

Jeff Goodman: All right, welcome to another edition of the Good N' Plenty podcast. I'm your host, Jeff Goodman. And we got another great show for you today. We've got the guy who runs the NCAA Tournament. And that is none other than Dan Gavitt, the Senior VP of Basketball who oversees the NCAA tourney for the NCAA. And we'll talk to him about all the craziness that is about to ensue. We'll talk to him about the coronavirus and any plans and stipulations that the NCAA has in place, how the NET, the new metric in its second year is fairing and if they're going to tweak it, what they're going to do there. [Parenting 0:00:38] college basketball, how that's going to affect the seeding process. We'll talk to him about a bunch of different factors, even name, image and likeness and the one-time transfer rule proposal.

But first, today's show is brought to you by Indeed, post your job today at [indeed.com/good](https://www.indeed.com/good) and get a free sponsored job upgrade in your first posting. Remember, wherever you listen to your pod, subscribe to the Good N' Plenty podcast, do that iTunes, Stitcher, wherever. We also do the Ryan and Goodman pod, which is more NBA focused. So stick with us even after the NCAA Tournament is over, but the next five, five or so weeks, you're going to want to come to this podcast as often as possible because we'll give you different perspectives, like a Danny Gavitt, like a Pat Knight on his father, like a Steve Forbes, from East Tennessee State and his road and what he's dealing with right now as a mid-major head coach feeling like, you know, he has to win the southern conference tournament potentially to get in the NCAA Tournament. So again, this is a little different than most pods because we try to get whatever the storyline is not necessarily the coach and ask them a bunch of regular questions. We'll get some coaches on obviously as well. But whatever the storyline is, we try to give it to you and give it to you a little bit differently.

But without further ado, let's just get to it. Now pleased to welcome in, a return appearance. So you obviously did pretty well the first time around Dan Gavitt, the Senior VP of Basketball for the NCAA, and good to have you back.

Dan Gavitt: Great to be back, Jeff. Glad I didn't blow it so badly the first time that you want me to be back again.

No, you did a good job. And listen, this is the time of year, this is a time of year where you better get your sleep now because over the next five weeks, you and I, we're not getting much of it, aren't we?

No, we're joining a nation of college basketball fans could be in the same boat but the best time of the year. Got to love March.

Yeah, no doubt. Let's start with kind of an overall question and just kind of the, the prevailing sentiment this year has been it's been a down year for college basketball because there's no dominant team, there's not many dominant players. You know, ratings in the regular season are down a little bit. How... why do you think that is, first of all, looking from your vantage point, kind of up high? I mean, I've heard it from coaches, we have a reason for it in the media, which is, you know, kids are leaving early not to be

lottery picks, not to be first round picks, but even to get two ways or play overseas. What's the biggest reason in your opinion, and can it be fixed?

Yeah, I don't think it's any one single reason, Jeff. I think first of all, some of this is just cyclical, right? I mean, there are some years that you've got a confluence of events where you've got an outstanding freshman class. You've got, you know, returning players, that, you know, it gives a certain level of talent and chemistry. You know, things just happen that, you know, kind of come together in a really positive way and maybe some of those things have been the opposite this year. You know, that, you know, the talent may be down slightly in some classes.

And certainly, you know, we've been dealing for some time now with opportunities for college players to explore professional options. They become, had become more and more lucrative and more plentiful over time. And so, that challenge things a little bit. But I, you know, I'm still more bullish and optimistic about the game than anything. I think the experience is outstanding. I think the resources and opportunity that guys have at this level is still incredible. Certainly, there are some challenges.

You know, and basketball, men's basketball in particular probably is somewhat at the, at the eye of some of that because, as we, you know, wrestled in college athletics with issues like name, image and likeness, and transfer, you know, things like that. Basketball is kind of central to many of those things because of the really viable professional opportunities that are available even before a prospect were to come to college in some cases. And certainly, once they're in college, whether it be for a year, two, three or four, whereas in other sports, those opportunities are not nearly as plentiful, plentiful or accessible at any given year.

So, you know, the sport is challenged with some of those things that are before and after a potential college basketball experience. But they're not unworkable. You know, we just need to continue to kind of press forward with what is contemporary, what, what is relevant today, and how that experience has to evolve over time to, you know, help keep the game, you know, really healthy on every level.

