

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

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St. Louis, Missouri, USA

Enterprise Center

Miami Hurricanes Tre Donaldson Malik Reneau Dante Allen

Media Conference

MODERATOR: Miami Hurricanes are here, Tre Donaldson, Malik Reneau and Dante Allen. We'll start off with questions for the student-athletes.

Q. First of all, congratulations to all of you three for last night. I have two questions. Dante, I just want to ask you about your first experience in March Madness and what it's been like for you, what you anticipated compared to what it really is.

For really any of you, maybe Tre or Malik, Braden, if you could talk about him. He set the record yesterday for assists. What do you think it'll be like playing against him, what kind of challenges does he pose?

DANTE ALLEN: To me, it's a blessing. March Madness, I've been watching it as a kid since I learned what basketball was. So to be able to play in the tournament in that type of environment, too, and most importantly to be able to come out with a win, it's a blessing, something I would have dreamed about when I was growing up learning how to play basketball.

A great experience, even better that we were able to get the win, also.

MALIK RENEAU: Yeah. I mean, Braden Smith is a great point guard. Congratulations on him getting the assist record. But, yeah, I mean, we gotta show him a lot of crowds. He's a great passer and he's the fuel to their offense. So being able to defend him without fouling and stuff like that so we can get an edge on him because he's the fuel to their offense. So if we can stop him, we can stop Purdue.



TRE DONALDSON: Like you said, me and Malik are familiar with Braden Smith playing in the Big Ten. Like he said, show him crowds, giving him different looks and keeping in front, that's the biggest thing, make it tough for him. He's a very gifted and good player. So make it as tough as possible for him.

Q. Malik, you're very familiar with this Purdue team, playing at IU for three years. How excited are you to go up against the Boilermakers again and what do you take from those three years that you can use to your advantage?

MALIK RENEAU: It's going to be a fun game. I'm super excited. Not just because I've been at IU and know the rival state. Man, just playing with these guys, it's always been fun playing with them.

It's just another obstacle, another road game that we have to come through. And just having that experience and knowing what they've done on the offensive end and what they do as a program. So just letting these guys know what we're going to see ahead of time and get everybody's minds ready for what we're going to face on Sunday.

Q. For any of you, you've talked before about the chip on the shoulder mentality a little bit this team has, and obviously that's been good for you during the season. When you get into March and you're playing a team like this at a moment like this, how valuable is it and necessary to have that sort of approach and mentality?

TRE DONALDSON: I mean, I don't feel like it changes. It's the same chip we've had all season. Just because we're in March and just because we're playing another good team, it doesn't really change. It's the same chip, and I feel like that's the biggest thing, and that's something that other teams can get misconstrued that they have to change when it comes to March. You just have to be yourselves, be the same people, and I feel like the teams that are able to do that are the teams that come out on top.

DANTE ALLEN: I think like Tre said, to keep it is definitely important. I think one big thing we've carried ourselves a lot of years is that we're ready to face anybody. We'll play



against be anybody, no matter the conference, wherever they're from. And I think a team like Purdue, top ranked nationally, one of the better teams in their conference. So I think to kind of carry over that chip, knowing that it's games like this that we wanted with the team, with the name, with the players that they have, just kind of knowing going into the game, it's going to be a fight. But it's nothing that we'll ever shy away from, I think, within our program.

Q. Talking about that theme of adversity that you guys have faced and conquered again and again, starting off this tournament, going to St. Louis, playing Missouri. And even next game, the timing of it with it being at noon. Not much rest from last night until Sunday. How do you guys feed off of that in terms of getting ready for how to prepare?

TRE DONALDSON: I mean, just gotta deal with it. I mean, we're going to be prepared for any moment that comes our way. Just stay the course and just continue to just keep pushing and pushing. And I mean, we've been in basketball our whole season. So we're just going to keep fighting.

Me, personally, I don't feel, we just can't overcomplicate it. We can't get too high or low. Just continue to look at everything the same way and attack it head-on. We have all day today to rest. Last night was a late game, but nobody cares. They're not going to use that as an excuse or anything like that. So we just have to come out, rest today, take care of our bodies, but also stick to what we do, don't change nothing and attack it the same way we have been all year.

Q. I want to ask Tre and Malik, with the experience that you have in the Big Ten, just how valuable is that to be able to play an opponent that you know so well, and what have you been able to -- without sharing any secrets, how much have you been able to talk to your teammates about Purdue?

And then for Dante, I'm just wondering, what was the celebration like last night? It was late, but did you stay out late or did you just go back to your rooms and sleep?

DANTE ALLEN: I think the celebration was really just within the locker room. Kind of getting back there with the team, coaches, everybody kind of involved, being able to put our sticker and go into the next round, just kind of enjoying that. I think by the time we left the arena, I think we were already ready for the next game. I think the biggest thing for us is it was a quick turnaround. We have today, but even then going back, getting a good meal and good shower and then also a good night's rest, I think, was the most important thing to us.

MODERATOR: Your familiarity with the Big Ten, advantage or no?

MALIK RENEAU: Yeah. I wouldn't say it's an advantage, but yeah, just being familiar with the opponent, just giving these guys a heads-up. Like I was saying earlier, just a heads-up on the type of actions and concepts they like to run. They got a lot of plays in their play book. So we have to be prepared for everything. And just being prepared for everything. I mean, that's what I've been telling them, just showing them the little concepts and how to guard ball screens because those are going to be vital in this game.

