

# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - Norfolk State vs Florida

Thursday, March 20, 2025

Raleigh, North Carolina, USA

Lenovo Center

**Florida Gators**

**Walter Clayton Jr.**

**Will Richard**

**Alijah Martin**

Media Conference

THE MODERATOR: We are now ready to begin the student-athlete press conference for the Florida Gators.

**Q. For you guys, what does it mean to finally be here and be able to start this postseason run given everything that's led up to it?**

WALTER CLAYTON JR: It means a lot. We haven't been looking past anything. It just means a lot to finally get here, get an opportunity to come out and win some games in a row.

THE MODERATOR: Will, do you have anything to add?

WILL RICHARD: I agree with what Walt said. Definitely means a lot, the season that we had leading up to this moment. Definitely appreciate the journey that it's taken to get here. I'm ready to play.

THE MODERATOR: Alijah, anything to add?

ALIJAH MARTIN: They said it all.

**Q. Alijah, this is your third NCAA Tournament, and obviously you had the run a couple of years ago with Florida Atlantic. Just what kind of experience can you kind of impart from that for the rest of the group in terms of helping to be successful this time around?**

ALIJAH MARTIN: Definitely blessed to be here for the third time. I want to just remind the guys to stay hungry, stay humble, and don't take nobody lightly. Just have elite focus, and we'll be fine.



**Q. You three kind of lead the way and set the tone. You're up here speaking about this. Back in the locker room, you got your big guys. Could each of you just touch on how they separate you guys from other teams. You guys are terrific, but they kind of really kind of elevate you to a different level teams can't match.**

ALIJAH MARTIN: We have an unbelievable front court. Two guys that can bring it up. Three guys that can shoot the 3. Four guys that offensive rebound the ball elite. When you just name those four guys, we have the utmost confidence in them.

THE MODERATOR: Will, do you have anything to add?

WILL RICHARD: I agree with Alijah. Our front court is elite. Those guys, they bring a huge lift off every time they step on the court. They're playing hard, they're doing a lot of things they don't get credit for. They definitely take our game to another level.

THE MODERATOR: Walter?

WALTER CLAYTON JR: I agree with what they said.

THE MODERATOR: Fair enough.

**Q. Walter, this offense is up to Number 1 in the country in KenPom. I'm just curious about what makes it fun to operate and what makes it effective in your mind as a point guard?**

WALTER CLAYTON JR: The fact that we've got multiple guys that can do multiple things. Multiple guys that can be on ball, off ball. So I think it's just a healthy balance of guys, depending on the game, whatever the game is, guys provide different things. That's what makes it so great.

**Q. Now that it's here, what's kind of been the discussion and the mentality going into this deal? Todd talked about it the other day, like it can be over in one game if you're not on your Ps and Qs.**

WILL RICHARD: Like Alijah said, just staying humble and hungry knowing that you can't get content but just knowing we have to have elite focus going on every game and



attacking every game like it can be our last. It's win or go home, so you've got to bring it.

**Q. Will and Walt, how much do you guys want to get this first win? Obviously you guys have bigger goals, but just to kind of get the first NCAA Tournament win for both of you?**

WALTER CLAYTON JR: We had a little team get together earlier today, and that's what me and Will talked about, just not looking past any game. Obviously we haven't won a game in the tournament yet, so it's definitely going to mean a lot getting this first one.

THE MODERATOR: Will, do you have anything to add?

WILL RICHARD: No. Walt said it all.

**Q. This question is for Walter. Do the individual accolades mean anything to you right now, consensus first team All-American, and sort of where that puts you in Florida basketball history as the first Gator to do that?**

WALTER CLAYTON JR: It definitely means a lot. I'm thankful. But I think it means a lot for the team also. I think those individual accolades could reflect on the team. The team, they've trusted in me to do things, and we've been winning. So I think that's one of the main reasons those awards are starting to come out.

I definitely give a lot of credit to my teammates and my coaches for the awards I've been getting, and I'm thankful.

**Q. For Walter and Will, do you remember watching Alijah and watching that FAU run? What were your thoughts when you saw those guys doing that?**

THE MODERATOR: Walter, I think it's your turn to go first.

WALTER CLAYTON JR: I definitely remember because I was definitely on my visit from the portal when they played Kansas State. Madison Square Garden, right? I was on my visit there watching that. Him having that experience, it's great to have him on our team, and I definitely remember the run.

WILL RICHARD: I was right there on the couch watching the game with him. We definitely watched their run. Just having Alijah and knowing his experience and what he can bring to a team like that, it's definitely important for us to have him here with us.

**Q. I know you guys have already flushed this at this point, but what was the plane ride back to Gainesville**

**like and just celebrating the first 24, 48 hours after getting home?**

THE MODERATOR: Alijah?

ALIJAH MARTIN: Man, just a bunch of guys just singing, in the air, waiting on the selection show to tell us where we're going and who we're playing, stuff like that. Great vibes, man. All type of songs that we're singing and just having fun.

THE MODERATOR: Will, do you have anything to add?

WILL RICHARD: I'm not going to lie. I was tired. Them three games had me tired, I was asleep.

ALIJAH MARTIN: He was singing too.

WALTER CLAYTON JR: He was the only one asleep on the plane (laughter).

ALIJAH MARTIN: He wasn't asleep.

WALTER CLAYTON JR: No, I let him nap. We had a team get together later in the day.

**Q. A little power nap?**

WILL RICHARD: Yeah, a little power nap.

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