

2023 NCAA Wrestling Championship

Saturday, March 23, 2024

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

T-Mobile Center

Aaron Brooks

Finals Media Conference



AARON BROOKS: Praise the Lord. Being able to be present tonight is a gift. Our team, special night, family being here, family and friends. I'm just very blessed that tonight played out as it did. Regardless, I'm very blessed, but it was fun.

Q. One of the things that Carter said was after he won his first one he sat down with Cael and he said the rest of them were going to be even harder. Did you have a similar conversation with Cael, and how do you feel you've managed the pressure throughout the four years winning these titles?

AARON BROOKS: I didn't have a similar conversation with Coach Cael, but I think that's kind of like it's truth. But one thing I talked about with Coach Cael before this tournament, so different conversation, but, like, a target. God always molds you for those things.

My whole life I've had a target, whether being in Maryland and got known a little bit on the national stage, it prepares you for that. I just look at it that way. I've always had a target, not just me going for a fourth title but I've always had a target on my back regardless.

We kind of had that conversation. I think that's the truth. It's nothing different when you've had a target on your back your whole life.

Q. It was 20 years ago today to the date that Cael won his fourth, finished off his undefeated career. Could you talk about what that means for you to be able to accomplish such a feat, getting your fourth on the same date?

AARON BROOKS: It's cool to be a part of, when I look back on it. I was thinking about it just before I came out. But I remember being six years old, six or seven -- I'm pretty sure I was seven. There was a disk of Coach Cael, his high school national championship, or high school state final and then him in high school and NCAA Finals, his four national championship titles.

I'm six years old. My dad -- no one ever wrestled, but he said this is the greatest wrestler ever. Undefeated records.

I watched it, learned ankle pick and cradle and the Granby Roll. But to be wrestling in this program and him as my head coach, some days I look, God is great. You never know where God's going to take you. Being six years old in the back of the car, GMC, watching those things, I didn't think I would be here. So praise the Lord.

Q. Getting to the match, Aaron. Hidlay usually makes a living off of underhooks. You seemed to take him totally out of that game. Was that part of the game plan, or was it just you pressuring and not allowing, dictating the pace?

AARON BROOKS: Styles bring match-ups. Nowadays, especially with the media, social media, everyone knows what everybody's got. People know I underhooks, and people know he underhooks. It just happens to be that he's right leg lead righty underhook, I'm lefty, lefty underhook. One of us is going to get to it. I don't think it was something like that. I think I was looking to get to mine. And he got to his twice. We both like that technique.

Q. Aaron, you and Carter become the sixth and seventh wrestlers to win four national titles. Talk about your bond and being to achieve such an incredible feat together.

AARON BROOKS: It's pretty cool. Looking back, when we first came in, just seeing the growth in both of us, but having someone else to be part of that journey and doing it with is a lot of fun. We're blessed.

Q. We know you guys don't take in the milestones, things like that, but the past three days you guys have had, with everything you've accomplished, you and Carter, four-timers, new team scoring points, new margin of victory, things like that, can you put into words what it means to be a part of something like that now?

AARON BROOKS: I just think it goes to show generations



that are coming. I even look at the younger guys. I'm like, man, we've got some young studs just in the country. RTC is being available in high school. So I think whatever record's being broken, XYZ, that's going to happen. It's cool when you see it because the sport's evolving. The future is bright for American wrestling, not even just talking about Penn State, but I see that in a lot of the youth nowadays. I'm like, man, I wasn't doing it at that age.

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