TRE DONALDSON: I feel like just our experience with them is going to help us a lot. Purdue has been doing what they do for a long time. This is nothing new. Coach Painter has had the program down pat and he's done a great job with the program.

Me being able to play them last year three times, knowing what it takes to win, it's just a big thing that I can not only relate to the young guys, but to Malik, as well. Me and Malik bounce a lot of ideas and thoughts off of each other on how we can help each other win. Him playing in the Big Ten for three years and being familiar with the program and what it means to him. I feel like it's going to be a big thing for us.

Q. And one thing, is there a flip side where they know you, too? They also know the two of you, right?

TRE DONALDSON: No.

MALIK RENEAU: Probably not so much. The way I play is quite different than how I played at IU. So I mean, we're going to be able to put me in space and it's going to be harder to double team and stuff like that. Yeah, that's pretty much.

TRE DONALDSON: We've both grown a lot from last year. So it's different aspects mentally, physically and obviously our basketball games have changed a lot. I played one year in the Big Ten. Coming from Auburn, they weren't really familiar with my game. Like I said, I played them three times. So they're going to know a little bit. They're going to have a good scout. They have a good program, so I know they're going to prepare as best as possible. But we just gotta be us.

Q. What's the most important thing Coach Lucas has given you individually? What means the most to you? What is most powerful to you?

MALIK RENEAU: I mean, his self-belief in us. The way he

trusts everybody on the team to do their job at a high level and then the confidence he gives in everybody to go out there and just compete and have fun and leave it all on the court.

TRE DONALDSON: Me, personally, just reminding me of like why I'm here. Me just being counted out, people thinking I wasn't able to play basketball at a high level, things like that. That helps me keep that chip on my shoulder, helps me continue to play at a high level.

DANTE ALLEN: I think for me just kind of being the young guy coming in and having a bit of a bigger role within the team, just instilling that confidence in me the same way my teammates do, instilling the confidence in me that I'm out there for a reason. I provide a lot of positives for our team, especially things that may not always show up on the stat sheets, the box scores, stuff like that. So just kind of reminding me all the positives I've done that have gotten me here and just making sure that I don't ever shy away from them.

Q. Dante, what's the biggest thing you've learned from this senior class of Tre, Malik and Ernest that you'll take with you?

DANTE ALLEN: I would say just never shy away from who I am. Obviously college is different. You have guys that are bigger, more physical and might be more experienced, but also kind of knowing that I've been a really good player here before, been recruited and I think kind of coming here just always remembering the things that got me here, things like toughness, competitiveness, kind of stuff like that. So never shying away from them, never shying away from the things who make me me, and just going out there having fun every night, whether it's a game, practice, individual workout by myself, just making sure I'm always having fun with it and always loving the game of basketball the same way I always have.

Q. I want to ask all of you, what did it feel like if you could just describe or remember, when you ran out onto the court last night and everybody was booing. It was really, really loud. I'm wondering what went through each of your minds, because it may be similar tomorrow. What did that feel like right when you go out from the tunnel and you're hearing these deafening boos?

MODERATOR: Dante, start us off with that one, please.

DANTE ALLEN: I think it was amazing for me. I think one of the best things about it is that I've always wanted to play in the tournament. But I think me also being the competitor, kind of having that extra level of adversity, it

kind of being closer to their home, I think it just added to the fun for me. And then also added onto that, really, really wanted to come out with a win.

TRE DONALDSON: Running out to all the boos, I embraced the villain role. I like it. I like playing on the road. I feel like it's more fun. It kind of gives you a little motivation, got everybody going against you. Proving 17,000 people wrong is really fun. I enjoy it. And I feel like our team takes on that role, as well.

MALIK RENEAU: It just added more fuel to the fire for us and just made us even more excited to go out there and just play. The only thing I really can remember from the cheers was the MIZ. That's all I really remember from what was going on out there. Everything else was just go out there and have fun.

Q. I want to ask, also piggybacking about Coach Lucas, Jai Lucas. CY said, when I first met him that the thing about Jai is he's demanding without being demeaning. Can you talk about just his personality and how when you see him, he seems like this mild-mannered guy. But how do you feel he balances being demanding but not demeaning?

MALIK RENEAU: At the end of the day, he just wants what's best for us. So we understand that. And going out there and competing at a high level, he's going to yell at every single one of us, whether you're the top player on the team or you're the walk-on on the team. He wants the best from everybody. So just having that, really, and having that from a coach, it just makes us all go.

And then off the court he's just a great guy. I mean, he's going to talk to everybody. He's going to interact with everybody. And he's just a great guy to be around.

TRE DONALDSON: I tip my hat to Coach. He's very professional. I feel like that's the biggest word when it comes to it, because like you said, he's very mild-mannered, but he holds us to a high standard and that's what comes with being professional. He's been around the game of basketball and around great coaches and around great programs. So he just carries that on with him to his own program here at Miami. And he does a really good job of being professional and carrying himself the right way, but also holding us to a high standard, holding our entire program, coaches as well, to a high standard to understand what we want to get done and what his goal is for his program and his teams.

DANTE ALLEN: I think like one thing Tre said is he's been around the game. He's been a coach at high-level programs with high-level players. He's also been a player,

too. So I think one great thing about him is he understands the mind of a player a little. There will always be times when he gets on us when he really needs to get his message across. But I think the thing about him is he understands us. He understands how to really get his message across, whether that's a one-on-one conversation, whether that's something that he might need to emphasize a little bit more. But I think he does a really great job of understanding how we receive messages, kind of how to get that message across, too.

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