

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: Second Round - UConn vs Florida

Saturday, March 22, 2025

Raleigh, North Carolina, USA

Lenovo Center

Florida Gators

Micah Hondlogten

Thomas Haugh

Reuben Chinyelu

Alex Condon

Media Conference



THE MODERATOR: We are now ready to begin the Florida portion of the press conference. I'd like to remind you of the rules once again. There's no videotaping, no flash photography.

Q. Was there any planning in having the frontcourt be all the player representatives today?

THE MODERATOR: Micah, were you involved in that decision?

MICAH HONDLOGTEN: I cannot say I was involved in that decision. She just kind of told us right before we came out here today.

Q. Micah and Tommy, what was your guys' reaction last night when you found out you're playing the back-to-back national champions? It looked like Dan Hurley was really excited for this one. Just your thoughts on playing these guys.

THOMAS HAUGH: I know as a team we're really excited to play this game. It's going to be a great game. We're going to go out there, two really good teams, and it's going to be fun tomorrow.

MICAH HONDLOGTEN: I'm going to agree with him on that. Obviously it's unique to go against back-to-back national champions. I know we were back-to-back national champions in '06-'07. I think we want to go out there and do our work early and get the game over with.

Q. Whichever one of you wants the answer, getting the first game out of the way, does that kind of make you feel more relaxed or at ease, et cetera, anything like that?

THE MODERATOR: Reuben, could you answer that, please.

REUBEN CHINYELU: Obviously it's just the same mindset we have. There's no room for relax or anything. It's just going out there taking care of our business, doing what we do all year, just believing in that and just going out there.

We don't have the urge to relax just because we won one game. This is a six-game streak that we're looking forward to. So we're tackling each game at a time. We're just ready for the moment to embrace it and then just live the moment.

Q. Alex and Tommy, when I say UConn to you guys, given what's happened with them the last two years, aside from just saying two-time national champions, how would you describe how they play, what you know about them, that kind of thing?

THE MODERATOR: Alex, could you go first, please.

ALEX CONDON: I think UConn are very well coached. They have a really good system in place. Our coaches have been saying they're really good at scoring the ball. So I think that defense is really important tomorrow.

We come out and guard the right way, initiate the physicality, and I think our offense will come to us. But the defense is the main thing for us tomorrow as a frontcourt.

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

THOMAS HAUGH: I agree, super well-coached team. They like to get to their stuff in the half-court. We have to do a good job of staying on the man and guarding our yard.

THE MODERATOR: Any other questions for the student-athletes?

Q. UConn leads the country in blocked shots. What



do you guys think about the challenge of going up against them and how you have to be mindful of that in this matchup?

MICAH HONDLOGTEN: A really big thing of ours is playing off two. While we might be able to drive, they're a very good shot-blocking team. So you drive, you get them up in the air, you look opposite, look out, and get open shots for others.

I think that's what makes us a special team is we're very unselfish with the ball. So we've just got to play our game, and I think we can get it done.

Q. Todd and Alijah were talking about the complacency after the first 15 minutes. Have you continued to talk about that? How confident are you that you are going to get back to the way you've played the majority of the season?

THOMAS HAUGH: It was definitely that last couple minutes of that first half wasn't how we normally play, and we need to get back to how we played that first half, first 15 minutes.

That was the first game. We got the nerves out and everything behind us, so we're going to be ready for tomorrow.

Q. You mentioned how there's '06-' 07 back-to-back champions. Has Billy Donovan, have you guys been able to connect with him over the years since you've been at Florida? Is he close to the program still and given you guys advice or anything like that?

THE MODERATOR: Is there anyone in particular you'd like to answer that?

Q. On the left, you mentioned the '06-' 07. Sorry, Micah.

MICAH HONDLOGTEN: There's been a couple times he's come up to practice and sat through it and gave us a little talk in the huddle afterward or before. He's always available. Several of us have his phone number that we can just text him whenever, and he can give us like advice.

It's really good to have someone like that in our contacts that's also there to help us whenever we need.

Q. This is for any one of you. Taurean was on the Florida team that went back to back. Has he had anything to say about not letting UConn go one up on you?

REUBEN CHINYELU: He's just physically, he's out there telling us you've worked hard for this moment. So just embrace it, live it, and go out there and do what you did all season because that's what we do.

It's all about us, what we do, how we take care of our business. So we just focus on what we do and let the game speak for itself.

THE MODERATOR: Any other questions?

Gentlemen, you're excused. Thank you very much. Good luck tomorrow.

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