

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - Xavier vs Illinois

Thursday, March 20, 2025

Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA

Fiserv Forum

Xavier Musketeers

Dailyn Swain

Dayvion McKnight

Zach Freemantle

Marcus Foster

Ryan Conwell

Media Conference

THE MODERATOR: Joined by Xavier student-athletes, Dayvion McKnight, Ryan Conwell, Dailyn Swain, Marcus Foster, and Zach Freemantle. Xavier came from 13 down to beat Texas in Dayton. Open to questions.

Let me start. I'll ask all of you, and you can go down the line, please. Just such a quick turnaround from the great comeback against Texas to be in here and now getting ready for the next game. What's that like?

RYAN CONWELL: I would say it's a blessing to be able to advance in the tournament and to be able to play another game. We're all thankful for it.

MARCUS FOSTER: Yeah, I'm excited just to play another game, get to spend more time with my brothers and the coaching staff. Like RC said, it's a blessing to be able to play here while there's other teams at home.

ZACH FREEMANTLE: To piggyback off both of them, we're excited for the opportunity that's in front of us.

DAYVION MCKNIGHT: Grateful and blessed to be in the position we're in. To survive and advance to the next game. Truly blessed.

DAILYN SWAIN: Same thing. Just grateful for the opportunity, the opportunity to go out and showcase our talent and show our good of a team we are.



THE MODERATOR: I'll ask Ryan, unlike a lot of teams, you've played in this building and had success in this building. That's an advantage for you guys?

RYAN CONWELL: I say a little bit. Being more comfortable with the atmosphere in the arena, it definitely is going to be a different game. Last time we played here was against Marquette. That was a tough game. We got the job done. But I think, yeah, it plays a little bit of a part on our side to have played here before.

THE MODERATOR: If I can ask the other four, just we'll go down the line. Just your thoughts after looking at quick tape of Illinois?

MARCUS FOSTER: We need to be prepared defensively. Just each and every one of us got to be locked into our assignment and just know that we've got to be prepared to defend and rebound in order to win the game.

ZACH FREEMANTLE: After watching a little bit of film today, they crash the glass real hard. They're a very physical team so we'll have to be ready to go to war tomorrow.

DAYVION MCKNIGHT: Everybody that's in the game is going to have to help out with the rebounding, transition, defense, and just being in gaps and as much as we can.

DAILYN SWAIN: Yeah, just say that's the biggest focal point, defensive rebounding. They crash really hard and have a really skilled team.

Q. You guys had some great comebacks in the Big East this season. I just wondered, what was the key to all your success there? Obviously, the other night you had a great comeback as well against Texas. What's been the reason for this? You guys just don't give up. What's the key been this season for you guys?

DAYVION MCKNIGHT: I feel like that just goes to show how much grit we've got as a team as a whole. We've been through a lot from the beginning of the season to now. So I feel like we just don't lay over. We're going to keep fighting until the end of the game.

DAILYN SWAIN: I would also give credit to our coaches



not allowing us to hang our heads when things aren't going our way. They always tell us to just raise our level instead of just talking about what we're doing bad. I think that really helps us turn the game around.

ZACH FREEMANTLE: I would say it shows a lot about the character of the people on this team. Basketball is a great metaphor for life. Things don't always go your way, but you'll always have to find a way to fight through. This team has the ability to do that.

MARCUS FOSTER: We've faced a lot of tough moments as a team early on and even some during conference play. That's helped us in these moments to come together and pull out the win.

RYAN CONWELL: I agree with what these four said.

THE MODERATOR: I don't want to single Zach out because everybody overcomes adversity. You did overcome three foot surgeries. You must love basketball to stick with it like that.

ZACH FREEMANTLE: This is my favorite thing in the world. The only way I'm going to stop is if someone chops it off.

THE MODERATOR: Other questions?

Guys, thank you. Appreciate it.

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