

# Big Ten Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Friday, March 15, 2024

Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

Target Center

## Purdue Boilermakers

**Matt Painter**

**Zach Edey**

**Lance Jones**

Postgame Press Conference

Purdue - 67, Michigan State - 62

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Purdue, head coach Matt Painter, along with Zach Edey and Lance Jones. Coach?

MATT PAINTER: Thank you. Obviously it was a hard fought win for us, Michigan State outrebounded us, and I think that's the second time that's happened all year. Just a tough group. I think, when you play them, use your ability to stop them in transition and try to get them off the glass while also defending a lot of guys that can make plays and make shots.

So I thought we did a pretty good job defensively. We weren't as efficient even though we only turned the ball over 11 times, which is our average. That kind of kept us in the game as kind of our magic number.

But I thought our guys hung in there. I thought we got some really good defensive stops and did some things. There were some times there, as they got 14 offensive rebounds, that we were getting stops but we couldn't get a rebound. I think they probably look at it the same way because we had 12 offensive rebounds.

We hung in there. We played the first part of the second half and first half without Braden Smith. Lance did a good job. Ends up with only one turnover, which is great. When you get in those types of positions, you've got to play a different position that you're not used to. Just being solid and getting us into offensive sets was great.

He took five charges also today, by an individual player. One of them was probably a pushoff, which you wouldn't count as a charge. Taking four charges and another



offensive foul is a pretty good night. One of his best games. Even though he didn't score a lot, he did a lot to affect the game. He got fouled nine times, which is unheard of for a guard to get fouled that much.

Both of these guys next to me got fouled 23 times tonight in the game. Just we've got to do a better job making free throws, but everybody is trying to make their free throws. As long as we keep guarding and taking care of the basketball, we're going to give ourselves a chance.

**Q. Kind of going off of that, Lance, you played extended minutes at the point guard. I don't know if this team has played five minutes without Braden in the game at any point for a long time. Kind of tell me about that role and accepting it. Then this team to extend the lead without Braden in the game was huge going into halftime.**

LANCE JONES: Without Braden, it shows us how deep we are and how we can still play together. I just wanted to be next-man-up mentality, carry the load if I had to. You know just keep the game under control.

**Q. Zach, I guess asking about Lance and just that steadying presence, especially when you see Braden go down. Michigan State hit a couple tough shots. Just having somebody like that. Coach Painter talks about it's not maybe his usual role, but he's not turning the ball over or making mistakes. How much does that maybe steady you in a moment where a game might get a little bit uncomfortable.**

ZACH EDEY: I've got ultimate trust in my teammates to step up and fill whatever role is needed. Lance, he can do that. We're confident in him doing that. I wasn't worried at all when Lance had to step into that role. I've been with him in practice. I know the work he puts in, and I know the type of player that he is.

**Q. Lance, talk about this guy to your left. Knowing he's down there, Player of the Year. What's it like playing with this guy? Especially you're the new guy on the team.**

LANCE JONES: It's amazing. Just the way he creates for everybody else and just how dominant he is. They send a lot of bodies at him. As Coach Painter was saying, they throw the whole kitchen sink.

You know, he just never gets rattled or anything like that. He stays aggressive and always makes the right play.

**Q. Lance, this kind of game, a physical game, where both teams are fighting hard, seems like that would kind of bring the best out of you in terms of your mentality and how you approach the game. How much do you like playing in games like this where you're able to draw four charges and things like that?**

LANCE JONES: I love it. It's winning time now. It's March. It's a new season. I just want to bring a different type of edge and competitiveness and aggressiveness.

**Q. Lance, you talked about control. How were you able to keep control of the game as at the end there the Spartans' confidence grew so much?**

LANCE JONES: We've been through a lot as a team. Everybody just had to keep poised. We knew we just had to get stops and lock in defensively. It started with Z down there and just followed on with everybody else.

**Q. Matt, obviously you've been in this big tournament a lot of times, but you've got a coach on the other sideline, the guy is the ultimate competitor. What's it like for you to have to keep playing against this team and doing well with your guys?**

MATT PAINTER: We have a lot of respect for Michigan State, just how they run their program, how they play, how they compete. We've stolen a lot from them through the years. If you can learn from competition, that's the best. Like taking losses, learning from those losses, and just trying to enhance everything that you can in your program, through competing with somebody like that.

It's hard to be honest with you. We've got a matchup with Zach that I think really puts them in a bind, puts a lot of people in the bind. We have some guys that can really shoot the basketball. So just trying to complement each other more than anything.

I thought we did a good job of defending the arc. Once again, I thought we had some really good challenges, and we never let them kind of get going because that's a big piece of what they do. Even though it's not astronomical numbers for them, but when they get it going, especially Tyson Walker gets going, he had 30 against us last year in one of the games.

It's an honor, man. It's an honor to be at Purdue and compete in the Big Ten against schools like Michigan State.

**Q. Circling back to Lance, I know you've talked about this progressively through the year, but on a day like this, Zach talks about just the ultimate trust in a guy who's maybe not been around as long as some of his other teammates. Stepping into a different role, nobody thinks twice about it. How has he moved that sort of immediate and instinctive trust from his teammates?**

MATT PAINTER: I think more than anything you find out -- you know, everybody wants to play, but does everybody want to sacrifice to win? How are you as a competitor when things don't go your way or you're not getting shots?

He was more of a scorer when we got him. A lot of times those guys kind of find their way through a game with their scoring, so they bring that energy when the ball's going in, and then they've got bad body language when they don't.

For him, for the most part this year, he's been great. Whether the ball goes in or it doesn't go in, he's been able to do little things and help us win.

We knew it right away from talking to all of his coaches that he was coming to Purdue to try to help us win. You can't have enough guys like that. Like today, taking those charges, defending those guards, he wasn't a big piece from a scoring standpoint, but he affected the rest of the game. Taking those charges is huge. Who the hell takes four charges in a game, right? It's like unheard of, especially now with the rule changed a little bit.

But he got fouled a lot. Braden went out, and we didn't lose a beat, and he was solid and took care of the basketball. We're very fortunate to have him.

**Q. Matt, so whether by players getting banged up or the flow of the game, how important is it that a guy like Myles Colvin comes in and makes an instant impact?**

MATT PAINTER: Myles has been great. He's kept a great attitude. There's been games he didn't play or didn't play very much because we have a very deep team. But when you lose somebody like Braden, you need a punch, like you need somebody that can put the ball in the basket.

We drew up a play after a timeout and got him that dunk, which was great. He missed a three, but then he went right back to his pull-up. He's got a great pull-up there.

I thought he played hard. I thought he got a couple fouls that weren't fouls. Sometimes that happens to guys that come off the bench. They're going to call it more on those guys than the guys that play all the time.

But he and Cam Heide really gave us a lift today.

**Q. Do you happen to have an injury update on Braden Smith? What was he saying when he came back from the locker room and tried to get back in the game?**

MATT PAINTER: He said it was his calf. He pulled a calf muscle or got hit in the calf or something like that. Then he said he was able to go, so obviously we went with him.

I thought he wasn't the same. He wasn't as aggressive. He didn't try to get to his pullup or drive very much. He was just solid out there.

We'll see. Sometimes those things in the next day you're perfectly fine, and sometimes they get progressively worse. So we'll just kind of see what's going on and see how he's feeling tonight and tomorrow morning.

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