

# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: Regional Semifinal - Purdue vs Houston

Thursday, March 27, 2025

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Lucas Oil Stadium

**Purdue Boilermakers**

**Braden Smith**

**Fletcher Loyer**

**Trey Kaufman-Renn**

Sweet 16 Pregame Media Conference



**Q. Braden, so many other teams in this Sweet 16, they have a lot of transfers in their starting lineup, which as proved successful. But you guys have the stability. How important is that not only on the court but in the locker room to have stability and continuity in the relationships you do with your guys?**

BRADEN SMITH: We've got a lot of experience together being able to play for, for our case, three years in a row. That builds and helps over time. Having that is huge.

Just like playing with Fletch, I understand what he likes to do, what he doesn't. Same with Trey. I understand the spots he likes to score from or where he's uncomfortable. The same with me for them.

It just builds over time. It's obviously beneficial for us to be able to on the court for so long.

**Q. Coach was saying that your loaded up sort of non-conference schedule helped you get to this point. I'm curious, when you're watching Houston film and such, are there times when you see, like, oh, that's like something like Ole Miss does, or we did this against that, or we did this against A&M. Does any of that stuff come up where that non-conference stuff really does translate to late March?**

BRADEN SMITH: I think so. When you get to play these teams in the tournament that's why you have a non-conference like that, to get you ready for games like this so you don't in to just playing Big Ten teams and then you go into the tournament, you don't play Big Ten teams.

It obviously benefits us. Understanding how they play defensively are similar to other teams, and their coverages that they do, defensively, or whatever sets they run offensively, they're similar to other schools we've played early on. I think it helps and benefits us for both ways.

**Q. Trey, I know you didn't go to school too far away from your hometown. But what is it like to play in this stage a little bit closer to Silver Creek?**

TREY KAUFMAN-RENN: It's great. I remember when, obviously, I guess, this isn't in Gainbridge, but when we went to state and the entire town of Sellersburg came up, and you see, at that point it was blue and orange fans there, and just the support you get.

So I'm just happy that obviously my family, but even relatives and people from Sellersburg and everybody I know can come to this game. It's going to mean a lot to me.

**Q. What does all this mean to you? You spent all those years developing. You redshirted. Now you're coming of age. You're putting up big numbers. What does all of this mean to you after a very tough summer where you put in a lot of work?**

TREY KAUFMAN-RENN: I think that's something I'll be able to answer after my time in college is done better. Right now it's one of those things where it's just the next step.

I've always thought of it that way whether I've succeeded or failed. It's the next step. You've got to go to the next game. You've got to try to help your team win in every way you can. That's how I've always looked at it.

**Q. Fletcher, at times this season guys like Camden and Myles were maybe a little bit gunshot when they got the ball and had open looks. But the last two rounds they were willing and able to knock down some shots. How important has that development been these last couple of weeks when you play a team as defensively sound as Houston?**

FLETCHER LOYER: It's been very important. Obviously teams like to take away certain actions. When you get it



out of your hands and get it to those shooters, that's oftentimes the best shot, especially for Purdue.

They shoot such good percentage and they put a lot of time into their shots. It's the best shot, Purdue, when it gets swung to them, and they'll continue taking them and continue to help us win games.

**Q. When you think about how good they are on defense, only allowing 58 points per game, I know every possession is important, but even more so, like you said, you have to value and take those shots. What kind of pressure does that put on that end of the court?**

FLETCHER LOYER: I don't see it as pressure. I think you put in a lot of work to get to these spots and play in these big games against great teams. Now it's just executing. So, trusting in ourselves and trusting in the work we've put in to get to this spot. And then ultimately trusting our scout that we're going to get the ball in the right spots and we're going to knock down the shots.

**Q. Fletcher, what is it like for you to have your dad as such a big resource, as a coach, scout and basketball mind as you have gone through your career?**

FLETCHER LOYER: My dad's been awesome. Early on I thought he was hard on me, but ultimately it just got me to be the player I am today. And seeing his experience and what he's been through, college, NBA, whatever it was, he's helped me a ton.

And ultimately my brothers learned from it as well. So being able to listen to my brother and talk to him, you just get a whole other perspective. Just another coach that wants the best for you and wants the best for the team.

**Q. Trey, how have you seen your growth and development and what have you learned from your previous experiences at Purdue to help you prepare for the stage here?**

TREY KAUFMAN-RENN: For this particular stage, just take that run we had last year, the scouting, the preparation, just being on the stage before. I think those are all experiences that you have. Obviously from a skills standpoint, this past offseason really helped. I put in a lot of work. Like I said, I'm just glad it's paying off.

**Q. Coach Painter mentioned earlier about you becoming so much a better passer over time. Can you kind of explain that a little bit, as to how you become a better passer and what all goes into that?**

TREY KAUFMAN-RENN: Yeah. As these guys will tell you, that's not a trait that I thought I was going to develop. But no, it's just one of those things where there's going to be people doubling me or we're going to have open shooters that knock down a high percentage of shots, you've got to get it to them. You've got to get it to people who can score the ball. I have confidence in everybody on our team. It's the best look for Purdue.

**Q. Braden, obviously in the first two rounds you guys had the early tip-off times. You're going to play 10:00, 10:30. Does your process change? How do you prepare for such a late-night tip-off?**

BRADEN SMITH: Honestly, it's different. You wake up, you eat breakfast and you get ready to go. Now we'll have time -- I think we get to come in here, have a shoot-around, stuff like that. I think it will benefit.

It kind of sucks because for a competitor you've got to wait all day to go compete late at night. So I think that part sucks. But at the end of the day, you've got to be ready. I think playing in a game like this, the Sweet 16, that will get you amped up enough where you're ready by game time.

**Q. What is it about their defense that makes them so imposing, Houston?**

BRADEN SMITH: I think it starts with their bigs. I think their ball pressure is really good. I think they can corral the ball on ball screens. They cause havoc. They've got quick, athletic guards that are pressuring the ball. You're dealing with two tough defenders on you.

For my case, coming off a ball screen or whatever the read is. So just that. When they're in the post, they've got two big guys that are super athletic. They're really good with their trap.

I think just for us understanding that and just being simple with the ball, I think we'll be fine.

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