

Big Ten Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Friday, March 14, 2025

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Gainbridge Fieldhouse

Oregon Ducks

Dana Altman

Postgame Press Conference

Michigan State - 74, Oregon - 64

DANA ALTMAN: I'll make this a lot shorter than the last one. We made too many mistakes, too many defensive mistakes, didn't rebound the ball in the first half. Got ourselves back to one, and then they scored 13, 14 in a row, and we didn't get the stops and took some really contested shots.

Made too many mistakes to beat a good team.

Q. Nate, you guys got within like one point early in the second half, and then they go on that big run. What changed after that point?

NATE BITTLE: Like Coach said, we just took some quick shots. They got some buckets, and we can't do that against a good team.

Q. Nate, you kind of had a frustrating day yesterday. Coach said you played amazing, but you had a much different day statistically today. Is that much different to do in a loss?

NATE BITTLE: Yesterday, I do what I had to do to help my team win. They were taking some shots yesterday, and I helped my team in assists and rebounding and stuff like that. Today, I just tried to do my job. It's not always going to be your day. We fought hard as a team. We know what we got to do going forward.

Q. Nick, can you just talk about what makes Michigan State such a challenging team to play?

NATE BITTLE: They have some talented scorers, but we didn't do a good job getting to that rebound in the first half. They were up, I think, 10 on the boards in the first half, and that's not something we've got to do against a good team if we want to win.



Q. You guys had a terrific season. You're going to get a good -- probably a pretty good seed in the tournament. Talk a little bit about where you guys could go from today, maybe a few changes along the way to get to the NCAA Tournament. How do you think you're going to go from here to there and what you think the result might be?

NATE BITTLE: We know what we've got to to win. It starts with the rebounding the ball, getting stops on defense, and offense is going to come. If we do those things, we'll be good.

Q. How do you reflect on your first year in the Big Ten so far?

NATE BITTLE: You know it was good. It's a different league, more physical and stuff, but I enjoyed it a lot.

Q. Dana, can you put your finger on what was happening in the last 30 minutes? You guys were being out rebounded by 36 to 12 or something like that.

DANA ALTMAN: We just didn't go after the ball. Guards didn't rebound. They picked up loose balls, and Nate really gave us a presence the second half, and KJ started going.

No, we didn't go after the ball. They picked up loose balls. They were quicker to it. We had to have everybody on the boards, and we didn't.

Q. Coach, what could you say about their defense that made it especially hard for you guys today?

DANA ALTMAN: We got into the paint a number of times and just took really contested shots. We got it down to one there. I know TJ took a contested one, Ra'Heim took a contested one, Jackson took a contested one. We took two or three in a row there. We took contested shots, didn't drive it in the paint, and we had to kick it out. We need to make better decisions than that.

Then we didn't get any stops. They had 13, 14 in a row there, after we had made a really good run. Again, I didn't



think we played through Nate enough. I thought the ball should have went in there more. We just pounded it a little bit too much.

Q. You just touched on what I was going to ask a question. Do you think spacing of your team on the floor and maybe Michigan State's defense prevented a lot of going into Nate?

DANA ALTMAN: I don't know. We had a couple different sets that we got it in there pretty good. Their length, their size inside can clog up the middle up a little bit. We knew that from last time we played them. That when you get the ball in the paint, you've got to kick it out. We went 4 for 19 from 3, and they went 7 of 15. We had a couple guys hit them that were shooting in the 20 percent.

We had some pretty good looks from Kee, and Bam had a couple good looks. We just didn't hit them. Shooting balls is a big part of the game. We needed somebody to hit some 3s, and we just didn't do it.

Q. Obviously, you'd like to win, but how can you use this time off to kind of reset before the tournament?

DANA ALTMAN: Well, we'll examine the film and try to get the guys to get the ball moving just a little bit better on the offensive end. When we got it inside, if you look at the points in the paint, we beat them 40-28. When we got that thing inside to Nate, a lot of good things happened.

We'll talk about that, try to get the ball moving a little better. We made some glaring defensive mistakes that we got to get cleaned up. Then we got to get more guys on the boards. Nathan did a great job, 11. KJ, like I said, picked it up the second half and got five, I think, the second half. Those two guys picked it up.

But our guards have got to rebound more. Everybody's got to look at the boards.

Q. Your depth has been such a huge part of the success of your team this year. It didn't seem like you got a whole lot from the bench today. What do you attribute that to?

DANA ALTMAN: I don't know. KJ gave us some good minutes with the rebounding, had a couple bad turnovers in the first half. Bam missed a couple shots that he hit yesterday. Ra'Heim was okay. Supreme was okay.

We've got to get more out of the bench. We played our starters quite a bit, and we've got to get some more from our bench.

Q. Jackson, obviously, struggled a little bit offensively today. Do you think that makes the front court a little bit weaker offensively and allows a team like Michigan State to really hone in on what they need to do defensively?

DANA ALTMAN: I think he's our leading scorer or second, whatever he is. He had some good looks and just didn't hit. He just didn't play as well offensively as he played in some games. When we're playing our best, he's getting a few buckets down.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports