

Allstate Maui Invitational

Tuesday, November 21, 2023

Honolulu, Hawaii, USA

SimpliFi Arena

Purdue Boilermakers

Matt Painter

Zach Edey

Fletcher Loyer

Postgame Press Conference

Purdue - 71, Tennessee - 67

THE MODERATOR: We'll get started. We are joined by head coach, Matt Painter, and Zach Edey and Fletcher Loyer. We'll get started with some opening comments from Coach.

MATT PAINTER: Yeah, it's obviously a huge win for us. We got a lot of respect for Coach Barnes and Tennessee, you know, a tough team, athleticism, quickness, experienced, very good defensively.

I thought our guys -- even though our execution wasn't great sometimes and had those 16 turnovers, I thought we really did some good things. Missing 19 free throws, we just didn't make 'em pay at the free-throw line, but we were still doing good things, and I think that's the one thing, trying to keep the energy and keep everybody positive sometimes when you're missing an open three, you're missing a free throw, you miss a jump hook that you normally make, like, just stay process-based, and I thought our guys hung in there and we got a lot of support.

Zach went out, and then I thought Caleb and Trey and Mason and those guys did a really good job. Fletch really got us going in the first half knocking down shots, making his free throws and just making plays. A couple of those hustle plays that he made were huge, you know, diving on the floor and getting us that extra possession.

But I'm just pleased with the effort. Our execution's got to be better, our defense has got to be better, and we got to make improvements there, but our guys are really pulling for each other and giving a maximum effort.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Coach. We'll open it up for questions for Zach and Fletcher, to begin with.



Q. Zach, is that about the most physical game you've played in? Where would you rank it? There were certainly a lot of calls.

ZACH EDEY: Like Coach said, they're a super tough team. We knew that kind of coming in. That's kind of their thing. Yeah, they're super physical. I don't know where I would rank it all time. Big Ten's pretty physical too. But, yeah, in a game like that to out-rebound a physical tough team like that says a lot about our team.

Q. Fletcher, when you hit that first shot, that first three, it seemed like that actually instantly gave you confidence that you seemed to miss a little bit yesterday. Were you hunting for your shot more today? Did it just come through the natural flow of the offense today? What happened today?

FLETCHER LOYER: After yesterday, no one wants to go 0-5 or 0-6, whatever I was, but just sticking with it, coming back with the same confidence I had. Like, I had -- whether I had, zero points, where I had 30 yesterday, coming in, it's a new day, it's a new game, and another game we got to win. Whether it's me getting 27 or whether it's me getting 2, that's what I'm here to do. I'm here to help the team win.

Q. You guys kind of beat Gonzaga with pace, changing the pace of the game in the second half. How much did it mean to this team to show you can win UFC style today too?

ZACH EDEY: We're a super versatile team. We can run offense a lot of different ways. We can get in transition, we can run half court, we have really good sets, we can rebound the ball. We have a lot of stuff to our team which makes it harder to game plan.

FLETCHER LOYER: Like he said, the versatility. I don't know if I've heard Zach use that big of a word before, but...

ZACH EDEY: All right (laughing).

FLETCHER LOYER: But it's special. We got a lot of guys that can go, a lot of guys off the bench. Ethan Mortan sat



over there, but he came in ready to win. He came in and helped us get a stop there at the end. It's what he wanted to do. He's a senior on this team and he just wants to win, man.

Q. Fletcher and Zach, you guys had a couple games last year where you could say the whistle didn't go your way and you guys seemed upset. How did you guys handle that as a team this time?

ZACH EDEY: We don't really speak on referees. We missed layups, they missed calls, it's part of basketball. Just got to play through it and move on. We have to accept that they're human too. They're not trying to do anything to impact you negatively. Just play through it.

FLETCHER LOYER: Yeah, it was a long game, a lot of fouls were called. But coaches get on me for complaining sometimes. I got on them right back. They were complaining a little bit.

But you got to fight through it. You're here to win the game. Whether it's three officials out there or three fans on the court with us, we got to win the game.

Q. Based off that line, pretty obvious how much this one did mean to you. Can you talk a little bit about just getting this win.

FLETCHER LOYER: It's huge. It's a tournament you grew up watching. It's in Hawaii. What better place -- there's no better place you could be right now. Had the best pool, we talked about that, and for such a big tournament, it's going to be special to compete for a championship tomorrow. We didn't come here to play for that third place or fourth place game. We came here to win it. Today's win, with Zach in foul trouble and other guys needing to step up, it was just huge for our team and just boosted our confidence.

Q. Building on that, you motioned to the sideline after you hit your first free throw, after missing, I think, your first five or six. Was that something you felt mentally when you're like, okay, finally, relief, I can exhale a little bit and kind of settle into the game?

ZACH EDEY: Yeah, just as a shooter sometimes when it feels good coming off your hands and then it comes off the rim, it's a tough thing. It kind of makes you question some things, and then you string some things together. So once I kind of saw one go -- like, Mason came up to me, and he says, It looks like you're trying to aim it too much, so I just tried to let one go, look at the rim, shoot it, and it went in, and then I got like six in a row right at the end.

So kind of just trying to trust my skill, trust my shot. It was a big thing for me to get my free throws back at the end of the game there.

Q. Quick turnaround and a back-to-back game and so physical today. Did it have any bearing on your legs or feeling throughout the game? Did it affect anything?

ZACH EDEY: No. I feel perfect.

FLETCHER LOYER: I wouldn't say so. I thought we did a good job of listening to our trainer and doing what we needed to do and hydrating. But we got another one tomorrow, so I guess we'll see.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Fletcher. Thanks, Zach.

Questions for Coach.

Q. That was obviously a physical game. How do you feel like your guys just emotionally dealt with a lot of free throws, especially early on and just how they responded?

MATT PAINTER: Yeah, just trying to play through contact. I thought anytime he gets fouled and they call it, it's going to balance out at some point, and there just seemed like -- there was a lot of collisions at the other end that you couldn't see in that second half. So, like, you just don't know as a coach. You're 40, 50 feet away from collisions and normally when there's collisions, it's on the defense, right? We had to be physical without fouling and make some of those plays. Then they started shooting more free throws in the second half.

But it's just one of those grinder type games, and I thought our guys made plays, and I thought we were pretty good when he wasn't in yesterday, and then I thought we were pretty good, once again, when he wasn't in. We hung tough, and Gainey made a couple tough shots there at the end and got 'em going. But I thought our guys really showed some toughness defending in playing.

But they did too. His teams are always that way. We've played 'em in the Bahamas, we've played them in the NCAA tournament. Like, his teams, they're always tough as nails. So this could have went either way. They could have won just as easily. We were just fortunate to push it out in the last three minutes.

Q. Knecht gets 13 points in the first half, only three in the second half. What did you see change out there defensively for you guys?

MATT PAINTER: I thought he got away from us a couple

times, once in transition, and he just missed. I think we got a good contest there, but you just can't let him cork it like that. He's a good player. He's got a bright future. He can post you a little bit, he can go off the dribble. We really wanted to get in those gaps and make it hard to where he couldn't get in those creases and get to the basket or spin into a pull up. But I thought we were pretty fortunate a couple times. He had a pretty good first half, but I thought he just had a couple good looks that he missed in that second half.

Q. 52 fouls between the two teams. Is that on the players, is that on the refs? Where do you weigh in on this? America wants to know.

MATT PAINTER: I weigh in on it because of him. I don't think this game's this way if Zach Edey doesn't play in the game. Those guys are going to balance it at some time. They say they don't, but they're going to balance it at some time. I'm not saying that we don't foul, but we committed the fewest fouls in America last year, out of 362 teams, and we got a lot of experience back. It doesn't mean we don't have an outlier three or four games where we do foul, but for the most part we don't. And we had the number one free throw disparity in the country last year, too. So like this isn't anything new for us in terms of if you get officials that are going to call -- and that's the only thing that we want. We don't want everybody rules and Zach Edey's rules. We want the rules to be the same. As long as the rules are the same for post play, so be it. I think Kansas would probably say that with a guy like Hunter Dickinson. We played Trace Jackson-Davis at Indiana, I think they would say the same thing in his career. Like, you just want it where it's an even playing field. That doesn't mean the fouls are the same, right, free throws are the same, because that's not, you got to call a game, and so you get into that nine fouls versus three going against you or going for you, well, sometimes that's the way it is. One team fouled nine times and three times. But that was a tough game. That was a tough game to officiate, tough game to coach, tough game for players. So, like I said, we were pretty fortunate to win.

Q. Really, all night long it seemed like Fletcher just would not let you guys lose. What does it say about him and his effort to come up big in a moment like this?

MATT PAINTER: I would say, even though he made some shots and made some plays scoring the ball, the biggest thing was like that turnover that he dove and got, and some of those rebounds. Some of those rebounds he flew in, he kind of forced them to foul him and got a good box out and went there. He's not the most athletic guy in the world, so he physically has got to get a piece of people and get in

their way and step to 'em, because then once he goes, from a jumping standpoint, if they got a little bit of an advantage, he's probably not getting it. So just a winner. Just a winner. Like a guy that's going to do some little things to help your team win and today I thought he was pretty grimy.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Coach.

MATT PAINTER: Thank you.

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