

Big Ten Basketball Media Days

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Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Purdue Boilermakers

Men's Head Coach

Matt Painter



MATT PAINTER: Thank you. Like everybody that probably came up here, excited about our season, excited about our guys. Thought we had a great summer, even though we weren't always together in the summer. Had three guys play for the U-19s, got valuable experience.

Have a good group of freshmen that are coming into our program that have really worked hard and done some really good things in their preparation for the season.

We return our top I think seven or eight scorers. We have some experience. Obviously the thing that you want is experience, success in guys really pulling the rope all in the same direction. There's also a selfish piece to a lot of things you do. Each one of our guys want to play. They want to be a big part of us playing. We're going to have to have some sacrifice within our team, like any team that's successful.

I think the keys don't come down to the talent, the keys come down from the production from that talent and the sacrifices you have to make to be on a team. That's hard to do. This is a hard thing to do.

We got a group of guys right now that are working really hard, putting in a lot of time, just trying to get better each day. I think what happens sometimes when you get picked to be one of the better teams, you know, your management of that ends up being really crucial in terms of your success.

We don't want to have a celebration in October or November. We want to be able to be in the position that they're saying we should be come late February and March, hopefully contending for a Big Ten championship and having a good number next to our name.

We also know we have to earn that. You have to earn that every single day and do a lot of little things so your program can be successful.

Q. What do you think your group took out of last year's NCAA loss? How has that worked moving

forward?

MATT PAINTER: That's a good question because you see a lot of teams that are a favorite in a game get knocked off in the NCAA tournament through the years. Then that team fragments through graduation or transfer, they're not the same team the next year.

We have some new faces, but very a lot more familiar faces on our team. That's what we really talked about, was learning from that and being better, even in a better position in next year's hopeful NCAA tournament.

We'll see. I think the answer that lies from your question really comes in our actions going forward. I use Virginia as an example, when they got knocked off in the first round a couple years ago, then turned around and won a national championship. That was a devastating loss for them, but obviously they used that as motivation. Obviously they were the national champs the next year.

We have to be able to use that as motivation. The thing that hurts you as a coach -- North Texas's coach is a very good coach, friend of mine. We talked about just how good they were, how tough they were. It wasn't something that we took lightly. We knew North Texas was very, very good.

But that's part of March Madness. We've really tried to magnify some of the things we struggled with in that game, and hopefully that can make us a better team and a better program.

Q. Your freshmen class, how are they coming along? Trey Kaufman had a hand injury. How is he coming along?

MATT PAINTER: All three of them are great. They have a lot of similarities in their makeup. Very grounded, work hard, put a lot of time in trying to improve, trying to get themselves ready for the season.

Brian Waddell is from here in Indianapolis, has been fabulous. How he didn't have other high major offers, kind of blows my mind to be frank with you. But just a winner, a



guy that's won two state championships, very fluid, understands the game.

Trey Kaufman won two state championships also. Hurt his hand. That set him back a little bit as he missed the first month of workouts in the summer. But can really score the basketball, has a good feel for what's going on. Just trying to learn from a defensive standpoint and then all of our ins and outs offensively in the stuff that we run.

Caleb Furst made the U-19 team and really put himself in a great position, got a chance to play the four and the five in the U-19s, which he'll play for us. But very good. Very mobile, can really move. Has really gotten to where he makes his free throws, can knock down open threes, good athlete, can move, do a lot of different things.

All three of those guys have been really good.

Q. You mentioned in your opening statement about having so much depth and talent, people buying into that. How much are you looking forward to having that sort of versatility to match up with everyone? How much do you expect to see Trevion and Zach Edey play together?

MATT PAINTER: I think our matchups, with our team, will really be determined more defensively than probably offensively. I think we can use that size together in snippets right now. It just depends how skilled your four is, or if we feel we can flip that matchup offensively to where we might have some struggles offensively but not as many as you're going to have at the other end.

And what you can live with. I think sometimes as a coach, that's what it really gets to. Having that kind of depth, being able to play a lot of different ways can really help you.

What's been working for you, a lot of times coaches like to stay with that. Sometimes what's been working for you now isn't going to work against the particular team you get. That piece right there, as a coach you wait for kind of it organically to come to you, you're kind of upset when it doesn't. You have to figure it out for yourself. You make it difficult.

It's a very good problem to have. I wish I had the exact answer for you. I think it's really going to depend on those other guys.

The problem with college basketball, people say it's really tough to play big, most people's big guys aren't very good. That's why. It's just the way it is. Especially their backups. So for us, if we can play Trevion and Zach together, but

Mason Gillis is a good player, Trey Kaufman is a good player, Caleb Furst is a good player. If I go the other direction, they're good players.

Trevion has to be able to function defensively as a four is really the guy to that answer. If he can do that, then he's going to put some binds in there. Now, it doesn't mean Trevion is on the perimeter more. We're going to go post up that four man.

I think we see more zone. Our league really isn't a zone league, even though people play it 10% to 20% of the time. That's fine for us, because Trevion is good in the high post. Zach causes a lot of problems. He causes a lot of problems for us in practice. I don't really have a good answer how to deal with them. He's improved. He's very, very good.

Q. You guys tried doing the two big things. What makes Trevion better prepared for this now than he was two years ago?

MATT PAINTER: I don't know if he is. He's a really good player. He's a better player than he was two years ago. He has more knowledge of the game. He's such a good offensive rebounder, such a good passer. Those are his two extremes on a high level.

You double him, he's going to make you pay. You get the ball in the high post to him, you can run splits off it, you can do a lot of different things because he sees the floor so well.

He is the fourth best offensive rebounder last year in college basketball as the five. Do the pros outweigh the cons? That's the real question going forward. And we have other players, other guys are good players, too.

I think it can happen. I think there's going to be games it doesn't happen at all. I think there's going to be games it happens in snippets. You have to be able to take care of the basketball.

You get two of the biggest guys on the court, they're anchored by the rim, a turnover happens, now you got to sprint to the other end. They're faster and running 80 feet, you're running 90 feet, I think we can all figure out how that ends. You can't have a lot of that.

Those pick-sixes in basketball, it's not the same as football. Football doesn't have the 70 shots in a game from each team. They just don't get that piece of it. That gets magnified in the giveaway/takeaway in a football game. In basketball, if you do that, you're going to give people run-outs.

When you play against good teams, have you to be able to steal points, get on the glass and steal points, have your defense create offense, get in transition. If you're just stuck in the halfcourt playing against a really quality team, it's hard. It's really hard.

You want to be the team flipping things to where you're stealing points. If they're stealing points off of you, now you're playing, in theory, big; but it's counterproductive. It doesn't make a whole lot of sense no matter what the narrative is.

If you have functional people sitting on your bench not being able to play, you just have size, you're not functional with it, the only time it's really advantageous is when a shot goes up.

We got to have the advantage when shots go up. We've got to have an advantage offensive efficiency. We've got to have an advantage defensive efficiency. If you take care of the basketball, make good decisions, you're going to set your defense to stay out of transition.

I hope my Jerry Maguire mission statement makes sense.

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