

# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - High Point vs Purdue

Thursday, March 20, 2025  
Providence, Rhode Island, USA  
Amica Mutual Pavilion

## High Point Panthers Coach Alan Huss Trae Benham D'Maurian Williams

Media Conference

Purdue 75, High Point 63

THE MODERATOR: When you're settled, an opening statement on today's game. Thank you.

ALAN HUSS: Clearly we're disappointed. We didn't come here to lose. We came here to compete and for stretches of the game, we did just that. When you have a long week, a long layoff like we had, you make choices as a coach and we limited contact and probably didn't do a good enough job of emphasizing rebounding for the last week. That's on me.

You know, you make decisions. I thought our first shot defense tonight was terrific. We just weren't able to capitalize with the rebound. We have been a fairly sound rebounding team for the second half of the season. It's something we placed great emphasis on. It was a miscalculation on my part and I let our team down today. I'm disappointed for that.

That being said, 29 wins, making the first ever appearance in the NCAA tournament for High Point is special. I don't want to dwell on one game where I didn't do a good enough job of having them ready. I'm proud of this group, proud of these guys sitting to my right. We have done exactly what we talked about for a long time. We certainly hope we'll be back soon.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for that, Coach. We're going to take questions for D'Maurian and Trae only.

**Q. D'Maurian, Coach Huss helped your game this season. What exactly did he do to help you bounce**



**back to what you were doing at GWOO? And Trae, he convinced you to come back, did he help you see what was possible?**

D'MAURIAN WILLIAMS: Yeah, first he installed my confidence back in me and made sure I was mentally right. Just a lot of reps this summer. He put me in the best positions to show what I do and forever grateful for that.

TRAE BENHAM: Yeah, I mean Coach Huss when we met in the summer, he told me we had an opportunity to make history. We had a lot of guys who came out of the transfer portal. It was super deep. It was hard to see my own minutes, my own ego, my own desires get in the way but as time went on, I realized and Coach Huss helped me realize there's something deeper than your own selfish desires and that's to be bigger than yourself.

We talk about it all the time but that's called sacrifice, and sacrificial love runs deep, and that's why this brotherhood is unlike anything I've ever been a part of. I want to give glory to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, because He's the one that sacrificed for us and He's a leader, and it's Him, that's the reason why we were able to do that. That's the reason we're able sacrifice and be a part of something bigger than ourselves and to crucify our own egos and desires every single day.

**Q. I wanted to ask you guys about the fan turnout. The university posted a video earlier today. I understand there was a big charter and a bunch of them flew up. A very impressive showing on behalf of faithful in purple. What did it mean to see all those folks out there see you play a competitive game? Did you anticipate you would have that much fan support up here?**

D'MAURIAN WILLIAMS: Yeah, absolutely. They've been behind us all year. We probably have the best mid-major fan base in the country so we expected them to be here and they was expecting a win. We didn't come here preparing to lose, so, yeah, we knew they were going to show up.

TRAE BENHAM: High Point is a family, man. You can sense it the moment you step on their campus. I don't know if any of you have been there but that place is



... when all is said, we're done.®

incredible. Like, we love going to school there. The family there is incredible and we have so many people who are very passionate about High Point basketball. It's a joy to be part of something like that. When you have that much momentum behind something that you do and that much love behind something that you do, it gets you emotional, man. So I'm grateful for my time at High Point. I'm grateful for the fans. Props to them, props to Huss Bus, my buddy Qualay, shout out to him.

**Q. Trae and D'Maurian, Coach Huss put a lot on himself for the loss but you had an incredible season. Talk about your appreciation for coach and what he did to help you get here and have a great season overall.**

D'MAURIAN WILLIAMS: Really I'm just grateful for the honesty. He told me a plan this summer and everything that he said came to fruition. So I'm grateful for the honesty.

TRAE BENHAM: Yeah, I'm just grateful that I was able to be part of something big. We could have gone anywhere in the country. There are so many people that could have played somewhere else and I know I could have played more minutes. I know I could have played somewhere else and maybe make more money, but it's not about that. Like, the memories that I've made at High Point has been surreal and I wouldn't have changed my college career for anything.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. One more here for our student-athletes.

**Q. D'Maurian, a three point game, seven minutes to go. Can you share with us what the confidence levels were and communication was coming down the stretch there?**

D'MAURIAN WILLIAMS: Yeah, even when we were down ten, we keep the same approach to everything we do. We were very confident going into the game. Even toward the last four minutes, we were confident. We just missed a couple pieces.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much for your time. We'll take questions for Coach Huss right here in front.

**Q. Congrats on a really good season. You obviously had a great season a year ago. I know the challenges when it comes to non-conference scheduling for mid-major. So this was your first real opportunity to play a team at this level this entire season. You guys played well out there, but did not having faced a power conference opponent, did that put you at a little bit of a**

**disadvantage big-picture now that you can reflect on how the game played out?**

ALAN HUSS: It certainly didn't help and I'll be on the record to every high-major coach out there, we would love to play you next season but I'm guessing that won't help. We would like to play a couple of power five conference teams. We're open to any and all. I think the ironic thing is they were one of the only ones that had a little bit -- by the time we talked to them, they had their schedule full except for one date that didn't work for us. Everyone else except a couple of schools said no.

It was probably a combination of a number of things. We had the last bye before the conference tournament so we were off for the better part of a week, played three games, not to the best of our ability. We lost our rhythm a little bit. Then we got another whatever it was, eight or nine days off and, not to make excuses, I just don't think we ever really found the rhythm we had late in the season. Even when you look past the step-up in class, I'm not certain -- we just didn't have great offensive flow today. I'm not certain it was anything we did. It was just us out of sync a bit. Obviously it's a big stage. With all due respect to the Big South, because we've got a great conference. It was unbelievably competitive. It has us prepared to play at a high level. This is a big stage for a lot of our guys and we have high-major transfer downs that for whatever reason didn't necessarily have the best experience at the highest level and for those guys that have a little bit of a chip on their shoulder and want to prove they can play at this level, they came out here but I think our plan was good enough defensively and we just kind of lacked flow and we couldn't run. The best thing we do is play in transition. We couldn't defensive rebound today and that really kept us out of transition. When we get the ball off the backboard and play fast-break basketball and play unselfishly, we're difficult to defend.

**Q. Alan, you guys retained a bunch of seniors and not just seniors, players in general heading into this season. Do you think that's reflective of the culture you've built at High Point and the way you have retained them, is that something you can replicate?**

ALAN HUSS: We certainly hope so. We have a number of guys with additional eligibility. We hope they use them with us. This is probably unique to us, unless you experience High Point you probably don't understand how good these kids have it. There's been some things on social media that show the things at High Point, but the things are just that. They're just things. Every time we have a student-athlete make an official visit or unofficial visit and show them our campus, we're careful. We take them directly to our conference room and basketball office and



say, all right, I know you have sensory overload right now, you have seen the nicest campus you will ever be on. If you choose High Point for those reasons, prepare to be disappointed, right? Those aren't good reasons to choose a college. You need to choose them based on the people in this building right here, the people you'll meet in the athletic department, the people you'll meet in the university as a whole. You need to be prepared to be something or be a part of something that's bigger than just High Point basketball if you come to High Point.

We're really careful to make sure we get guys that appreciate how good they have it there. You come to High Point, if you go to the mid-major level, people think it's not as nice and it's quite the opposite. Doesn't matter where you come from. If you come to High Point, you're going to have an experience that's better than where you came from.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.

**Q. You talked about the rebounding in today's game, their offensive rebounding was a huge difference. What was the chat other on the sideline and the huddle? Could you feel the size and length of Purdue?**

ALAN HUSS: Yeah, when you get dominated on the back board like we did today, I don't know if it was one single thing. It was more a series of problems. We've done a good job. We switch a lot of 1-4 ball screens. We inverted the matchup with Kaufman and put a four-man on him a lot of the times today. We were in huge disadvantaged situations and typically we do a good job winning those battles with numbers. We were a little passive in those 50/50 and 60/40 situations and watched a little bit. All we were trying to do was just get that game speed of pursuing the basketball game speed. We needed to get to that tempo and that urgency level.

Aside from the offensive thing, I think you feel that in the layoff more than anything else. More than step-up in class, we were just a step slow to all the 50/50 balls and they had plays where they had a 6'8" guy and we had a 6'2" guy. You can't do anything about that. We have to win the 50/50 balls. We weren't sound enough in that area today.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for your time, Coach. Congrats on a great season.

ALAN HUSS: Thank you.

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