

# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - Colgate vs Baylor

Friday, March 22, 2024  
Memphis, Tennessee, USA  
FedExForum

## Baylor Bears Coach Scott Drew - Ja'Kobe Walter Jalen Bridges

Media Conference

Baylor - 92, Colgate - 67

SCOTT DREW: First, it is Coach Bridges. He called a great play at the end of the game for Austin Sacks. He deserves credit for that.

Second of all, thankful to God to give us this platform, an opportunity not everybody gets a chance to play in, March Madness. Really happy for these guys. A lot of them, it was their first time ever in an NCAA Tournament game. Really proud of how they played together.

And to score 92 points, that actually sets a Baylor record for most points in an NCAA Tournament game. Hopefully we saved a couple of made 3s for the next game, because 16-for-30 is pretty efficient.

**Q. Jalen, as Coach kind of alluded to, their high level of offensive execution today. What do you think contributed to that? How fun did it feel especially when you got rolling in the second half?**

JALEN BRIDGES: I want to thank my Lord and savior Jesus Christ, because without him nothing is possible. Like you said, we got rolling. It is a blessing to be able to play with guys like Ja'Kobe, who can space the floor, guys like RayJ and J-Nunn who can make life easy for me and him. It's fun to take the court with these guys every single night.

**Q. Four players in double figures, three with 15 or more, how much fun is that? Ball's hopping around, everyone's cooking and everyone is doing their kind of thing. How enjoyable was it for both of you?**



JA'KOBE WALTER: First I want to thank my Lord and savior Jesus Christ just for the opportunity just to be here. Not everybody gets to play out here. And me being a freshman, not a lot of freshmen get this opportunity as well.

Like Jalen was saying, it's fun to be on the court with a bunch of guys that can score. Every day we're in the gym and we see the work we put in. So just seeing it come to fruition -- that's the word, right? -- on the court, seeing on it the court, it's just really cool to seeing, like he was saying, just really fun.

**Q. Ja'Kobe, what was your mindset early? You seemed very aggressive and were hitting some shots early. What was your mindset coming out?**

JA'KOBE WALTER: Really just putting everything in the past. This is a new season, you know. Like Coach showed us a bracket, it was just us and Colgate. It was just the next game up.

I really wanted to come out aggressive, set the tone early. My teammates, they were finding me. They were encouraging me. When we got things going, it was pretty hard to stop us.

**Q. This is for Jalen, when you talk about establishing momentum, as you hoped to go deeper into the tournament, just how big was it to start the first game shooting the way that you were shooting, for you and for the rest of the team?**

JALEN BRIDGES: It was great to feel that way, to see the ball go through the hoop a little bit, especially after how we struggled in Kansas City.

Like Ja'Kobe said this is a new season put the past in the past, focus on the next game, the next opportunity and stay together. And the rest will take care of itself for real.

**Q. There's a sequence in the second half where it was, like, Colgate hit a 3, you guys hit a 3, back and forth. Did it almost feel like y'all had to shoot that well because obviously they were executing there pretty**



**well, too?**

JALEN BRIDGES: They're a super talented team. They have a lot of guys that are really good at what they do. I feel like we let up a little bit defensively. And that's something that we cannot do going forward or we're going to be heading on a flight home.

We've just got to play both ends instead of just trying to get open shots on offense. There's 94 feet; we've got to play on both ends.

**Q. The big men that Colgate had and kind of the footwork and the post moves that they had, that gave you all some problems. But what allowed you to kind of gain that separation that you needed?**

SCOTT DREW: I think first and foremost, this is their fourth NCAA Tournament in a row, and every one of those games were single digits in the second half. And now they're older, more mature. We knew we were going to be in for a dogfight.

What we had to do was take away their 3s. I think we did a good job, but when you take away something, you give up something.

Credit their interior for making great moves and plays. I thought as the game went on, we were able to do a little better job of limiting their touches. And the zone helped change that a little bit for us as well.

**Q. When you're sharing the wealth like that and getting everyone involved offensively, how tough do you feel you guys are to beat?**

SCOTT DREW: I think every coach cares more about what shot selection you get and if it's the right shots. We know they're not always going to go in. But that's what you can control, and then you can control the effort on the glass.

I thought we had great looks. I thought everyone was really unselfish; 17 assists is really good. I thought when we got stops in transition, we were really good as well.

I mean, we've had a top-five offense most of the year, and we know we're efficient. It's nice to finally play somebody that doesn't know every tendency, every set, everything you do. So it's good to play somebody different.

**Q. I know he were able to play periodically through the game, but do you have any update on Yves and do you think there's going to be anything lingering with that?**

SCOTT DREW: He woke up that way and it bothered him yesterday. The good thing is you have a day off. Yves is really durable. He hasn't missed a game, hadn't missed much practice, if any practice. We have a great staff. They'll get him right. But he was definitely affected by that today.

**Q. Scott, the last few minutes of the first half, RayJ gets his third foul, goes to the bench. Not a guy that sits on the bench a lot. How important was that to get some minutes from Miro and to get Jayden Nunn handling the ball a little more and extending the lead into halftime?**

SCOTT DREW: I thought that was really critical. And the guys did a great job defensively, did a good job executing. To finish with Yves' bucket before the first half was a great way to close the half.

And we knew in the second half they were going to come out and make a run, which they did, and called timeout and then thought our guys did a good job in regrouping and never really letting them get it to single digits, where you start to feel it and the crowd gets involved.

**Q. When you've got a quick turnaround, have to play another game in two days how beneficial is it to be able to close the way you did and not have to be in a dogfight the last couple of minutes?**

SCOTT DREW: Honestly, if you're in this profession long enough, big wins, close wins, you see it all work that second game. I can tell you, I lost a little less hair because of it, so I'm appreciative of that.

But I'm really so excited for our guys. We had so many, it's their first time in the NCAA Tournament. And as you can tell from Ja'Kobe and Jalen, we have really, really good kids. And you want the best for them when they're good kids. And they've got great parents. And I know a lot of them were really excited about today.

**Q. When the Baylor fans are chanting for Sacks, do you hear that? How cool was that to see him hit that 3?**

SCOTT DREW: I love that. Usually that's a good thing. So hopefully five more games we hear that. But excited for him, and he's the ultimate teammate. I mean, everybody loves him. I don't think he's ever said a bad thing about anybody. Just really kind young man.

**Q. You mentioned a couple times how well a lot of these guys are playing their first tournament game played, including some of your best players. I'm**

**curious how you found the balance within the roster, you still have these talented freshmen but also have some veterans. It's a hot topic around the country; how do you construct a roster? What have you found where you've been able to, seems like, find that balance?**

SCOTT DREW: This is a first-time experience for all of us. We're all learning on the fly. I mean, you never had a COVID year before. You never had NIL before. You never had a transfer portal before. I mean, things are changing and you're trying to figure it out as you go.

I can tell you our formula is just to get great young men we want to spend time with that are talented and they'll put the team first and embrace our culture of joy. And we've been blessed to do that.

I don't think we have a set number like we're going to take this many transfers. There's teams out there, you take too many transfers, it doesn't work. You take too many freshmen, it doesn't work. There's only 68 teams in the tournament.

A lot more don't work than do work just numerically. With us, we're blessed because the guys that represent our university do a great job, and they've played a lot of basketball this year. I mean, Ja'Kobe and Yves aren't freshmen anymore.

**Q. Did the Oakland win over Kentucky get your attention a bit last night, make you think anything different coming in today, not that you needed a reminder that those things can happen?**

SCOTT DREW: That's March Madness. Again, if you don't have that, it's just March. I mean, it is what it is and personally we're in the league with Coach Kampe at Valpo and good friend of mine, 40 years at a school. Everybody in the profession, even Coach Calipari, I think they're good friends. You love it when good things happen to good people. Happy for him. But I'm sure there's upsets today just like there was last night and a couple of other close ones.

But that's why this March Madness is so special. I love it when you can't get past the first two days and there's no perfect brackets left. That just shows you how hard it is. I don't know if it will be that way -- I watched TV for about one minute the stat was there's only like 46 percent of the brackets still correct. And that was like at 5:00 yesterday.

My point is that expect the unexpected. Makes it great. Makes it tough on coaches and players, though, because you don't want it to be the last time you put on the jersey.