

# Maui Jim's Maui Invitational

Tuesday, November 23, 2021

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

## Wisconsin Badgers

## Greg Gard

## Tyler Wahl

## Johnny Davis

### Postgame Press Conference

Wisconsin - 65, Houston - 63

GREG GARD: Obviously a terrific team win. As I've said many times, I think this team is growing up right in front of our eyes and it's been fun to watch.

Obviously a terrific team in Houston. We had a great first half and we were able to do enough to hold on in the second half. But I think for this group to go through these type of experiences and have success on top of what we're learning and growing as this is happening is a great credit to these guys and their teammates back in the locker room.

So really proud of them. Looking forward to getting some rest and getting ready for tomorrow.

**Q. Tyler, your second half, you didn't score in the first half, and then you get nine points to keep you guys in the game. What kind of spurred that? What was in your head when that was happening?**

TYLER WAHL: Not a whole lot was going through my head. Got the ball in a good spot and just took advantage of opportunities and my teammates got me the ball in good spots and helped a lot.

**Q. Johnny, you got a bunch of threes early, wide open ones too, which is really rare from this defense. Did you run anything special to get those or did you find yourself in advantageous spots?**

JOHNNY DAVIS: No, I would say we did a really good job of sharing the ball. They were doubling the post and doubling ball screens and Chucky and Steven they were doing a good job of throwing the ball out of the traps finding open teammates.

**Q. You had 11 shots in the first half. In the second half you quieted down until those last five minutes. It**



**looked like you wanted to assert yourself and take over down the stretch.**

JOHNNY DAVIS: Houston was making a bit of a run to come back. I would say I just knew what I had to do for us to win. But it wasn't about myself. Credit to this guy right here and everybody else back in the locker room.

**Q. Yesterday, Houston scored the first 17 points of their ball game. Today you scored the first 13. Was there an emphasis to jump on them quick?**

TYLER WAHL: Yeah, we started out slow yesterday, so that's something that we didn't want to do today, so we came ready to play and that's just what happened.

JOHNNY DAVIS: Yeah, like he said, we really needed to come out fast, especially against these guys because they're one of those teams where if you get down on them they will just bury you. So I thought we did a really good job.

**Q. Those first couple of threes you hit what do you think that does to a defense? I'm sure they were geared to keep you away from the rim, but when you knock down a couple, what does that do to a defense who has to now play you on the perimeter?**

JOHNNY DAVIS: You said it. They're forced to close out on me hard and that opens up driving lanes for me and either I can go score or find an open teammate.

**Q. What was the difference between the first half and second half that they were doing? You guys had a very dominant first half but it felt like you were kind of shut down, so what were they doing differently to that?**

TYLER WAHL: They got super aggressive. Playing from behind it's always easy to get up into people's shorts and we weren't hitting shots. We were getting open looks, just not knocking them down like we were in the first half.

JOHNNY DAVIS: Yeah, the script kind of flipped in the second half. Just they were hitting shots. We weren't. But I would say our defense is what kept us really mellow throughout the game.

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**Q. (What did you see from your team today)?**

GREG GARD: I'm learning just like everybody else is watching this group mature and grow in front of us. So looking back, I'm kind of happy this did happen like this so we can learn how to finish a game, how to be better down the stretch. Some miscommunication, some shots.

Obviously they're a tough guard with Edwards and Sasser and the stuff they do. So I think it's a great experience for these guys to go through this, good environment, against a really, really good team. And we knew the second half they were going to come out and be physical and be aggressive and we talked about that at halftime. That's why you got to play a complete 40 minutes.

But I thought our shot selection at the start of the second half wasn't what we needed it to be and that allowed them to get a little momentum. And obviously today's game you can kind of lead rather quickly with some 3s and they got three 3s. I think Edwards got three at the start of the half that gave them some momentum.

And we just got to continue to grow and learn from this and be better. But it's a fun group to coach. They have really embraced who we need to be and how we need to get there and they have done it collectively.

**Q. Can you talk to what you did as a team to hold Sasser down in the first half?**

GREG GARD: Yeah, he's a tough cover. That's a heck of an education for a couple freshmen, with Chucky and Lorne having to cover him some, and for any of these guys. And to play that type of experience against this type of team with the physicality and athleticism and speed it can only help them.

There was mistakes made. There's no doubt. But this group with how hard they play and how gritty they are and how connected they are and play for each other. You can live with the mistakes. You just learn from them. And there was one at the end where we didn't, we were supposed to exchange, Johnny and, I think, Chucky came together and two went the same way and one didn't go to the ball and that's part of in-game learning that we got to continue to experience to get better at it.

**Q. When Steven and Chris got those two fouls at the beginning, do you think that played a factor in you guys not being able to keep up with them in the second half?**

GREG GARD: Are you talking about today or back in

Providence? Not really, because we, they both got two fouls in the first half and we went to halftime with a 20-point lead. So it's a matter of we know they're going to respond. We knew they were going to answer back. So Steve got in the third one obviously really quickly in the first or second possession of that second half.

But I thought we got good minutes from Ben Carlson. I thought he did, kind of steadied the court, so to speak, or steadied the boat. We were able to kind of get a good nine minutes or whatever he had there in the first half. I thought that was good for him to kind of get some experience and grow from it.

Carter Gilmore, I thought did some good things. And just make, just be solid. That's all we ask. But for Steven and those younger bigger guys, this was a good experience.

**Q. You spent almost four years chasing Johnny and trying to get him to this program and I know you're not consumed with the points, but is this, today kind of what you thought he could be for this program? And then to have that big steal late when he they did close to three, how big of a play was that just to get you guys back on track?**

GREG GARD: Yeah, that was big. I think the one thing about Johnny, he's always said he doesn't care about the individual things. And we talked through the off-season this summer, last spring. He said, Coach, all I want to do is win. I don't care what comes with the individual things. I just want to make us the best team we can be, and I think he's consumed in the right things that way.

And obviously he's got a pretty good cast around him too. Guys that are playing with him aren't stiff. So I think it's just a good plan. You're always going to have one guy that kind of evolves into your guy, so to speak. I think he's doing that.

But he's got a great mentor in Brad that is tough as nails and he's got freshmen that are learning on the fly and a couple sophomores that are figuring things out for the first time. And so it's a good mix, but he's kind of taken the role that we envisioned that he would take this year, but we know it's going to be, there's going to be tough games ahead too.

**Q. Chucky did a good job working the ball screens. Can you talk about his performance today?**

GREG GARD: Yeah, every game is a learning experience because when you step from high school to college at this level it's, it can be very eye opening and even points in this game where a couple timeouts he probably didn't like me

too much as I commented on his decisions.

But that's part of growing up. That's part of him maturing as a point guard. And the nice thing about Chucky is he's a competitor just like they all are. And he's like, yes, I know we need to do A, B and C that we had talked about.

So I think for all of these guys to get this type of experience, I keep using that word, but I think just for these guys to do some things really well, do some things not so well, and try to become more consistent in the process is good for everybody.

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