

# NCAA Women's Basketball Championship: First Round - Montana State vs Ohio State

Friday, March 21, 2025

Columbus, Ohio, USA

Value City Arena

## Ohio State Buckeyes Coach Kevin McGuff Jaloni Cambridge Chance Gray

Media Conference

Ohio State - 71, Montana State - 51

**Q. This is both of your first NCAA Tournament games. Can you talk through just nerves beforehand and walk me through how you felt you did today?**

CHANCE GRAY: Cotie sent us a text this morning saying it's win or go home and have the mentality to go out and have fun and play as hard as we can because like McGuff said before the game started all we're guaranteed is 40 minutes. So that was kind of my mentality, just leave it all out on the floor.

JALONI CAMBRIDGE: Like she said, it's do or die. Play together. We want to win, we want to get out of here. Just happy to be here. It's been fun so far.

**Q. Can you talk about if second quarter, whenever they went on a run, I think a 10-point run, and the fouls were not going Ohio State's way. Seemed like the crowd was getting upset. Coach got a technical. Can you talk about your team's response to that?**

CHANCE GRAY: That's when we come together as a team and try to stay poised. We can't control the referees or the atmosphere of the game. We can only control ourselves and be good teammates and good players. That's all we really focused on.

**Q. The start of a second half there, three straight 3s to start the half. Seemed like it was the moment you guys needed to start to pull away. What was going through you in that moment? And kind of did you feel that momentum shift there?**



CHANCE GRAY: I was kind of ready to shoot whenever my teammates got the ball. We were moving the ball really well. And that's something we've been emphasizing the last couple of weeks, just one dribble, push the ball up the floor and see what we can get, get easy shots and do simple things.

**Q. Jaloni, for you being from Tennessee, do you look ahead now look at potential match-up for Tennessee? Is that a match-up that would particularly excite you?**

JALONI CAMBRIDGE: At the end of the day, basketball has always been basketball. I'm excited for whoever we're about to play.

**Q. Kevin, can you talk about the missed calls in the second half and your emotions on the sidelines?**

KEVIN MCGUFF: I disagreed with some things that were going out there. I voiced my displeasure and that's about it.

**Q. Can you talk about after that moment how you guys built off that? I know the whole team has been open about sometimes not getting calls?**

JALONI CAMBRIDGE: We get fired up. Obviously things weren't going our way. We've got to make them go our way. That's exactly what we did.

**Q. How much more dangerous does it make you guys as an offense when Chance is shooting like that and really making 3s?**

KEVIN MCGUFF: I think just in general, in the first half, we were leaving a lot of points on the board -- or off the board because we weren't making the extra pass and the extra pass.

In the start of the second half, we played really aggressively in transition. But instead of like sometimes people equate being around the basket with a great shot. But when there's two people there and you can spray it out to somebody wide open, which is what happened, and



Chance was obviously capitalizing on those, we just moved the ball a lot better until we found a better shot than what we were getting in the first half.

**Q. Yesterday you made note of Montana State coming in with 30 wins and said something to the effect this is a team that's used to winning or knows how to win. I'm curious in what ways you saw that today given it's no longer on film and it's right in front of you?**

KEVIN MCGUFF: I thought they played a great game. They played really hard. They played with poise. Morales was really, really good. Picton off the bench was great, too.

They looked like a well-coached team that plays well together, that plays extremely hard. And I think they did everything they were probably capable of doing to win. I just think our depth and athleticism probably won out today.

**Q. Obviously you guys are without Elsa today. You have Eboni playing a couple minutes. Could you talk about the different look they gave you on the court specifically on defense?**

KEVIN MCGUFF: I thought Eboni was really good, especially on the defensive end. She's a fifth-year senior. She's been in these moments. She's been in our program a long time. She knows what to do and when to do it. And it showed today.

**Q. Jaloni, you had six steals and the team forced 26 turnovers. Can you talk about the press, the traps, how you felt on defense?**

JALONI CAMBRIDGE: I think I was in the right place at the right time. McGuff always emphasizes getting up, pressuring the ball, making sure the offense is uncomfortable. Just happened to be at the right place at the right time.

**Q. Coach, could you talk about winning the turnover battle today?**

KEVIN MCGUFF: We knew that was important. Montana State plays a similar style. They have a lot of success this year in turning people over and turning those turnovers into points. I thought, especially as the game went on, I thought our depth and athleticism wore on them. And the turnovers started to come, and we were able to convert those into points.

**Q. Could you talk about what you said in the halftime locker room? Did it echo the beginning of the game**

**where you said it's 40 minutes or at that point how did it change your advice to the team?**

KEVIN MCGUFF: I'm good at math. I said there's 20 minutes now. So I did say that. Really what we mostly talked about is making the extra pass and making the extra pass because I thought we were getting great opportunities but taking tougher shots than we needed to. So that was the biggest point of emphasis.

**Q. For the players, the play that seemed to really get everybody riled up was Taylor going after the loose ball and getting called for the foul and then they hit the 3. And Coach got a little upset and irate. You didn't let them score the next eight minutes of clock time -- the last five minutes of the first half, first three or four minutes of the second half. What changed for you guys defensively at that point? I know you put points on the board, but what started going well for you guys defensively to get those stops?**

CHANCE GRAY: I think just getting back to being aggressive in the press. Not really getting stagnant. Trying to be as aggressive as we can. That's the best basketball.

Getting steals and converting the steals, I think that's kind of what got us going. We talked in the huddle. They went on their run and it was time for us to go on our run.

**Q. At times you emphasized controlling the pace of the game. In the first half seemed you allowed them to speed you up a little bit. What was your message in the second half as in the second half it seemed you slowed down and were able to control the pace?**

KEVIN MCGUFF: I think we actually played at the same pace, if not faster, but we were much more efficient with it. We kind of, like, allowed the pace of the game to lead us into harder, contested shots.

But we combined pace in the extra pass in the second half which led to a lot more shots, which we were able to make with a lot more efficiency.

**Q. Jaloni, Taylee Chirrick, No. 44 for them, said she played with you and against you in AAU ball. I don't know if you remember that, but what are your thoughts on how she played in this game?**

JALONI CAMBRIDGE: I don't know if I remember. I played a lot of people. Obviously for her to be on this team, she's obviously really good. She got good minutes. Just being aggressive. I think I want to say she played on the Northwest Blazers, that orange team, and they've

always been good. We always had trouble playing against them, always long and lengthy. Did a really good job today.

**Q. When you look at the stat sheet, after a two-week layoff, what numbers catch your eye, something that you're pleased about, is it the assist-to-baskets made, or...**

KEVIN MCGUFF: Probably the assists. That's where I think late in the year and in the first half today we've struggled with making the extra pass to lead to a better shot. We finally did that in the second half.

I think kind of reminded ourselves of who we can be when we make that extra pass.

**Q. What's the message to the team now? Obviously you enjoy the win, but after the way different teams, different seasons, after the way last season ended, what's the message to push them to get out of Columbus, get to the Sweet 16 now?**

KEVIN MCGUFF: Enjoy this one but it's short-lived. We'll watch the next game. We've got two really good teams with two distinctive styles of play. We need to lock in, make sure we get good eyes on that, and show up tomorrow, use our practice time to get as prepared as possible and we know we're going to have a really tough game on Sunday.

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