



## 2019 NCAA Championships May 16-25 • Orlando, Fla. • USTA National Campus

### Men's Semifinal: Recap and Quotes

#### #2 TEXAS def. #3 FLORIDA, 4-2

**ORLANDO, Fla.** – The Texas Longhorns capitalized on a searing start to reach the program's second NCAA title match (2008). They will compete for their first team title on Sunday, against the winner of defending champion Wake Forest's semifinal against No. 9 North Carolina.

After taking the doubles point, the Longhorns stayed hot in singles, leading on all six courts in the early going. The Gators managed to salvage the first set on Courts 1 and 5, but with Texas taking the other four opening sets, the pendulum was beginning to swing decisively in their favor.

Texas soon took a 3-0 match lead, but the Gators snapped back to close to 3-2. With a Florida comeback sending the No. 4 flight to what was a tight deciding set, it was up to Texas senior Leonardo Telles, playing No. 3 singles, to cash in on his lead and avoid more third-set drama.

Florida junior Johannes Ingildsen was able to level the second set at 5-all, but Telles immediately broke for 6-5. He took full advantage of the opportunity to serve his team into the final.

In an ITA Top-10 showdown at No. 1 singles, No. 9 Oliver Crawford battled past No. 7 Christian Sigsgaard, 6-4, 6-3, to put the Gators on the board for the first time in the semifinal.

The veteran Texas lineup features juniors at the Top 2 singles spots, and seniors on Courts 3-6.

## QUOTES

### **Texas junior Yuya Ito**

***On the pressure of expectations being the ITA's No. 12-ranked singles player and playing No. 2, where he is expected to win:***

At No. 2, in this point of the tournament, any team has a very good No. 2. Every time I step onto the court, it's tough, I just have to do what I can do; I can only control what I can do. I try to take care of my business. It turned out well today. Hopefully I can keep that going.

### **Texas senior Leonardo Telles**

***On closing out his clinching match from 5-all in the second set:***

It's more of just trusting myself in those moments. I saw it was going to come down to me and Harry [Harrison Scott]. I didn't really know much about what was going on the other courts aside from that. It was more about trusting myself and knowing I've worked all year for this. I was going to be ready for that moment.

### **Texas Interim Head Coach Bruce Berque**

***On his team's hot start in singles and doubles:***

The guys handled the moment terrific. I told them after the match that we've been consistent with the way we played every match, with the way we competed. Every time we went out there and did it, we were preparing ourselves for this moment and reinforcing only good competitive habits, and they were ready. They earned it and they prepared all year and they continued to do what they have been doing.

***On the advantage of having a veteran team:***

It helps for sure. In our singles lineup today, we had two juniors at No. 1 and No. 2 and the rest down the line were seniors. You saw the results of that. It's not only that, it's the way they do it. I couldn't be prouder of the way all of our guys competed today, but especially Leo [Leonardo Telles] at the end was amazing. It was a seesaw match, there were ups and downs. He stayed the course the whole time. He was as competitive and tough as he could possibly be, against a very good, tough competitor and a very good, tough Florida team. I couldn't have been prouder of Leo, but it's not the first time he's done it. He's done that three or four times this year, so it's nice to see him do it once again.

## **Texas Interim Head Coach Bruce Berque (continued)**

### ***On stepping in as head coach in the middle of the season and leading the team to success:***

I don't think it has much to do with me. Well, it's not about me. It's about the team, it's about these guys. I don't feel any special sense of pride because it's me out there. I'm just happy that these guys are representing Texas well. I'm really proud of these guys that they get to be proud, they earned it.

## **Florida Head Coach Bryan Shelton**

### ***On whether the slow start put his team in too deep of a hole to finish the comeback:***

I think so. Texas did a nice job today in the critical stages of matches. We always say that the first 20 minutes of singles, you really want to try to set the tone, and I thought that Texas did a great job of that, coming out aggressively. They took some momentum from the doubles. I think our guys were up for the fight, that's what you saw, us continuing to stay in there and us continuing to battle until the end.

I thought that if we could get them deep, I felt like we had a good chance. In the heat, extending the matches a little bit longer and continuing to play, then we'd have our chances. They did a good job at stepping up at the right times and executing.

### ***On stationing himself on court No. 3 for most of the match:***

It was just one of those things, you kind of read what's going on throughout the six-court layout and you see where you think that you can turn the match in your favor. I felt like in the middle of court No. 3 and No. 4, even though we lost those first sets, those were the key spots for us. At No. 2, the guy was just too hot, playing too well. We knew that was going to be their best slot.

For us, we knew we had to be really tough in the middle of our lineup at No. 3, No. 4 and No. 5. We know we've got one of the best No. 1s in the country, so we felt comfortable there. We just needed to do a little bit better in the middle.

## Florida Head Coach Bryan Shelton (continued)

### *On the impact of mentor Bill Tym:*

Well I think that he instilled a lot of good things in me, as far as what it takes to become successful. He always said that the difference between successful people and people who aren't is that successful people are willing to do things that unsuccessful people won't do.

We try to find ways with our guys on our team, our coaching staff, to differentiate ourselves from the pack. One of those things that can all of the sudden help us and gain an advantage over... it's a global game, this game is not just going on in the United States, it's going on everywhere. So our guys keep a journal to write those things down that they're working on, have goals that they're setting for themselves, doing the little things daily, taking care of their bodies before, after and during. Just trying to find separators. There are so many good college teams out there, they're all there recruiting the best talent, and making deals out there.

For us, we've got to develop, we've got to bring in great student-athletes and find ways to develop a little bit quicker. I think Coach Tym, he instilled that for sure. He instilled how to problem-solve. We want to teach our guys that there are answers out there, even though we got off to a slow start in the singles, don't panic. It's a test. You've got two hours to complete the test. There are a lot of problems that these teams are throwing out at us. Let's use our brains and figure out how we can adjust and get to the finish line.

### *On his final message to his team:*

It's been a heck of a run. Our guys have invested in one another, they've worked extremely hard together, they've built relationship that will last a lifetime. We have two seniors on this team and I know our guys, I saw them all crying after the match. That wasn't because we lost, it was because those seniors will no longer be with us moving forward. I think that's the hardest thing-but just certainly super, super proud of these guys. I think they'll remember this championship, they'll remember this season, not just for the wins and the success but because of the unity we had and the chemistry that we had and the work we put in and the tough losses, I think we had four or five throughout the year. But also, remembering the success we had and how we bounced back and the resilience. These are things that are going to help these guys for the rest of their lives and memories they'll take with them forever.

## Florida Head Coach Bryan Shelton (continued)

### *On what the missing ingredient is to get Florida to its first NCAA final:*

We've got to continue to work. We've got to improve in a lot of different areas. One of the areas I saw today that stood out, we still are not serving effectively enough, especially on the big points. We're having to come up with ridiculous ground strokes or volleys or something else, and those guys were getting more free points on their serves. I think that's an area we've got to continue to work on. This game is still a lot about first strike. We can get better with first-strike tennis, get better with our serves and our returns.

I felt like our team was super fit this season and worked hard to get there, so I think that element is in place. This is the first time that this team has made it to the Final 4. I can't really talk about other teams in the past, all we can look at is what we have in front of us right now and the guys we have on our squad right now. I love our guys. The guys that are coming back are coming back better than ever. We've got some great ones coming in and so the future is bright. These guys have built a culture that is based around doing things the right way, with integrity. I know we will continue to fight on.