All right, so since you mentioned the name, image and likeness, and one-time waiver or you... the transfers which, you know, recently there's a proposal out there for this one-time waiver deal where anybody can transfer and be able to play immediately without sitting out for a year. What's your take and how, how much do you feel like this thing is going to go through? And if it goes through, is it, is it going through for next year where guys are going to be able to play right away instead of sitting out the year?

Well, time will tell. I'm not, you know, the one that's charged with that specifically with that working group. But the issue is certainly on the table as it relates to the waiver process, not to the overall fundamental rule of one-time transfer exception. This is about the waiver process. But it all is kind of part and parcel.

I was on a call yesterday with the NABC and, you know, coaches rightly so I think have very significant concerns about this. As you and I both know, not surprising. What maybe was a little bit revealing during the discussion yesterday is the concern that even Division II and III coaches have about this idea and proposal because...

They're going to be plucked.

...the trickle down effect.

Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. But then also, even at the high-major level, you know, there was, there was discussion about, you know, guys transferring, you know, freely and after just one year with no, with no year and residency from one high-major program to another high-major program that's a little bit higher on the pecking order, possibly...

Sure.

...because there's opportunity at that position or playing time, or NCAA Tournament possibilities or those kinds of things. So this is not just a high-major, mid-major issue. This is not a mid-major, low-major issue. This is an issue that can affect all of college basketball at every divisional level one, two and three.

And as far as, and I know, again, this is one that's not under your jurisdiction necessarily, but name, image, likeness, when can we expect, well, when are you told we can expect something out there publicly about the, I guess, what the NCAA is going to allow and not allow for kids to be able to use their name, image and likeness?

Well, and the real, the real end game, I think, on finalizing a lot of the legislative changes that would come about as a result of the, of this consideration is not until January of '21. But there will be probably some, some movement and some more certainty around potential proposals in late April when the board, boards meet again here after the Final Fours, there's, you know, that, that's one more touch point, but really, it could be as late as next January '21.

All right, let me hit him one more non-tournament topic before we actually get to the good, the good stuff. And this next one's kind of, boy, it's, it's moving quickly and that's the coronavirus I reported last night that Chicago State men's basketball program has canceled its games at Seattle, at Utah Valley. Now a report came out that the women's team isn't playing even its home games. Now again, listen, Chicago State hasn't won a league game in the whack. But the Seattle area has got nine people who have, who've already passed away due to the coronavirus. How... I know you guys have put together a panel to evaluate this whole thing. And I know there's even been, I guess, an organization, the National College Players Association which came out and said, they suggest you guys host games without fans during the NCAA tournament? This thing, again, it's, it's moving quickly. So I know it's going to be hard for you to come up with some sort of definitive answer to this. But how are you going about handling this whole situation right now?

Well, it's a great question and obviously is a great concern both, you know, in our country and globally. And as much as we love basketball and basketball is important, it's not as important as other things that are going on in our world. All that being said, we know, we were charged with the responsibility as, as we have for 80 years are those of us who did this before us that are in place to, to, you know, make sure we run events that are safe, secure, and what... look out for the well-being of all the participants, players, coaches, fans, media. And we've done

that very successfully. And we will continue to do that with that as a, as a primary priority always.

That being said, we're planning on having this tournament and the women's tournament. That's what our membership, you know, wants us to do. That's what, I'm certain, that players and coaches want and their families and fans. We're doing it in a very responsible, incredibly, you know, thoughtfully-planned kind of way. We're in daily contact with the Center for Disease Control, CDC, which coincidentally is in Atlanta, where the Final Four will be held. And we're considering anything and everything that, you know, can help to safeguard to the extent we can student athletes, coaches, fans, and taking guidance from others, you know, leagues and properties that are dealing with exactly the same thing. You know, the thing about this is we're not operating independently here, right? The NBA, the NHL, all the college conferences that are holding their championships this week, PGA Tour, you know, everybody is wrestling with this very same issue. We can, you know, take care of some things and some things, frankly, could end up being out of our control. You know, if, if federal agencies make decisions on large scale events, then we're no different than any other, you know, property league or event, but we need to prepare for the start of the tournament. And that's exactly what we're doing to make sure the experience is as incredible as it's always been, that teams get a chance to participate, have this life changing experience and, and compete for national championship. And so, we're focused on that while being very mindful and responsible of what our ultimate goal here is, and that is to protect the health, safety and security of all the participants.

