

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - Mount St. Mary's vs Duke

Friday, March 21, 2025

Raleigh, North Carolina, USA

Lenovo Center

Mount St. Mary's Mountaineers

Donny Lind

Dola Adebayo

Arlandus Keyes

Xavier Lipscomb

Media Conference

Duke - 93, Mount St. Mary's - 49

THE MODERATOR: We are now ready to begin the Mount St. Mary's press conference. Coach, if you could start with an opening statement.

DONNY LIND: I've got to thank God for this opportunity that we have to coach these guys, to play in a game like this, to be on this stage is unbelievable. I've got an unbelievable life. It's not fun losing a basketball game, but an unbelievable life, and I'm incredibly thankful to be with young men like these three guys every single day.

As far as the game goes, Duke is a really good basketball team. There's a reason why they're one of the top seeds in this tournament, and they showed that for most of the game today. I thought our guys fought unbelievably. They played with heart and determination and great effort until there were zeros on the clock, and I'm incredibly proud of that. It's part of the culture we're trying to build here is a relentless and resilient group, and I think they showed that today.

I'm also incredibly proud of the way they played for each other, the love that they obviously have for each other. You could see on the court, it was evident. That's one of the things that I'll always -- a memory that I'll always be proud of with this group.

THE MODERATOR: We're going to open the floor for questions for student-athletes.



Q. Dola, what was it like for you out there, and how would you describe the last week for you guys?

DOLA ADEBAYO: Thank God, like Coach said, it's been a fun ride, just going out there with my boys. Looking back, making history. And just looking forward, this is just the beginning for us. I'm proud of our guys. Like it was amazing.

Q. For you, Dola, just following up on that, is there anything you can take away from being on the wrong side of a loss like this that will fuel you for the rest of the games going forward?

DOLA ADEBAYO: Got to get stronger.

Q. X, five-year career. You ended on this stage in the tournament. Can you try to put into words how rewarding this season has been for you to end it on this stage in this way?

XAVIER LIPSCOMB: I actually have a year of eligibility left, so this is not the end for me. I'm just super thankful for my teammates, the perseverance that we showed as a group. We were picked eleventh in the MAC preseason poll, and we didn't care about that.

Everyday we just worked as hard as we could and took it day by day. We proved all the doubters wrong.

Q. Dola, early in the second half, I think you tried to dunk on their 7'2" center. Is that the kind of thing it was going to take today, just being brave and just going all out today?

DOLA ADEBAYO: Yeah, in these type of games, that's the mentality you've got to have. You're not going to get bailed out. You've got to take it to them. That's how I had to do it.

Q. Arlandus, can you talk about your run in the tournament? You hit a lot of big 3s, both in the MAC tournament and these last two games. Can you talk about your prominent role over the last week.

ARLANDUS KEYES: Honestly, I was just able to shoot the shots I'm capable of hitting. One of our best shooters,

Melo, I just wanted to tag along to what he was doing and help my teammates get in the game. I know I'm able to make the shots, so I just do what I had to do.

THE MODERATOR: Gentlemen, you're excused. Thank you very much.

At this time, we'll go ahead and open up the floor for Coach. Let's go third row and then second row.

Q. Coach, congratulations on the season. One of the story lines with your team's overall success has been your son, just his involvement with the basketball program. If he's willing to speak, what's it been like to have the success with him alongside you, and how special is it for you in your career?

DONNY LIND: It's amazing. This is a hard business for us as fathers, very difficult. So to be able to bring him with me -- my wife and my daughter are here too -- it's been a blast. He's enjoyed missing school, playing with his friends on the court, but he can speak to that, I'm sure.

But to be able to have these guys along for this ride and to be a part of it and just be having so much fun, I've got the best job in the world. I've said it for the last ten months. To share it with the people I love the most, with my family and, shoot, those guys in the locker room has been unbelievable.

Hopefully he'll talk to the fact that he's had a blast over the course of the last couple weeks. You should see him at home games when he's allowed to be on the bench. He's having a lot of fun. That's what our program's about. We try to have as much fun as we can. This is a fun, fun game. It's a blast to get to do this with him.

You're up, bud.

SILAS LIND: These have been the best few weeks of my life, and I hope we have many, many more of them.

Q. Coach, you guys have really clicked the last couple weeks here, it seems like. Is there something specific you learned in that time that you'll apply to future teams moving forward?

DONNY LIND: I think it was like a culmination of all the stuff that we've been preaching all year long. It's the conversations. It's the off the court work that we do that allowed us to be successful at this time of the year.

We stayed with it. We talked a lot about trying to be a team that cared for each other and loved each other and was willing to sacrifice our personal goals. It's hard to keep

that messaging up sometimes. Whether it's working and you get bored or it's not working and you get frustrated, it's hard.

I credit my staff, man, those guys, they help push that message forward every single day, and we work together to get the guys to really believe that. To their credit, when their backs were against the wall, guys get hurt, they just found ways to keep doing it, to keep caring about each other and keep trying to play together and not just for themselves.

Q. Donny, a lot gets mentioned in this day and age with how hard it is to build a culture now with the way the mid-major landscape is so fluid in transitions year after year. To have this group and the continuity and the camaraderie that they've developed in just a year reach this stage maybe a little ahead of schedule, how important is that for you, for this program, and for this conference, and how does it speak to the way you need to adapt to this landscape?

DONNY LIND: It's a testament to the fact that you can still do it, right? There's so many doubters. There's people that say you can't care about the kids, you can't build a culture, you can't invest in them, because they're just going to leave anyway, right? That's what everybody says.

Most of us as coaches, we got into this business to impact young men, and we just have to stay with it. And the timetable is shorter, but we can still make an impact. You go in that locker room, and those guys have been impacted by our staff, by each other because we were intentional about it.

I'm proud of the fact that it gives me some validation in what I believe in, that that truly does work, but the work has just begun. We want to build a program here that ascends to heights greater than these. So if we're going to do that, we're going to have to double down on the stuff we're talking about, and hopefully it's with some of the same student-athletes, but it might not be. That's the nature of what we're doing right now.

We're going to be really intentional about the guys we bring into this program, that they're guys who want to be coached this way, that they're guys who want to be not just yelled and screamed at for 2 hours a day and then left alone for the other 22, but they want to be invested in, they want to grow.

I think it speaks to the Mount. The Mount is a place, it's a small community. If you don't believe in community, if you don't believe in helping people grow, you're not going to work at the Mount, you're not going to be a student at the

Mount, and you're not going to be a good player on this team.

So we have to be intentional. I was fortunate, Dan recruited really good players that wanted to be at the Mount, and I think they thrived under the way that we coached them, and we did a pretty good job in recruiting and found more guys that fit what we do.

Q. Can you talk about the job that Arlandus did for you over the last week?

DONNY LIND: Arlandus is a winner, first and foremost. He does winning stuff. He is a great talker, a leader, and I know he's made a bunch of shots, but he rebounds the ball for a guard really, really well.

He was out with a concussion the last week and a half of the regular season. When he came back, there was no worry with me that he was going to fall back into that role and be able to kind of pick up some of the slack with Melo being out.

One of my biggest struggles all season was at the end of the game which of the guards to play because we had three of them -- we have four of them for three spots, and trying to push and probe and make sure we had the right one.

The last week and a half, I didn't have to worry about it. I could leave Arlandus in there knowing that him, X, and Dallas could close the game out. I was really proud of the way he stuck with the team and stepped up when his number was called and just continued to do the winning things that we needed him to do. He values that role, and so do I.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports