

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: Second Round - Miami (FL) vs Purdue

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St. Louis, Missouri, USA

Enterprise Center

Purdue Boilermakers

Fletcher Loyer

Braden Smith

Trey Kaufman-Renn

Media Conference



Obviously for Miami, we haven't played a lot of those guys. So for us it's more of a mental focus and mental lock-in than anything. And obviously we're used to it, and it's nice, obviously, having played them in the past with them being their two best players.

Q. Fletcher, in an era where anybody can transfer, this trio chose to stay at Purdue. And I know you guys have talked about it a lot, but if you guys win tomorrow, Matt Painter wins his 500th game at Purdue. Loyalty is a two-way street. What made the decision for you to come back so easy, and what is it about Matt Painter that makes him such a special coach?

FLETCHER LOYER: Well, he recruited us, and he put a lot of faith in us early on, obviously putting the ball into two freshmen's hands right away and Trey working his way from being a guy redshirting to come off the bench and now starting and being All American. Obviously he put a lot of confidence in us to go out on the court and play. And to be able to get a degree from Purdue and come back for a fourth year and come back and have a chance to do something special with a group of talent, we didn't really look anywhere else.

I think you see a lot of situations where guys go chase money and the grass isn't always greener. You can learn a lot of values, like Trey said last week, you get a lot of relationships, you learn so much from sticking with a group of guys and dealing with adversity that why would we want to go somewhere else when we have a coach and fanbase and teammates that trust us?

Q. Painter talked earlier in the week about how freshmen obviously have a different perspective of March Madness. You guys, all three of you being together, riding this ride of four years of March Madness, kind of where is your head space now versus where it was as a freshman?

TREY KAUFMAN-RENN: I just think we have a lot more experience now, and so like when you're going to games -- it's the small things as far as we don't get as much time to warm up or maybe the travel is different, or just all those little things add up at this time of the year.

BRADEN SMITH: Yeah, no. Just the same thing.

MODERATOR: This session features the student-athletes from Purdue, Fletcher Loyer, Braden Smith, Trey Kaufman-Renn. And we're going to start off with questions.

Q. Trey, you guys see a lot of different brands of sort of two-big basketball in the Big Ten. Obviously that's what Miami has really kind of built themselves around this season. As you study them, what makes sort of the way they use their bigs distinct and successful?

TREY KAUFMAN-RENN: I think both their bigs are really athletic. Obviously we're familiar with one of them. We played Indiana. And the way the other bigs are able to rebound and block shots and kind of be an anchor on the defensive end.

They're just really good. And we hope that our experience with having played multiple two-big lineups will help us at this time.

Q. Braden, obviously you have a short turnaround. You guys have played, obviously, Malik and Trey in the past. They were in the Big Ten. When you were having such a short amount of time to prepare, does that familiarity help you at all in this process at all?

BRADEN SMITH: Yeah, no. It definitely helps. I think for us, it's just like you gotta be ready to like just bounce back quick. And obviously we were able to do that last tournament with the Big Ten Tournament, playing four games in four days. And obviously we played most of those teams. So it's easier.

Experience is a huge thing, and obviously when you have guys that have made it and played a lot of games in the tournament, it's easy to help the guys who haven't. And I think for us, like, sometimes even we get lost in that and we don't have that understanding of, like, okay, hey, we gotta focus and relock back in and do those things, especially when it comes to tournament time. So being able to have each other to hold accountable. We also can hold accountable the younger guys and everybody else.

FLETCHER LOYER: I think a lot of it is little details. It takes a lot of little details to win in March, all the stuff you learned all summer, fall, winter now comes into play. So just making sure everybody is ready to go and ready to do their job.

Q. This tournament can often be a war of attrition sometimes with the schedules, get packed into games back to back and it can be tough. With you guys, this game tomorrow being scheduled for noon after playing a game almost 48 hours before, how are you feeling in terms of your fitness levels and where you stand for tomorrow?

FLETCHER LOYER: It's just getting ready to go. It's win or go home. So it's no time to be tired. Make sure everybody is ready to do their job and play for a full 40 minutes.

BRADEN SMITH: Same thing. It's really just like that. And obviously we just played the Big Ten Tournament, which we played four games in four days, which is obviously a lot tougher on our bodies than it is being able to get a day off. Well not a day off, but a day in between games. I think for us just what Fletch said, being ready mentally more than anything.

TREY KAUFMAN-RENN: Yeah. I mean, just like they said, plus I think we have a really deep team. So we trust the guys that come in when maybe the starters need a break. Like, we got really good players, really the entire team. When you have that, there's not any drop-off when some substitutions are made. You have more confidence.

Q. Trey, circling back to you, you talked about having played against Malik before. I know you haven't had a ton of time to look at Miami just by the nature of the turnaround, but what are some things that you see that are a little bit different about the way he plays or it's the way Miami uses him compared to what you saw at Indiana?

TREY KAUFMAN-RENN: Yeah. He's always been a really good scorer even when he was at Indiana. They use him in a lot of the same different actions. I think they use

him in the short roll a little bit more at Miami versus just doing post-ups, as well as he's shooting a lot more threes this year. So there's some subtle differences. But overall, he's a really good player, really good scorer. So we'll have a tough time guarding him.

Q. Braden, everybody got involved in the offense yesterday. Just for some of those younger guys that this is maybe their first or second March Madness tournament, how important was it for them to see a shot go through, make a big play and get into a rhythm to start this thing off?

BRADEN SMITH: You know, it definitely sparks a boost for everybody when shots go in, and obviously for the younger guys to be able to get their feet wet, in a sense, and just be able to have that.

I thought, really, like the last tournament kind of just helped a lot with that, too. It honestly feels the same. Obviously different stakes, but kind of feels the same. So I think they kind of got acclimated early on with that tournament. But, yeah, no. It definitely helps when you make some shots and going into the Big Dance.

MODERATOR: Gentlemen, thank you very much for your time. Best of luck tomorrow.

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