

Big Ten Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Wednesday, March 11, 2026

Chicago, Illinois, USA

United Center

Indiana Hoosiers

Darian DeVries

Tucker DeVries

Lamar Wilkerson

Postgame Press Conference



Northwestern - 74, Indiana - 61

THE MODERATOR: We have Indiana coach Darian DeVries along with Lamar Wilkerson and Tucker DeVries.

Q. Tucker, Coach Collins was just saying a minute ago that their focus defensively on you was to try to make you a two-point shooter and take away your comfortable response. A, did you feel that out there? B, how frustrating was it, especially in the second half, that you guys couldn't really get anything going offensively?

TUCKER DeVRIES: Obviously I think they did a great job executing their game plan as a whole. I thought in the first half we were able to get in the paint, make plays for one another. I felt like we had a lot of assists on our lot of our buckets. Then second half it just felt like we were a little more stagnant. We weren't able to get in the paint as much and get as many easy looks as we did in the first half.

A lot of credit to them as well as on us trying to execute.

Q. Tucker, just how frustrating is it to end the season like this with 7 of 8 losses?

TUCKER DeVRIES: I mean, it's about what you'd expect, especially with the amount of seniors we had. We all came here wanting to lay the ground work for this program and the culture and really set the tone, but just down the stretch of the season, we weren't able to capitalize on some of the opportunities we had.

It really sucks that none of us are really going to put this uniform on again for a regular season or this tournament.

It is what it is, but it's really frustrating.

Q. Lamar, your thoughts on kind of what went wrong in the last six, seven, eight games when the losing streak kind of happened? Just give us a player's view what happened there.

LAMAR WILKERSON: I just feel like we just got stagnant. We just weren't playing our best basketball. The other team that we were playing, they executed well. They did what they had to do. We made a lot of self-inflictions that cost us the games through that last stretch.

Yeah, we just weren't hooked up like we were supposed to be.

Q. Tucker, for you, I guess defensively over the last six, seven games here, you guys have given up on average close to 1.3 points per possession. Tonight very similar in the second half. What were some of the key defensive breakdowns over the last month, specifically for you guys to obviously see that downfall?

TUCKER DeVRIES: We've had a lot of conversations, especially the last couple days, about trying to really get back to the ground work of our defense and getting back to the habits that we're supposed to be able to execute. I thought towards the end of the year that kind of slipped on our end, just the attention to detail and some things.

At this level if you're off by the slightest margin, they're going to make you play, especially the teams that we're playing in this league. They're really talented teams that put you in a lot of difficult spots. If you're not connected 1 through 5 on defense, they're going to pick that apart pretty easily.

Q. For either of you guys. You were down 45-44 early in the second half, and I think over the next 10 minutes or so it was just two field goals. Was there anything in that stretch that you thought wasn't being done offensively? What was the difference there that you weren't able to score consistently?



TUCKER DeVRIES: I think there's a lot of different things that go into it. I thought, like I said earlier, we weren't getting in the paint as much and getting cleaner looks. A part of it's a lot easier to score when you're getting stops. We sent them to the free-throw line, I felt like they were in the bonus at the 10, 12-minute mark. We've got to do a better job of keeping them off the free-throw line. When they have their defense set, they're really good defensively.

We weren't able to get them in transition very much in the second half, and I felt like that really kind of stalled us out and took away some of our execution.

Q. Obviously this season is concluded, and a lot of people are focused on the transfer portal already. Just in general, what skill sets do you want to add to this roster moving forward that you think are going to be really impactful for next year?

DARIAN DeVRIES: As we talked about a little bit as the season's gone on, just developing more depth and having more size and physicality for this league is going to be critical. I thought that was something that we just didn't have a lot of depth there to sustain it over the course of a 20-game league schedule. That's certainly something we have to prioritize to give ourselves just a better chance on the interior of the rebounding and being able to post and being able to get guys in and out and sub and have some depth there. That's something that we'll have to really search on for.

Q. Coach, was there a specific time in that second half where you just kind of saw a different thing from your team? It looked like they had a sense of urgency at the beginning, and then it kind of petered out late.

DARIAN DeVRIES: It was interesting to start the second half. There was a stretch in there, about three, four minutes in, it felt like Northwestern's defense had really cranked her up a little bit, gotten really physical, started slowing our movement, and then we weren't able to get by people to get to the ball to go make a play. So you ended up with a lot of windshield wiper offense.

Again, that's been something that that's kind of hurt us a little bit, especially these last seven, eight games in the second halves, just not getting -- able to find a secondary way to score has been a problem for us in a lot of these games.

Q. I recognize you guys are on the bubble. If Sunday comes and you're not in the field, I know this may be a hard question to answer today, but what do you feel like got established in the program this season in

terms of you talked about principles and those things and things that will outlive this roster, what do you feel like you have sunk roots into this program this season if this is your last game?

DARIAN DeVRIES: I told the guys, it's a great group to coach. I think their practice habits were really good all year. They've represented themselves, our program, in a first-class manner. All these guys came, outside of Tucker really, with not much to go off of. Conor a little bit.

When you're putting that many new guys together and their ability to maintain a really good locker room throughout the season, I thought it was pretty impressive by them and what they did, the way they carried themselves, even during tough times.

Like I told them, there's no going back. Every season you've got a certain amount of games you'd like to have back. Certainly we felt like there's a little more in there for us that we would have liked to have gotten done. These guys continue to stick together even during a couple of these losing streaks and stuff and continue to maintain positive and work and do things the right way. I'm certainly appreciative of that group and especially that group of seniors.

Q. Obviously if this is your last game, last game obviously coaching Tucker throughout his college career, obviously a lot of emotion in there. Probably not the best game that he wanted to end his potential career on. Can you just talk a little bit about what it's meant to coach him, obviously from freshman year up till now, to really see him grow as a player and as a person, as a dad?

DARIAN DeVRIES: I think the hardest part, you go through so many things. When you have that father-son relationship and then your coach relationship. I know from my standpoint as a coach, as a dad, just proud of the work he's put in and the way he's continued to lead. Even, again, during some harder times for him as a player.

I think those are the things you're most proud of, is when you get to see the way he carries himself, good or bad. Whether he played good or bad, he continued to just push forward, lead, and do things the right way and put in the time and work to try to always improve. That's the hard part is you don't get to do that anymore.

Q. Darian, if you don't get NCAA Tournament news on Sunday night, will you want to play in one of the other postseason events if invited?

DARIAN DeVRIES: We haven't really gotten that far yet.



We'll have to talk to administration, coaches, and players and see where that's all at.

Q. Vibes may matter right now for emotions and whether this team deserves to be in the NCAA Tournament, but frankly it's about body of work for the entire season. What's kind of your elevator pitch you would make to the committee right now to say, give us all due respect as far as whether or not you deserve to be there or not?

DARIAN DeVRIES: I think the biggest thing we've talked about, when you're a bubble team, we've had a lot of Quad 1 games. I think the biggest thing for us is a lot of those Quad 1 games were against the top 10, 12 teams in the country. I think we had seven or eight of those losses were Quad 1 were against the top 12 teams in the country.

That's a challenging schedule. If you put other bubble teams in the same situations, we've been able to be really competitive despite that challenging schedule. Then you have wins against Purdue and UCLA and Wisconsin and some of our Quad 2 wins. I certainly think there's a case there. Whether it ends up being enough, we'll see.

That's something that I think this team, they've gone through it this year. They've continued to fight and battle and came away with some good wins along the way to back that up.

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