I know there's going to be another team here today that actually cancels its, its last regular season game. Have you gotten any more info about any of the league tournaments being affected other than maybe Chicago State, which I'm told, and again, I think their deal is a combination of financial and the coronavirus, but, you know, their league tournament is in Vegas, and from what I'm told they're not planning to play there as well. Are there any other league tournaments that you guys have already gotten info on that are going to be affected? Because, you know, again, it's got to be, listen, it's got to be hard being a coach right now, right, and sending your kids, these kids, out to an area like Seattle, where you don't know all the information. You know that there have been nine deaths. And if something happens, you're the one who made the decision. You know, certainly, you're, you're in the equation. You're one of the people who made the decision as the head coach of that team. So I, you know, it's got to be a tough, a tough deal for any coach going to any area that has been hit with the coronavirus right now.

Sure. And I put athletic directors and presidents in that group as well.

Right.

I mean, you know, clearly, I think, you know, we're, you know, we work for the membership of 1,100 schools. We got the Division III men's, women's basketball championship starting this weekend, you know, and those, all those games are played on campuses.

Yeah.

And, clearly, I don't think there's any question in my mind that, you know, sooner rather than later, there will be some campuses that will start making decisions as to whether to hold events

on campus or not, or whether they have their teams travel or not, you know, to the example that you, you've shared, Jeff, and we just have to adjust, you know, when those eventualities happen. You know, my colleagues here that run other championships aside from basketball have to think about the spring championships as well. This is not something that's going to go away, you know, at the end of April, I mean, excuse me, at the start of April. So, you know, we're, we're, again, being responsible. We're completely connected with, with all the authorities that we need to be on a daily basis, and, and being thoughtful about how to do this responsibly.

When you start your hiring process, you may have questions. Will you find good applicants to choose from? What about education experience? And how will you know you made the right hire? Indeed is here to help. Millions of great candidates use Indeed every day to find their next opportunity. You can post a job in minutes and you screen their questions to help create your shortlist of applicants fast. Also add skills test to your job post so you can be confident in your applicants' abilities. Their library of more than 50 skills test ranges from industry-specific skills, like accounting to general aptitude tests like critical thinking. Indeed gives you the smart tools to make hiring decisions quickly and to be confident that you're making the right hire for your team. Post your job today at [Indeed.com/good](https://www.indeed.com/good), and get a free sponsored job upgrade in your first posting. That's [Indeed.com/good](https://www.indeed.com/good). Terms, conditions and exclusions apply. Offer valid through March 31, 2020.

All right. Let's move to a simpler topic, I think, I hope. I don't know. The NET, second year of the NET. And I don't know, I mean, I kind of like it. I mean, listen, there are some things that stand out about it, that I'm... a little bit perplexing for me like how my alma mater, Arizona, is number 10 in the most recent edition of the NET. I guess, the thing that all the numbers geeks and, you know, the Matt Norlander of the world, my good friend Matt Norlander of CBS Sports by the way, want to know is why hasn't this been disclosed? You know, to the public, the formula of the NET and will it be? Because you've got the factors listed, but we don't, they don't know how it's weighted. And again, even if I knew all that stuff, Dan, it wouldn't mean a damn thing to me. But for Norlanders of the world, they want to know. They want to know how, you know, how it's, I guess, how, how, how it's prepared, how it's cooked.

Yeah. Well, you know, we give continual, you know, consideration to that, as we're studying, you know, how this is working and, and what we should do differently in the future if anything. Frankly, we're... we've been even looking at it over the course of this season in real time as to whether we should consider tweaking it for next year for the future. Did the same thing last year, but the committee decided after just one year of sample size wasn't enough. Wanted to have two full years. We've got a couple things we've identified we're taking a good hard look at. So it's possible that this spring summer we may make some tweaks to it. And at that time, maybe we'll consider, you know, sharing a little bit more about, you know, how the sausage is made and what that formula is. Although, to your point on, you know, except for the extreme analytics, guys, I don't know how much that means, you know, for coaches and, and student athletes, but, you know, we'll consider that. I just think, you know, from where I am, and I can

speak on the committee's behalf of this as well, we're very pleased that it dramatically improved analytic tool than the RPI.

Oh, so much better.

It was...

So much better.

Yeah, I mean, it was, it was a recommendation from the NABC, from the Coaches Association, to make this thing more modern and contemporary and sophisticated. I think we have achieved that goal, you know, taking things into consideration like offensive and defensive efficiency, and some level of predictability that the RPI, the results-oriented metrics didn't take into consideration at all. Makes it a much, much more accurate and, and useful tool. But it, but it is just that. It's one, one tool, and you know, we have literally five other metrics that are on the team sheets the committee uses, you know, in analyzing teams, KPI, SOR, BPI, Sagarin, and KenPoms rankings are all there right next to the NET.

It is the main analytic that sorts the quadrants, quadrants one, two, three and four, so it is impactful in that way. But it's not the only thing. I think that, you know, the, the analysis of how the committee uses the NET ranking is more important than what your NET ranking is. You know, if you look back at last year, for example, there was one team I can think of that was ranked in the, in the low 30s that didn't get into the field as an at large team and there was another one in the mid to high 60s that did. So it's not the end all, be all. But it is a way to, you know, sort teams one through 353 to determine who's great, who's good, who's average and who's bad. And that's what determines, you know, your, your quadrants 1, 2, 3 and 4, and that's ultimately more important than anything is, who did you play? Where did you play them? And how did you do? And really the focus of that being on quad 1 and quad 2 games played and how you doing in those games.

So is that the biggest misconception right now about the process of tournament selection? Is it that everybody now believes like the NET is the end all be all on how teams are, are chosen and even seated? Or, is there something else that we're missing that you think, you hear all the time that you say to yourself, "No, no, that's not right"?

Yeah, I mean, I think that there's a tendency toward that, you know, because, you know, people follow and love sports, you know, through analytics so, so much now, right? Not just to our sport, but across the board. So I do think that there's probably a little more misconception about how those tools are used. I do think, you know, frankly, that being said that, that there's maybe even a little more utility with the NET and predictive analytics in helping determine seating. And some of those tough questions about, you know, because the, the... getting into the term as an at-large team, you need results. You need wins. Just playing a bunch of close games isn't going to get you into the tournament, never has, and I don't think ever will.

But that level of predictability through the NET does help a little bit more maybe in the seeding process than it does in the selection process. But ultimately, as I said, it really is not to oversimplify it, but who did you play? Where did you play them? And how did you do? And, you know, the "were did you play them" is a big part of it, like, you know, winning games away

from home either on the road or on neutral courts is really important. It shows up in your NET ranking, in where you, where you're ranked. It shows up in your quadrant results because those are based now not just on, on where your opponents are ranked but where those games are played home, neutral, road. And you know, the tournament is played in a neutral setting or indeed some cases in like a road setting if you're a favorite playing an underdog or you're in a geographic area that favors, you know, your opponent and their fans. So you got to, you got to prove you can do that during the regular season when away from home.

Uh-oh, I'm not letting Steve Pikiell or Rutgers fans listen to this podcast. They, they haven't fared as well away from the rack as they have certainly on their, on their home court. Pike has done an unbelievable job. And I think they're, they're in good shape. But, I guess, certainly, what you, what you highlighted there does not, does not help their cause as far as the team that has struggled away from home.

Well, they have another opportunity in West Lafayette this weekend and then opportunities in Indianapolis during the Big Ten Tournament, and they certainly have had a fantastic season, historically, and, and even just this year alone. And, you know, what I said is absolutely true. But it's, you know, every team is evaluated independently and compared with others, and they've done a lot of other things that make their resume pretty attractive as well.

All right, so I got some heat from Providence fans, because I said that they should not be ranked in the top 25 today. Now Providence is an interesting case. And a lot of people feel like recency should mean more. That a team... that you should be evaluating a team more on what they are today rather than what they did in November, December. I completely disagree. I think every game should be weighted the same. You know, an Evansville loss, I get Kentucky is in the same team as the one that lost Evansville at home. I understand Providence is in the same team that lost the, you know, Long Beach State and Penn and Northwestern and Charleston back in November is the one that I saw beat Seton Hall and Creighton recently. Can you clear that up for people that, that, that it is, right, I mean, it's a game in November is worth the same as a game this weekend?

It is absolutely and that's intentional. That's even figured into the NET ranking. There is no greater emphasis placed on games played later in the season than earlier in the season. And the reason for that is for the health and good of the game of college basketball overall as much as anything, Jeff, you know. It's important that those games played in November and December matter, and that coaches and programs are incentivized to play those games because for all of us that love this game, yourself right at the top of that list...

Yeah.

...you want games that matter in November and December when you're battling for interest with fans around college football and the NFL. And so, you know, weighting games more so later in the season would, would change that dynamic. So they all matter. There's no question about that. And it leads to some great, you know, tournaments and, you know, double headers and intersectional matchups that happen in November and December. All that being said, the term is played in March. And so, how your team is constructed, whether it's, you know, player availability, injuries, mid-year transfers, players becoming ineligible for one reason or another, you know, the committee has to assess what a team is when they enter the tournament in

mid-March and how they will fare, you know, as, as an at-large team, as an AQ and where they'll be seated. So it is not insignificant if a team is playing well, particularly against the tougher part of their schedule in some cases, right?

You know, you mentioned Providence but I could mention UCLA or Texas or many others, Virginia. So, you know, it is, it is a full evaluation of an entire season. You're 100% right. But, you know, there has to be some consideration given to, you know, who the team is when they're entering play in March. And, you know, the good thing, the good thing about our game is, you know, you're, you're in it until you're not, right? I mean...

Yeah.

...all 350 basically have a chance to play their way into this tournament through the conference tournaments. And even if, even if you don't, and you're an at-large team, you got opportunities up until you lose that last game in your conference tournament.

Has there been any thought, any conversation recently about rewarding the regular season champions with an NCAA Tournament bid? You know, and for me, it's, you know, more for those lower-mids that it comes down to three days or sometimes one day, in February or March, as opposed to three months of work where they've dominated, you know, a league and they have one bad night and they're done. And yes, they're in the NIT, but we both know the NIT is not the NCAA Tournament.

Well, the, the committee has not talked about that at all. I mean, the reality is each conference has a chance to make that decision independently anytime they want. And, frankly, it's kind of gone the other way probably recently, you know, was the, was the start of the Ivy League Tournament. The one remaining league that had been rewarding the regular season champion, is the AQ decided to have 14 tournaments, which is great, you know, for those programs in that league, possibly, but no, the basketball committee hasn't talked about that at all because it's a, it's a league decision.

Yeah.

And, and they've all decided that, you know, that they want the conference tournament and they want that conference tournament champion to be the AQ.

Injury suspensions, clarify for me how that's handled. Do you... is there a certain protocol in place that you tell the committee members, like for instance, you know, Yoeli Childs nine games for BYU at the start of the season. He was suspended by the NCAA regarding the, the agent rule that was in place, that went in place last year. So he missed, I think, three of their seven losses for BYU this year. Obviously, that's just one example. You know, a guy like Neemias Queta missed a couple losses for Utah State. They're right on the bubble right now. I think they lost the St. Mary's earlier in the season and maybe UNLV. How do you, how do you handle those? How do you tell the committee members to handle those situations? Or, are they on their own and they have to determine how they look at suspensions and injuries?

Well, you, you know, each, and each of the 10 members of the committee, you know, has the opportunity to look at things their own way. But we do, you know, provide some kind of

guidelines and principles that we, that we use. One is that no games played are dismissed, you know, or not considered. So whether a player or a coach is available or not, the result of the game is the result of the game. So, I think it's sometimes a misconception that, you know, we somehow, you know, give credit to a team that lost the game without their best player, because they were unavailable. That, that doesn't happen.

But, but it is important to have full information. We have this conference monitoring program where nine committee members, you know, monitor anywhere from seven to eight different conferences and their, their job is to be experts in those conferences and to know, for example, of teams, player and coach availability and how it could have impacted a stretch of their season or single game, you know, opportunities.

