference tournament and once we got to the conference tournament it's all about seize the moment like we're doing here and give ourselves the opportunity to come here and make history. So it was just the preparation of the whole year I would say.

DQ COLE: Yeah, definitely. I just think ever since we came in, like I said, our first meeting it's just been everybody's all in. Nobody's not bought into the system that Coach Kampe has, Coach Bobby, Coach Cov, Coach Smitty. They all put a great game plan together every day and we execute. We go out there, we lock in and we make sure that we're ready for what's thrown at us because we see a lot of different things out there, and people get confused with our defense. So we have to be able to stay on top and contain.

**Q. Jack, you hit the fifth three last night, you stick your tongue out. You hit the sixth three. You do the Jordan shrug. You get the last rebound and you're screaming and then you come in here and you're like, oh, hey, how's it going. Is there a Jekyll and Hyde thing? What happens when you get on the floor that maybe totally runs in contrast to what it seems like you are off the court?**

JACK GOHLKE: I think that's good way to describe it. I've never thought of it that way, but Jekyll and Hyde is definitely a good way to put it. I try to just be as humble as

I can off the court and all this attention it's really cool, don't get me wrong, but it's definitely weird for me. Like we all know, coming from Division II, I haven't seen anything like this before. But once I step on the floor it's just a whole different mentality of I'm just trying to go out there and just make the opponent feel my presence, to be honest. And I didn't used to honestly be that emotional of a player on the court, but I guess I've just developed that in the last couple of years just because of my passion for the game and how much I love being out there with my teammates. I'm just trying to soak it all in, and I'm sure all of you know I'm pretty old and a seasoned veteran in college basketball. So I know I don't have a ton of time left for this specific stage. I obviously want to play pro. But just trying to take advantage of all these moments, man, and appreciate it really.

**Q. Obviously NC State, they're kind of on a magic carpet ride like you guys are. I just would like from both of you, if you don't mind, your thoughts on the Wolfpack, what you've seen over the last 24 hours?**

DQ COLE: They're a pretty good team. They got some big solid guys inside. The guard plays pretty decent. But I know our coaching staff will put together a good game plan to stop or at least limit most of their good players and try to get them to miss some shots, and we're going to hope we keep hitting shots and moving up.

JACK GOHLKE: Yeah, we watched our film today, and I know us as players will watch more film tonight. But I mean, just seeing Burns, how much of a force he is, we obviously gotta limit his touches, especially deep in the paint because he's going to kill us if he catches the ball down there. And Horne is a terrific player, too. So we gotta -- we still need to study up a little bit more on kind of tendencies and things like that. But we've put in our game plan with our zone. We know kind of what spots on the floor we need to attack when they have the ball and kind of what their weak spots are. So it's just going to come down to executing the game plan. I think whichever team does that best is going to come out victorious.

**Q. Guys, could you just talk about what a Sweet 16 appearance would mean for you guys as players, Kampe as coach and the program in general?**

DQ COLE: Yeah, definitely. I think it'll be crazy, not only for our basketball careers, but for obviously for Coach Kampe's career. And then I think we all deserve it. Coach Kampe believes in us. He's been believing in us. And we all believe we deserve it. Like Jack said yesterday, if we win, it won't be a surprise to us because we've prepared for this ever since our nonconference schedule way back in November, October. So, yeah, it'll be a great feeling.

JACK GOHLKE: Yeah, we're super excited for the opportunity, and like DQ said, us as players, we want to go out and get it for the guy next to us and for Coach Kampe, because we know how much time and effort he's put into Oakland University. And he deserves it more than anyone. But also just the school and the amount of support we've gotten as a team this year has been really cool to see, and a lot of us like DQ coming from JUCO, me from Division II, other guys from JUCO, things like that. We didn't have that type of stuff necessarily at our other schools. So getting that kind of love and hoping we can reciprocate it with something special like a trip to the Sweet 16, it would be really awesome.

MODERATOR: Questions for Coach Kampe.

**Q. Coach, last night after the game Jack kind of said, he joked and said something along the lines of I took some threes maybe I shouldn't have and you just kind of laughed and shook your head. Do you disagree with that statement, and also kind of what is it as a coach that lets you let a player like that play with that kind of freedom to shoot as often as he does?**

GREG KAMPE: 100 percent disagree with it. He hasn't taken a bad shot of his 380 that he's taken and what makes a coach do that is probably stupidity. I've always, on my best teams over the Division I years -- in the Division II days that's all we had was shooters. In the Division I days, you know, you can't win that way. So we always wanted to have two, and one had to be an unconscious shooter. And the reason they had to be an unconscious shooter is because my best players are always our post players. Score at the basket type guys. So how do you keep those guys from being doubled? You have a guy out there that's unconscious that will shoot anything. By the end of that game Kentucky had three guys on him and all of a sudden Trey Townsend goes from four points at halftime to 17, and if he had made his free throws like he normally -- I mean, he's an 80 percent free throw shooter that went four for nine. So he would have had over 20 points and that just opens it up and as much as I love the three, our offense's philosophy is the three is third. The first is layups, the second is free throws and the third is threes. We don't want to take twos. We want to take layups, free throws and threes. So to do that, if I can have a guy that's an unconscious guy that people think he's nuts. And they think Gohlke is that. They think he'll shoot any shot any way and he does. And he makes them. He can go miss four in a row and I've seen him do that, and I've seen him make four in a row. So yes I want him shooting it every time. He can't take a bad shot. Now, have I said to him, did we really need that one? Yeah. But he knows, if he doesn't take one, I'm going to scream at

him.

**Q. Greg, you have been doing this a long time, but in the last 18 hours --**

GREG KAMPE: Why do we have to keep bringing all that up? 40 years.

**Q. 40 years. In the last 20, 18 hours have you experienced anything that you've never experienced in your career before, any kind of surreal moments, pinch-me moments in the last little bit?**

GREG KAMPE: The rush of media kind of like this. I mean this is different because it's Kentucky, on the biggest stage. But our first trip to the NCAA Tournament in 2005, we went into the league tournament as the 7 seed, maybe one of the worst seasons I've ever coached. We were 9 and 17 or something like that and we went and we won our conference tournament, we're going to the NCAA Tournament for the first time and when the airplane landed to get back to Detroit, in those days you could get by, the media could go anywhere. There was no TSA. And we get off the plane and we're walking and there's this barricade and all these cameras and all these people, and I said to my assistant, oh, my God, what happened at the airport? And it was all for us. And I was like, we were dumbfounded by it. I've never been in anything like that. And as an assistant I'd been to the Sweet 16 with Toledo. So I never had seen anything like that.

This is parallel to that. I have not been asleep yet. I have not been to bed and I have not been -- I've not stopped talking. I like to talk, I talk a lot, but it's getting ridiculous. Every 15 minutes I've got a Zoom or something. But it's really cool and it's great for Oakland. This is unbelievable for our university, the amount of publicity and because our kids are such great kids it's positive publicity.

**Q. Rocket Watts, you said, that pass was the play of the game to DQ Cole in the corner. I'm just curious, can you kind of explain a little bit about what he means to this team and where he's come from given that this kid started out as a big-time prospect at Michigan State and he ended up at Oakland taking on a completely different role? What does he mean to this team and can you take us through that specific play?**

GREG KAMPE: That's a hell of a question because we don't win last night without him. He didn't play in the conference tournament because of injury. He's been beset with injuries in his two years at Oakland. I know he's disappointed in that, the trajectory of his career, looked like an NBA one and done and all that kind of stuff. And now he's a really important role player. But he could be an

important role player on a team that does something special. So maybe the trajectory isn't as bad as he thinks. And he's accepted it, and he's an unbelievable teammate. The players love him. I heard Gohlke at a press conference talking, not here, maybe it was the league tournament or somewhere that he was talking -- you know what, it was senior night. And he was telling everybody how he was telling all his people at Hillsdale that he's rooming with Rocket Watts and everybody thought that was unbelievable, you're rooming with Rocket Watts. So he's just a great kid that everybody loves, and last night was a special moment for him. I mean he got to the rim and made some big baskets for us when we were struggling, and then a selfish player that thinks they're really, really good and should shine in the moment would have shot a falling down shot there and instead he found DQ in the corner for maybe the biggest basket in Oakland history.

**Q. You say you haven't slept yet. I'm just checking if that's literally or figuratively. And also, when you have all this going on, how do you sort of set the tone that, I guess, 27 hours from now -- because you said yesterday that wasn't a fluke. This isn't just some Cinderella that popped off one day. You guys want to make a run. So how do you dial back in with all this going on?**

GREG KAMPE: Well, it's easy, because of how important it is, and we know what's going on. I mean, yeah, I haven't been to bed. I haven't slept. I got a job. This is -- I mean this is the most important time of the year in this job, and I'm lucky that -- what are there 32 teams left in the country doing it? And there's 360 coaches. So 300 coaches aren't doing it. So I better do it and I better do it well. I owe my players that.

I will say this, though. Between 2 and 4 in the morning I spent those two hours returning text messages because they can't return them at that time. You have 1300 text messages and you do it in the middle of the afternoon, then they answer, then you've gotta put a thumbs up or a heart on it. And now it becomes 2600 text messages. So I did that at 3 in the morning so that those people wouldn't -- I didn't want to keep answering text messages. And I got it down from 1300, I got it down to about 195. Now it's back up to 495. So I gotta -- tonight I'll be up at 2:00 in the morning doing the rest of them.

**Q. In this day and age, Coach, how does a guy stay at one school for 40 years?**

GREG KAMPE: Stupidity, a great athletic director, a president, people that put up with you. Nobody else wants you. I mean, there is a lot of answers to that. Five became

ten, ten became 20 and now it's 40 and everybody brings it up. I'm trying to low key that. I'm trying to tell people I started -- I got the job when I was 18. I don't know, man. I know this. I have a unique situation, a unique love for a university that's accepted me. I grew up with the university. We went from 9,000 students when I got there to 20. We went from a thousand on campus to almost 5,000 on campus. There's been a crane on our campus every year but the COVID year that I've been there. It's grown. It's an unbelievable campus, an unbelievable university. And it's getting the due that it needs now.

Our university website crashed last night. It crashed. I mean, that's what this does. We also sold \$8,000 worth of t-shirts to Louisville last night. Think about that. Honest to God. You know, they buy the t-shirts and they put the credit card in and Louisville, Louisville, Louisville. It wasn't the same person. So I don't know. Next year when Louisville and Kentucky play, I don't know if everybody is going to show up in an Oakland shirt or what. I have no idea. But it's crazy to think about what something like this does.

**Q. I know you haven't had a lot of time, but what have you seen studying NC State, and what threats I guess, do they pose?**

GREG KAMPE: I've looked at every possession this season that they've played against zone. So not a lot of teams play zone. So that's good. Otherwise I'd be up three nights, I guess. It's going to be a completely different game plan than we had against Kentucky. At Kentucky we wanted them to catch the ball at 10 or 12 feet. We wanted them shooting from 10 or 12 feet. We didn't want them shooting threes. We did a great job of that until the last two or three minutes. Tomorrow night we can't let that -- the big dude get in there and catch the ball at 10 or 12 feet, otherwise I might have three guys with broken bodies before the game is over. So the game plan is going to be completely different. And the great thing about our zone is there's only so much you can do against a zone. If you're going to play Oakland, we've got 77 set plays. How many of those are you going to prepare for in one day? Against when you play zone, they can only do a few things, and we've seen it all. So we think we know what they're going to do. It's more of a personnel scout? All right, what does this guy do? We can't give him this. This guy only guys left. If he goes right, he's pulling up. If he goes left, he's going all the way. All those things, my staff watched all their games. I only cared about the zone. They're putting that together, you know, the personnel. And I got an unbelievable staff that does a great job. I think we're very well prepared, and I think we'll be able to guard them. It's going to come down to what team makes shots and who makes the plays when it counts.

**Q. You said yesterday you talked a lot -- or before yesterday you talked a lot about slowing the game down against Kentucky. There were points in the game where it looked like you wanted to run on the court and grab your players to slow them down yourself. Does that change tomorrow? Do you expect a more fast-paced game? Do you expect to let them go?**

GREG KAMPE: It's going to be a complete opposite game plan and the reason is they're playing their seventh game in 11 days. Who does that? I mean the pros don't even do that. Right? But because they're in a league with 400 teams they had to win five games to win their league championship. So they had to play five games in five days and turn around three days later and play, and two days after that play again. So what have we got -- if we're smart we're going to play fast, right? We want to make them run. That big dude is big! Right? And they got a lot of big dudes. We want to make them run. And at some point they're human, aren't they? I mean at some point it's gotta kick in, 7 games in 11 days. So if we can keep the pressure up and we get them to the point that their legs are tired, it's hard to make jump shots when your legs are tired, and to beat a zone you gotta make jump shots.

**Q. Coach, would you be in favor of a video review component at the end of games in terms of fouls and stuff like that?**

GREG KAMPE: Say that again.

**Q. Would you be -- based on what happened at the end of the Kansas game last night. I don't know if you saw it. I know you were busy. Would you be -- there was a call at the rim that went against Sanford. Would you be interested in some sort of NBA-type model where you're able to challenge a call or calls in certain situations are up for review?**

GREG KAMPE: If I were them, I would say yes, obviously. If it happened to me, I would say yes. But, you know, man, we got way too many reviews as it is. I mean, it's almost a coaching strategy to ask for things so that you can get rest or you don't waste a timeout so you can get your guys together, and I'd hate to see the game even slow down more. I think one of the problems with our game is the last three minutes takes so long. As a coach I want it to take that long, but as a fan, I don't think I would.

So to answer your question, I would say no. I'd probably not be in favor of it. But I feel bad -- I'm a Detroit Tiger fan, right? And Armando Galarraga, whatever his name was, lost his perfect game because Jim Joyce made a bad call

at first that today it would have been a perfect game. And Jim Joyce, the umpire said it before he died, the worst thing that ever happened to him in his career. Well, that referee probably feels the same way last night, right? So I mean, it's the human side of our sport, and I don't want to see that changed.

MODERATOR: Coach, I gotta ask about your hat. Is there any significance with that? Is it your favorite hat.

GREG KAMPE: It's a brand called Live Lucky, and God, I need to live lucky right now, right? So I wear these Live Lucky hats hoping it rubs off. Your brain is right there. So maybe it sneaks in a little bit. No, that's not Notre Dame, if that's what you're thinking about. I had somebody ask me, is that Notre Dame, and I said, who? Who?

MODERATOR: Thanks, Coach. Appreciate it.

GREG KAMPE: Thanks, everyone.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports