

# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - VCU vs BYU

Wednesday, March 19, 2025

Denver, Colorado, USA

Ball Arena

**VCU Rams**

**Joe Bamisile**

**Max Shulga**

**Jack Clark**

**Zeb Jackson**

Media Conference

**Q. Guys, is the altitude any kind of an adjustment for you? You've played in it a couple times this season. Anything you do different in practice wise to prepare for the game tomorrow?**

ZEB JACKSON: We definitely got to get up-and-down when we practice just to get a feel for things. But I think we played in New Mexico which was a pretty high altitude, and I feel like it's definitely a little different, New Mexico felt different the first day there. It feels good being able to get adjusted a couple days before.

**Q. Max, you've obviously played against BYU; pretty familiar with them from your time at Utah State. What are you telling your teammates about the Cougars?**

MAX SHULGA: They obviously switched the whole coaching staff from last time I played them, and the team looks very different from the last time I played them, too. We've just got to treat them like a brand new team. We know that they shoot a lot of threes, crash, stuff like that, throw extra passes.

Yeah, we're just treating them like a brand new team. I don't think there's any similarities from the time when I played them last to this year.

**Q. For Max, this can be an inspiring event. So many people watch it. What does it mean for you to represent your home land of Ukraine in a tough time and maybe be an inspiration for people?**



MAX SHULGA: It means a lot. I don't think -- there's not many -- or not in my memory, not many people from Ukraine or players from Ukraine that really get to play in March Madness like that.

It's definitely -- yeah, I haven't really thought about it like that. I don't really think too much into stuff like that.

But if I can serve as an inspiration to young kids back home in Ukraine, then yeah, that's something that I'm definitely willing to do and put on for my country.

**Q. Do y'all have any childhood memories of the NCAA Tournament, games that you remember that stand out to you that kind of inspired you to follow college basketball at a young age?**

JACK CLARK: I wouldn't say I have like a specific moment or anything, but I think it's just, like, opening social media, look on TV, seeing ESPN, just watching all the upsets, the crazy upsets.

You'll see like a 16-1 upset, just an insane upset buzzer beater game. Kind of like last night was a buzzer beater, Alabama State. Just those games, to see them on TV and now we're a part of that. It's just something unreal.

**Q. Jack, you just mentioned 16-1 upset. You guys have a coach who once pulled that off. For any of you, obviously you're not a massive under seed. But being the under seed, does it help confidence at all to know that you guys are led by a man who pulled off the first 16-1 upset in tournament history?**

JACK CLARK: You know, it gives us a lot of confidence, not only for us but the coaching staff, as well, knowing that, like you said, 16-1 upset, and he was a part of that. That gives us a lot of confidence to go in, hey, we're an 11 seed playing a 6 seed, but for us it's like an evenly matched game.

Going in there with a lot of confidence will not only help us for this game but in the long run, as well.

**Q. Is it a bit of a psychological advantage to be a conference champion and to have that momentum of just having cut down the nets on Sunday and won a**



**title? Not every team in this tournament won their last game. Can that help you tomorrow a little bit?**

MAX SHULGA: I would say yeah just because we've played -- even though we played three games in three days, it is, like you said, momentum gaining experience.

But things really move so quickly. You don't even really realize or think about -- that was in the moment we celebrated, but then we just moved on.

Next day we had film and then next day we left, and now we're here again. It's moving so quick, it's not even really time to think the deepness of it. Now we have another game to play that we're trying to win.

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