I think Yoeli Childs is a really good example, frankly, because, you know, nine games at the start of season when they had, when BYU had some significant non-conference opportunities, and fared quite well without them. But, but we're not at full strength as they have been certainly, you know, in the last third of the season after he got, you know, through a slight injury as well.

Yeah.

And as I mentioned in my last answer about, you know, you know, the entire seasons work and how you're playing at the end of the season, that team with him now is a different team than when they didn't have him to start the season or when he was injured. And so that team is the team that has to be assessed for whether they're at large, they don't win the AQ or where they'll be seated now that they are at full strength.

So at the end of the day, I think Jeff, you know, my eight years working with the committee, I would say that there's not as much emphasis put on player and coach availability as some might think, because I think largely, you know, teams that are good enough find a way to have some success without players, and that there's enough of a body of work that, you know, that can lead to informed decisions about at large selection and more, more frequently seating, because, you know, it's a harder evaluation if you're trying to figure out whether you should be in a tournament or not. And oftentimes, it's more about seating than it is about selection. So I don't know if that answers the question. Clearly, it is a, it is a factor, but I would not say it's a primary factor at all. But, you know, I always say like, what's the alternative? Should the committee not consider that at all?

No, you have to consider. Yeah, you have to look at it but, but again, it's hard because, right, I mean, it's like you're playing with a free game then if, you know, Seton Hall without Myles Powell, right? Well, if they lose, some people want you to just discount it. Well, they didn't have their best player. But if they win, like they did against Maryland at home...

Maryland, yeah.

...then, then it's a hell of a win, right? So, like, you can't have it both ways, I guess, is what I'm saying.

Yeah. But, you know... no, you can't. But, you know, the committee wants to be fully, you know, informed and thorough and, you know, and diligent and, and they... so they want to have all that information at their fingertips and evaluate it in the way they see fit.

Well, and that's what I tell everybody. When everybody says, you know, like, well, how do they, how do they pick? How do they decide? And I said, Well, there's 10 people. So all 10 of them might have a different way of deciding, right, one may have seen Seton Hall play multiple times when they, when they play really well. Another might not have seen them in person. And you know, might be looking at the NET. Another one might really like one of the other metrics. So it's 10 human people in there that are all kind of figuring it out in their own way, aren't they?

Yes. And, and it's a series of votes, as you know, so, you know, literally they're voting on a computer, tabulating results, and that is what determines at large selection and seating. So, no one committee member, frankly, no, two or three committee members probably can sway, you know, all the decisions on any one of those factors. So, it is, it, there are a lot of safeguards, you know, because... put in place in that regard. And, and that's a little bit of misconception as well, probably.

But, you know, ultimately, you just use an example used earlier about, you know, BYU, you know, maybe it results in one difference on a seed line. You know, I don't think we're talking about massive differences here. But the difference, you know, between one seed line and another is not just important for the team that's being evaluated. It's probably equally or morally more important for all their opponents and for the rest of that region. Because if you mis-seed team based on, you know, player availability or, you know, then you're, you're creating imbalance in a portion of the bracket that's, that's not good for the term overall.

Well, here's what I'll tell you about seeding this year from somebody doing the top 25 fairly consistently this season, you know, as much as I possibly can. This time of year, it's, it's almost impossible. I mean, honestly, it's, it's really hard to evaluate right now. Like teams like Kentucky, right, I mean, again, that probably the worst loss I've seen, I don't know, and how long for a team that's going to be seeded in the top four lines. And then they've got really good wins. And a team like Providence, again, who was out of the equation, you know, a month ago and now looks to be firmly entrenched to some degree. It just, it's really, really hard to evaluate. I think after you get, you know, past the top six or seven teams, there's, there's less disparity than ever this year, Dan. I don't know how you guys are going to handle that seeding, because you're going to get killed for it. And honestly, I don't think seeding is going to be nearly as important this year as it's ever been because, again, the disparity between top to bottom from even one, you know, however many, you know, 40 or 50, whatever it's going to be, it's just so minimal.

Yeah, I don't disagree, I think it's really challenging this year. The regular season has been a reflection of that, and it's going to lead to incredible games...

Yeah.

...and incredible drama and excitement for the tournament because of that competitive balance you talk about. And I think right away, you know, in the second round, for sure, you're

going to have some big-time matchups that are, you know, even one-eights and two-sevens are going to be...

Are going to be great.

...hard, right, they're going to be hard to determine definitively, you know, who's going to win those games.

Yeah.

So great for the tournament, tough for coaches, awesome for players, you know, it's going to make for a fun March run.

Now, that's what I've said, "Listen, you know, you can say what you want about a lack of dominant teams and players but, man, once, once we get to even conference tournaments, you know, I'm going to hit Big East and Big Ten, but, but NCAA for sure. It's going to be unbelievable because, again, you're going to have some matchups you're going to look at and say, "Wow, that's, that's a second..." even, even some first-round matchups. You're going to have some great first-round matchups.

What, what is it like for you, describe before I let you go what this month is like for you, you're insane schedule? I know you got, you know, the four sites in four days, I think, again, on Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday of the opening weekend, which I'm too old to do now and maybe it's that I don't have a private plane, but you didn't do me any favors this year by the way with the, with the sights. None of them are within like six hours of a drive of one another, killing me.

Yeah, it's true. It's true. Albany is close to where you are but you're right, it's not another one that's, that's [budding 0:37:23] up next to Albany. You're right.

Yeah, what's it like?

Yeah, what's it like? It's a, it's a thrilling and it's a little bit stressful but incredibly...

You don't get stressed. Who are you kidding? You don't get stressed. You're [inaudible 0:37:41] as it gets.

On the outside, not on the inside brother.

Yes.

It's, you know, it's, it's a long month but a really great month, the best. I feel blessed to be able to be part of it. I'll leave on Saturday for New York. We have selection week with the men's basketball committee in New York City. Do some things with CBS and Turner Sports, you know, and CBS Studios in New York. After Selection Sunday, we'll go straight to Dayton for First Four, be there for both Tuesday and Wednesday for four, First Four games. And then on Wednesday night late after the last Dayton game go straight to Atlanta. And we have a command center in Atlanta at Turner Sports Studios for the whole first and second round weekend. Back to Indianapolis for a day to pack and do laundry and then out to the four regional sites starting in Los Angeles and ending up in New York, and then straight to Atlanta

after that. So, not a lot of sleep but awesome thing to be part of and blessed to have the opportunity.

Well listen, I appreciate you jumping on. I know it's going to get hectic here soon. So I figured now is probably as good a time as any to try to get you on. Maybe I'll see you for a minute in, in New York at the Big East, if you can slip away on Thursday and catch a few games, because I'll tell you what and you know the Big East better than anybody, that league has been awesome to watch this year. Absolutely. I mean, as of most of them because of the parody, so to speak, but the Big East has been awesome.

It sure has, you know, great programs, great coaches. And, you know, there's really special players, I mean, you know, Marcus Howard, Miles Powell at the top of the list, but there's so many great stories in that league. And, you know, it'll be fun to watch that among all the other conference tournaments. You know, as we close here, I can't help but think of going back to Atlanta for the first time since 2013. And since 2013, in the sixth Final Fours, we've had 19 different teams play in the Final Four, six different champions, only three teams who have repeated and been in the Final Four during that stretch and, you know, I think that's a great thing about college basketball and about this tournament, you know, other events as great as they are, you can, you could make pretty accurate predictions at this point in the season going into playoffs, if not even before playoffs begin. But there's no way that you can determine who's going to be in Atlanta. And, and that's what's great for the game and great for the players that play it. The opportunity to get to the Final Four and indeed win a national championship is real. And it's, and it's fun to watch. And it's, it's going to be a great March. So thanks, Jeff, what you do for the game and awesome to be with you. I look forward to seeing you in New York and then again, Atlanta.

No, likewise, Dan, I appreciate you joining us and just make sure you, you stock up Warlock with the M&Ms for the next week or whatever his candy is of choice.

And hands on, we got to cover that.

All right. Thanks, man. Appreciate it.

Thank you.

And I will see you next week. Tell Dave I said hello, and we'll talk soon.

Safe travels.

Thanks, man. You too.