

Big Ten Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Tuesday, March 10, 2026

Chicago, Illinois, USA

United Center

Penn State Nittany Lions

Mike Rhoades

Josh Reed

Kayden Mingo

Postgame Press Conference



Northwestern - 76, Penn State - 66

THE MODERATOR: We're now joined by Penn State head coach Mike Rhoades and student-athletes Kayden Mingo and Josh Reed.

MIKE RHOADES: Congratulations to Northwestern and Coach Collins. I thought they, especially in the second half, played a very good game. Credit to them. I thought the key to the game was the turnovers and the points off turnovers, 24-7. I thought that was the game right there.

I appreciate our efforts, especially from our only senior Josh Reed, and the way he led this year and his approach and how hard he played for us. I'm bummed to see it come to an end for him, but this is that time of the year. Just not good enough to win a Big Ten game here in a conference tournament.

Q. Josh, obviously as Coach just said, talking about the last year for you, I know you've had an awesome last month, not just this game, but in total this season?

JOSH REED: It's been a really amazing year here at Penn State. No regrets. I'm glad I came here. I was super happy to be here the whole year. I met so many new people who helped me grow on and off the court. So many new lessons and experiences that I'll hold for the rest of my life.

This is the place where I wanted to end my basketball career, and I'm glad I came here.

Q. Kayden, your first full year of collegiate basketball is over. What are you taking away?

KAYDEN MINGO: I'm very grateful and very blessed for the whole season. I feel like God put me in a very good position with a lot of good people around me. Going into next season, I'm really looking forward to fixing things that I could do better to help the team win. Be back here and win more games. That's the most important thing. Winning more games.

Q. Josh, you talked about how this is the best place to end your basketball career. For you and a lot of your teammates, this was your first year at State College. How do you think that helped you guys bond knowing you're going through that experience of being in a new place and being on a team together?

JOSH REED: I feel like we definitely grew and bonded a lot, especially over the summer when I first got here. We got really close really fast, and I feel like that definitely helped us on the court as a team. It's just rare to see that with basically a whole different group of guys.

Everyone likes each other. Everyone got really close really fast. We have a lot of vocal people, a lot of personalities on the team. It was really no trouble at all getting along.

Q. This is being your final season, what do you hope to leave with the rest of the team after you're gone next year?

JOSH REED: I just hope they can take away certain things from me leadership-wise and also just being their friend off the court. Hopefully it's just -- I'll be in touch with Kayden for a long time. He knows that. He can always call me, I can always call him. Same thing with the other guys on the team as well.

We've just developed that kind of relationship in such a short amount of time. I'm going to always be there for them no matter what.

Q. Obviously eight freshmen, one of the youngest teams in the entire nation.

MIKE RHOADES: Thanks for reminding me.



Q. A lot of these guys getting a big run early on in their careers. How do you think that could help them going forward knowing that for guys like Kayden, they have seen what it takes to play 30 minutes?

MIKE RHOADES: Experience is your greatest teacher in life. When you're a freshman, a real freshman, 18 years old, and you get thrown in the fire of playing at this level and in the Big Ten when everybody's bigger, older, stronger, you learn a lot. Unfortunately, you learn a lot through failure.

Kayden is an example and some other guys on the team too that their spirit of coming back every day to work and stuff like that, we can build on that without a doubt, led by him. It's the approach you've got to have.

I mean, it's hard. It's really hard when you have a really tough January and February in the Big Ten because it's unforgiving. It could wreck you. You try your hardest to stack days, and you have tough results. You've got to use all that as great fuel for the off-season and to live in the weight room, live in the gym, and take the next step as a college basketball player.

Q. You talked about yesterday with the turnovers and trying to limit those as a big key for this one. Obviously in the second half down the stretch there, the word you used after Ohio State, it kind of snowballed on you guys again. What did you see during that time period, and what went wrong?

MIKE RHOADES: We were right there in striking distance. I think it was a two-possession game. We were right there and self-induced.

Look, Northwestern plays very physical and very aggressive in their half-court. Coach Collins, they get turnovers in their half-court defense. I told our guys the key to the game -- the two things that were the key to the game is we can't turn the ball over and we have to rebound.

You go down there and you don't rebound, you have to sustain your defense for another full length of a shot clock.

We did a little bit better in the second half. The rebounding hurt us. 24 points off our turnovers, that was the game. Just maybe the physicality pushed us down a little bit, messed up our timing. You fight the pressure a little bit, and you get -- I'm not going to say we were lazy. Our guys played hard today, played the right way. We got off to a good start.

That's the next step for us. If you're going to beat a Big Ten team in March, you can't give them the ball.

Q. Can you speak on the decision to start Mason today, and how do you think he performed?

MIKE RHOADES: I thought the last three weeks he's been playing harder than others and his physicality and just the way he competes. He gave us 20 minutes today. We started three freshmen. You don't really want to do that in the Big Ten, but that's what it is for us right now.

He's going to get better and better. He cares so much. He works very hard. He's very competitive. He's got a body, a big strong body. I thought his defense was good today. We need a little more offense out of him, but I thought he did some good things. I'm proud of him.

Q. Obviously looking back on this season now, what are some of the biggest takeaways for you as a coach or as a person that you've learned about yourself through all these challenges you face this season?

MIKE RHOADES: It was a really hard year for me. It was really hard. The world we live in now, you want to give yourself a chance. You want to give your team a chance to be successful. So it's hard. The reality is when you're really young in Power 4 basketball, you're at a disadvantage. So we need to address that, and we need to get our young guys bigger, better, and badder and stronger.

That's it. You've got to be old. You've got to be old because everybody else is. The best teams in our league and the best teams in the country are old and experienced. We've got to address some of that.

I always reevaluate everything I do and what we do in the program, and I'll do that again. I know that works. It's been a tough stretch. This is a hard job, but it's pretty awesome too, the Big Ten and trying to figure it out at the place where I am.

Q. Coach, you talked about getting older, getting more experienced, but also in the Big Ten, so much of it is about growing together. How do you think having so many of those guys who came in together, who are having these learning experiences together, is going to help when they're sophomores, juniors, seniors, knowing that not only have they been through it, but they've been through it with each other?

MIKE RHOADES: That's the key nowadays. Will they stay together? Can you keep them together? With the things that go on outside these doors, with the poaching and all

this crazy stuff, you don't -- I'll go back to it. It's real relationships, real relationships that have a lot of love and trust. You sweat together. I'm going to lean on that stuff all the time.

But you've got to play the game of the landscape of college basketball. So we'll do everything we can to bring the guys back that want to be here for all the right reasons and do it and build on it and get them some really good players around them and do this right.

Since I've been here, we've had some really good wins. We just don't have enough. That's got to be the goal, and it starts with the guys that are in that locker room for all the right reasons.

I love them. For everything we went through, we had a really good group of guys. They were coachable. They were about the right stuff. You could hear Josh, that was one of our leaders. Even when we got off to a tough start in the Big Ten with the schedule we had, we didn't have crybabies or complainers. Guys went to work and stacked days, and I really respect that and appreciate that.

We've got to use that to catapult and move forward.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports