

Big Ten Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Friday, March 14, 2025

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Gainbridge Fieldhouse

Michigan Wolverines

Dusty May

Tre Donaldson

Danny Wolf

Postgame Press Conference



confidence this last week. Coach May and the staff was just all about confidence.

They got out to an early, I think, 6-0 start, and I don't think anyone blinked an eye. We just kept at it and just kept with our game plan. Coach put us in a great position to succeed. We only turned it over six times, and we won the rebounding battle by six. That's just a recipe for success, especially in March. Yeah, just a great team win.

TRE DONALDSON: Like Danny said, I feel like it was confidence. Just knowing that we have really good players, and it's been a rough patch for us, but just trying to get over that hump and play the right way. If we play the right way, we're going to be able to win a lot of games and put ourselves in position to win games. But just continuing to do that.

Q. Danny and Tre, Coach has been preaching about rest and how tired you guys were down at the end of the season. How has this past week been, or how has it treated you guys this week heading into this game?

TRE DONALDSON: I feel like we emphasized it for sure, just taking care of our bodies, the little things matter. That's something Coach always preaches. Just like being in the training room, getting ice, taking our stretching serious, things of that nature.

Just making sure we're focusing on that and not taking that lightly. I feel like we've done that as a team, and we really focus on that, and we were able to get our bodies right, and we were able to perform well tonight.

DANNY WOLF: Obviously the rest part is big, but I think we also had two of our best practices in probably a month, two months. Just didn't feel like we had the time to do that, and guys were energized, competitive, physical in practice.

I think everyone was just in a better mood, and you also just feel better going into games when you have better practices. This past week was huge. Just hope we can carry it over into the weekend.

Q. Danny, you mentioned getting down 6-0 early on. It

Michigan - 86, Purdue - 68

THE MODERATOR: We have been joined by Michigan. We'll take an opening statement from Coach May.

DUSTY MAY: We're extremely excited to perform the way we did against a program as quality as Purdue. We did a nice job on the glass. We competed every possession against Trey Kaufman-Renn and Braden Smith, two first team All-League players in our league.

The turnovers tonight, we had six, a couple of them charges, but if we can manage that. That's been our Achilles heel all year. If we can do that, this team has a very, very high ceiling.

Q. Tre, you guys seemed more connected tonight offensively than you have in a while. Was the key being aggressive, and what was the mindset going into this game?

TRE DONALDSON: Just trusting our reads and taking what the defense gives us, just not trying to do too much. Trying to get the ball to the other side of the floor and not keeping it on one side.

Just making the right plays, playing basketball the right way, and just trusting each other. Just trusting each other, make plays for each other, and have fun doing it. I thought that was the biggest thing for us.

Q. Can you guys just talk about the energy you came out with offensively and defensively and how you felt that impacted the game?

DANNY WOLF: I think we just kind of emphasized



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seemed like Nimari really brought the energy early. Can you talk about what he brought.

DANNY WOLF: Obviously we got down in an early deficit, but I think we just stuck with it and the shots were going to start falling. I don't really exactly recall what happened the first few possessions.

Yeah, Nimari's been in these situations. He's an older guy. He's been around. He's been in March. Yeah, I don't know what else to say.

Q. Tre, how did it feel to have a bounce back game like this, especially after the way the last one ended for you?

TRE DONALDSON: It felt great. It's just enjoying the game. I feel like that's the biggest thing. And having fun, that's something we've been preaching all week coming off of some tough losses.

Just having fun. I feel like our team morale is the best it's been all year, and that's big going into March.

DANNY WOLF: I saw more smiles from my teammates than I've seen in a while which is awesome. Tre hit that first three, I just saw a big smile on his face, and I knew he was going to keep going.

Q. Obviously a recent loss to Maryland. What can you use from that loss to go into tomorrow?

DANNY WOLF: Maryland's a great team, great size up front. I thought we played -- I mean, it was an interesting game in Ann Arbor. It was an up-and-down game, we cut it close. I just don't think we were hitting shots, and we were turning the ball over way too much.

Just excited for the game tomorrow. It's a great opportunity to play on a great platform. I know the coaches are going to give us a good game plan. If we just follow that, I like our chances.

Q. Just you and Goldin on the court with each other, boy, you guys just seemed like you just, tonight anyway and I'm sure other games throughout the year, you were just clicking tonight. Some of your thoughts?

DANNY WOLF: I think it's just taking what the game gives me. I'm just not trying to force the issue. When the coaches trust me with the ball in my hands, just trying to make the right play, not trying to force anything.

Yeah, Vlad's an awesome player, but when my teammates

are hitting shots, it makes us look way better because there's way more space. So credit to those guys. It just makes it easier when you're playing with such talented guys.

Q. Dusty, can you just talk about the pick-and-roll defense holding Smith to just 12 points and TKR having a lot of shots, but not a great percentage, I guess.

DUSTY MAY: Obviously Purdue not getting the double bye, those shots were a little bit short across the board. TK and Braden, they're just a hair short.

Also, Vlad's size around the basket. I thought we were disciplined as well, and we gave them different looks, especially in pick-and-roll coverage.

We changed -- credit the staff. They put together a heck of a game plan, and we gave them different looks. We do feel like we had them at least processing and thinking, as opposed to them just playing in flow.

But man, they're a challenge. We wanted to make every catch, every possession, just getting it over half-court difficult. I thought our guys, credit to them, they played with great energy, and they had an amazing transfer from practice. They were awesome these last couple days practicing and trying to earn the right to play well here.

Q. Coach, the last time you played Maryland, they held you to 22 points in the first half, which is their lowest output for the season. What can you learn from that half, that half of basketball, that you can learn to kind of counter that for tomorrow's game when you face Maryland again?

DUSTY MAY: Once I had the plan for today, or we had the plan for today done, I thought about watching our game versus either Illinois or Maryland, and I couldn't. I couldn't make a decision who I thought would win because I had so much respect for both teams. And Illinois played well against us, Maryland did well as well.

I would assume -- I don't really remember the details of the game except the last couple of minutes. We made some errors that were uncharacteristic, but I'm assuming that we turned the ball over, we played a little bit too anxious on offense, and we tried to do a little too much. Those were things we focused on this week as well as getting back to our defensive identity.

I'll have a much better answer for you in the morning once I've had a chance to digest that game film. Right now I can't remember the details of what exactly went wrong.

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Q. I think you had 12 assists on your first 13 buckets. Can you talk about the way you shared the ball, the way you guys came back to the ball, and the way you cut as well to make it easier on the teammates?

DUSTY MAY: When you play teams more than once, and obviously in the league we only play three teams twice, you get more comfortable and familiar with how they're defending you because there's so many different ways.

There's some teams that they switch everything, and there's other teams that don't let you go middle and they overload ball sites. So I do think we're a little more comfortable with the reads because they play a style that very few teams play. So we're more comfortable.

I thought our off-ball cutting was as good as it's been. Our penetration reactions, just responding to each other much, much better. I think when we're playing with better pace and poise, it's a lot easier to react to what your teammate's doing as opposed, when you're head down, you don't really know what to do. You're just trying to stay out of the way.

There's a chain reaction to all of this. By us not turning it over, our defense is better. And our defense, when we have bodies on bodies, we rebound better.

The two guys sitting with me, Tre Donaldson digging out about five loose basketballs I thought were 50-50 balls were pivotal. And then Danny Wolf, Vlad was putting his body on Trey Kaufman-Renn, and Danny was grabbing some real man rebounds in the paint, and we needed all of them.

Q. Dusty, obviously the turnovers matter, making shots matter, but last week after -- I guess it was the beginning of this week. After the Michigan State game you talked about getting out toughed a little bit, you wanted to bring a little more toughness. You played with a lot of force and physicality tonight. How did you work on that this week?

DUSTY MAY: We felt like it started the second half against Michigan State. A lot has been made of stuff that doesn't really matter. What matters is the way they played this year.

We're a program, we pride ourselves on being humble and learning something from every opponent, and the way that Spartan team competes, then it showed us what championship level competitive spirit looks like. So we felt like we did that in the second half, and then we did that in practice this week.

Like I said, we learn something new from every opponent, and that's what we learned from Michigan State. As a program, we walked out of there and just said our culture's not there yet. We're very confident our culture is going to get there from a toughness and competitive standpoint, but it wasn't there yet, but that wasn't the final day.

Until these games are done being played, we're still striving to be at that championship level, and we took a step forward each day this week. Obviously tonight we played extremely aggressive and spirited.

Q. You mentioned playing with pace. It seemed like that was an emphasis early on. Is that something you guys talked about coming into this game?

DUSTY MAY: Yeah, I thought we got it up the floor quickly. Obviously Purdue was pounding the glass. We talked about it every huddle, that if they're going to send three, four guys to the glass, if we can find a way to get it, we're going to have numbers, and then we've got to separate.

Like I said, they played yesterday as well. Even when we got gassed at about the five-minute mark at the first half, down to about the three-minute mark, there's a long stretch with no timeouts, no stoppages, and neither team was playing crisp basketball. We just felt like let's just keep this thing going. We think we can open it up.

We had a couple of our reserves in that don't play heavy minutes, and I think we outscored them in my mind during that stretch. We felt like that was kind of drawing a line in the sand. We're going to keep imposing our will in transition if we find a way to get the rebounds.

It comes down to defensive rebounding. When we rebound, we're pretty good in transition.

Q. Tre very confident sitting up there this evening and also very confident out on the floor. Played the most minutes out of everybody. There was a stretch there in the second half from the 12, 13 minute, you guys were holding onto an eight, nine-point lead, and Tre scored a triple and a couple of two-point buckets. You got a double digit lead, and it never got under that at that point. Just your thoughts on his playing this evening?

DUSTY MAY: I thought he managed the game extremely well. He played with confidence. When we needed to run some clock, he managed the clock.

Obviously the plays he made, 13 points, 5 assists, 2 steals, his stat line is impressive. But it's more of his presence of being the quarterback, being the leader on the court for us



and running our team, being vocal and getting our coverages organized.

I thought he did all those things tonight. He was extremely focused before the game. He wasn't happy with the way he's played the last couple weeks. Very few of us -- I wasn't happy with the way I coached. Very few guys in the locker room have been happy with the way we've performed lately.

Like I said, we strive to be the best and find different ways. We're still learning ourselves as well. Credit our guys. They brought it every day, and they competed at a high level. The beautiful thing about tournament format is we get to turn the page quickly and get after it tomorrow.

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