

Big Ten Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Sunday, March 17, 2024

Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

Target Center

Wisconsin Badgers

Greg Gard

A.J. Storr

Chucky Hepburn

Postgame Press Conference

Illinois - 93, Wisconsin - 87

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon. We'll start with the Wisconsin press conference. Opening statement from Coach Greg Gard.

GREG GARD: First of all, congratulations to Illinois. I thought this was a terrific college basketball game, as it should be in March. It came down to a play here, a play there, a rebound here, a rebound there.

But I'm so proud of these two guys to my right and the other 15 guys in that locker room. We're leaving here today a much better team than when we came in on Wednesday and started this tournament on Thursday.

We got to the game we wanted to get to, and we were able to completely get across the finish line, but it doesn't diminish the pride I have in these guys and how they've committed and grown over the last -- you know, this whole season actually.

It stings. It hurts because it's one we wanted obviously and it was one of our goals. But as I told them in the locker room, we put ourselves in position, so we have more basketball. We'll take the thing we learned through this week, which were many, and way more positives than negatives. Like I said, we're a better team walking out of here today than we were when we showed up on Thursday.

I'm looking forward to these guys having more ball coming up this next week in the tournament.

Q. A.J., Coach kind of mentioned how you guys have grown throughout the year. How do you feel your



game has grown over the course of the season and especially recently?

A.J. STORR: I think just being on the same page with my guys out there, like helping me a lot. Defensively I think I improved a little. The guys are motivating me to be a better defensive player, and I'm buying into it.

Just looking forward to playing some more games.

Q. Chucky, obviously the issue over the course of this second half of the season has been defense. Do you feel like it's not necessarily indicative of some of the problems you guys have, but it's just they made more of the shots and made some of the plays they needed to?

CHUCKY HEPBURN: Made some tough shots, got offensive rebounds, second-chance points. That's what we need to fix in March Madness in order to advance. We've got to do the little things to win games like that.

Q. Greg, you kind of alluded to it, but I guess what were you hoping to build with this week? How close do you feel you came to what you were trying to get out of this week?

GREG GARD: Trying to get a championship this week. That's what we were working towards. Like I said before, we're better today than we were at the start of the tournament when we landed on Wednesday. Now we get to go chase another championship.

68 of us -- or 64 of us at least with the play-in games -- will start on the same starting block. One game at a time. You've got to get six. I liked what I saw. We're primed and ready to go now.

Like I said, you want to be playing your best basketball in March, and we are. Looking forward to these guys getting more opportunities to go show how good they are.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

