

Allstate Maui Invitational

Wednesday, November 22, 2023

Honolulu, Hawaii, USA

SimpliFi Arena

Purdue Boilermakers

Matt Painter

Zach Edey

Lance Jones

Postgame Press Conference

Purdue - 78, Marquette - 75

THE MODERATOR: All right. We're joined by head coach, Matt Painter, Zach Edey, and Lance Jones. We'll start with opening comments for Coach.

MATT PAINTER: First of all, I think games like that, whether you win or lose, obviously make you a better team. How to guard them without any preparation is a real difficult task. With Kolek's ability to navigate and Kam Jones, and then Oso's just a really tough cover. I don't know if we've ever played somebody that's six-ten, six-eleven that makes every 10-foot floater that he shoots.

But for our guys to put ourselves in a really good position, obviously we were fortunate Lance hits that half-courter at halftime, but we knew they were coming. We really didn't start the second half off that bad offensively. Made some shots, made some plays, but we just simply couldn't stop 'em. They scored 17 points in the first, I think, four and a half minutes of the second half. We were just struggling to get stops.

Hat's to have to Shaka and his group. I don't think anybody's leaving this tournament not thinking they got a chance to win it all. They are very, very good, they're tough to guard. I thought our guys were resilient, I thought they hung in there, and I thought at times we didn't play our best basketball in the last three days, but I thought we played really hard, I thought we competed, and that's what you got to do. You got to just sometimes hang in there and just keep competing and make one more play. Z-Bo's tip-in right there was a huge play.

And then obviously we didn't seal the deal. We missed a couple front ends. But Zach's ability to get that rebound -- you sit there as a coach and, you know, even though it's



three points, you don't want somebody to go over the back, but he's so hard to handle on those free throw box-outs, getting that rebound right there took a little bit more time off, and when it gets to that point, it can go either way, so you want some separation. But our guys were able to get that stop, and he couldn't get past really half court to get a good shot.

But just proud of our guys. I thought they really competed in this tournament.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Coach. We'll open it up for player questions.

Q. Lance, obviously you transferred in this summer. How much are moments like this the reason why you chose Purdue?

LANCE JONES: It means a lot. I was telling the guys before the game it feels good to be on a winning team. This is my first time competing for a championship in an MTE. It just felt good and this was definitely something I'll look forward to, but this is only the beginning, for sure.

Q. Are you guys going to have a debate later of who hit the bigger shot, you at the end or Lance before halftime?

ZACH EDEY: His was. I mean, he shot it from, what, a hundred feet away, so I don't know, it's hard to compete with that.

LANCE JONES: I would say his was the winning shot, his is the winning put-back, so I would say his.

Q. Zach, for you, at the end when -- I mean, you spent the whole game jostling for position. I suppose at that point that's why you're there, you're there in position to make those types of rebounds and put-backs, and that's what your team comes to expect from you. Does it feel like after three days of getting beat up on and having defenses collapse on you that it was worth it for that moment?

ZACH EDEY: Absolutely. Winning's always worth it. I'm not going to go on the court and not try to compete for

every rebound, try to compete for every loose ball. That's just kind of the way I play, it's the way Purdue plays, it's the way Coach Painter always tells us to play.

Q. Can you walk us through the tip-in there at the end, what you saw and whether you were actively trying to put it back in or were you just trying to get a hand on it.

ZACH EDEY: Well, obviously Braden had to take a tough one at the end of the shot clock. Smart play by him just to get it up on the rim. Even to kind of hit the rim with that type of shot is impressive. With good shooters, a lot of times you get those short bounces. He's a good shooter, obviously. The ball kind of came to me. I didn't try to get two hands on it, so I just tried to hit it at the rim and that worked.

Q. I'm curious what your perspective is on attacking a team once they're in foul trouble, how much easier it is for you when you know the big guy behind you is trying not to foul because he's already got two or three or four. What's different about those situations between beginning of the game and when they get in those spots?

ZACH EDEY: Yeah, well, I'm going to play the same way. It's not something I adjust based off of how many fouls a guy has. I'm going to try to get him as deep as possible and try to get as good a shot as I can. It's just a lot of times when guys have foul trouble, they're not going to fight you as hard for those catches, they're not going to fight you as hard for that position, so it makes my life easier. But I play the same way. It doesn't matter how many fouls the guys have.

Q. Lance, the play at the end of the first half is obviously something that a lot of people are going to remember, but at the end of the second half, you getting in the way of Marquette's final shot, what did you see on that play?

LANCE JONES: Coach wanted us to foul at half court, but I kind of feel like he lost his dribble a little bit and did, like, a half spin, and I didn't want to put myself in a position to foul where he could get a shot up. So I kind of just played him straight up and he took a bad one. Well, it was a prayer, but it didn't go in.

Q. Zach, it took a little bit of time in the first half for you to get in your scoring groove and it seemed to coincide with after you had that big block. How much did that affect you getting some momentum scoring today or if that wasn't the case necessarily, can a play like that get it going?

ZACH EDEY: I don't know if those things kind of correlate. I think sometimes the ball just finds you a lot of times. It happens. Like, other guys are making plays in the beginning of the game. I'm not going to complain, I'm not going to try to take away their touches. We were scoring the ball. That's all that really matters. I got my touches at the end. In that second half, I ended up scoring, got a few rebounds. Yeah.

Q. Lance, could you take us through that shot, kind of what's going on in your head, did it look good when you shot it, and also, have you ever hit a shot like that or comparable to that in, like, your whole life?

LANCE JONES: I've hit a couple half-court shots before, but never that far away. While they were at the free-throw line, PJ said, No shots, and I was like, Nobody can shoot it? And then he's like, If you're going to shoot it, you got to shoot it from right here, in front of the bench, and so I got Mason's attention, and Mason threw it to me and it felt good leaving my hands, so that's the good thing about it, and it went in.

Q. (No microphone.)

LANCE JONES: Yeah, yeah. (Laughing.)

Q. This is for both of the players. Kind of talk about your experience here throughout the week here on Hawaii and kind of what it's been like for you guys competing in this tournament.

ZACH EDEY: Yeah, it's great weather. It's a great place to be. You kind of wake up every day, nice weather, you wear T-shirts, wear hats. We're going to enjoy it tonight. Obviously, going to -- we'll actually have some time to kind of get on a beach and hang out as a team. It's a great place to be.

LANCE JONES: For me, it's been great. I've had people being able to come and support me. My mom and my girlfriend were able to make the trip down. Just having them down here and being able to experience this with me is just amazing for me.

Q. Zach, you got really, really good, solid mature guard play from Braden and Fletcher. Can you speak to how much they meant in the second half and how far they have come from one year to this one?

ZACH EDEY: Yeah, they're big-time. I think that's kind of always -- I've always thought that, even when they were freshmen last year. Like, they're always really, really good players, way ahead of their time in terms of like their class.

But they made big plays down the stretch. I went to the bench, got a couple breathers, and Fletcher stepped up, Braden stepped up, other guys stepped up. Like, they just provide another dimension to our team. When teams try to overplay those post-ups, you got to guard them too, so it's tough.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Thanks, guys. Congratulations.

ZACH EDEY: Thank you.

LANCE JONES: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions for Coach.

Q. At this time last year you're talking about how it's harder to learn from wins. What has your team learned and gotten better at in these three wins against top-11 opponents?

MATT PAINTER: I think from a competitive standpoint just being able to go against the four teams that we've played here in a row, Xavier and Gonzaga, Tennessee and Marquette, like, all four really good teams, and that's the same thing that we did last year. We played Marquette before we went to the PK85, obviously, and then were fortunate enough to win versus West Virginia, Gonzaga, and Duke.

So I think it just builds confidence more than anything. I don't think it was pretty at times. We had stretches where we would go five, six minutes without scoring. We had success a couple times when Zach was out. I don't keep him out much, but, you know, I think it's just there's different things. We have some guys that -- I've said this all along, that aren't playing at times and they play around eight to 10 minutes a game. It's hard to be productive when you get kind of like two four-minute stretches.

I stayed with Caleb more yesterday. I stayed with Mason more today. I just thought we had to score. I really didn't think we could beat 'em unless we got into the 80s because that's how much I think of them and how they play and their offense. I thought we had to get there and I wanted to get the best spacing that I could and that's why I kind of went with him.

Caleb was a stud yesterday, the way he competed. Trey Kaufman gets off to a good start, but as the game unfolds, I got to make that decision at some time. If you go back and forth, then nobody really kind of gets that groove. So the reason I talk about that is because I don't define the roles all the time, right? It kind of evolves on its own. It's

like a market. You don't set the market, the market sets itself. It's kind of the way it gets because you're going to sandwich it around your main guys.

When people pressure and people get after us and they do things, I really don't like to play without Braden. So like that takes minutes away from other people because now Lance gets into some of those minutes, and then if I like a matchup defensively in there. So you go back and forth. So really the answer to your question is how can those other guys grow. They got to be able to play. If you're only playing four minutes or eight minutes or ten minutes, it gets pretty difficult, but you have to be ready. Like Mason played 12 minutes yesterday and then today he plays probably double that. You got to be ready to play, you got to be ready to help us win.

Just kind of the attitude of our guys, I think we learned that also. Like, our guys are -- I don't want 'em to be happy with not playing, but I want 'em to be professional. I think I said that a couple weeks ago. And they have been that way. That's what you have to get to have a winning program. You have to have sacrifice. And our guys have been sacrificing for each other and fortunate to coach 'em.

Q. You guys were outstanding from three tonight. I think at one point 9-11 or 9-12 starting off. How much does that make things so much easier when you got the Big Maple inside?

MATT PAINTER: Yeah, you got to take 'em. I thought there at the end where Braden had to take that tough one, I thought we had a couple chances to cork it, and you got to do it. Obviously, they wanted to get it to him, right? It's pressure, it's time, it's his time to get the basketball, but now when they double him, you got to do what you're supposed to.

Braden had the 1-3 that he made that was after the shot clock. He just was a little late getting to where he had to be and we were low clock. But when you can make those threes and you can balance it, and that's what we didn't want them to do. We really wanted to guard the arc. We knew we were going to get in some tough spots the way they live in the paint, but we didn't want them to have 10 threes like we did.

Now, when they get threes and they get in the paint and Oso and Kolek start manipulating the defense, like, you're in trouble, which they still did, right? But they didn't have the threes. So on our end of everything, you got to step up and take 'em, even sometimes when you're struggling. Like, you got to step up when you're wide open right there and feel good about that. But it was great to see those guys, Lance, Fletch, Braden, make multiple threes.

Q. With Lance, sometimes maybe he'll go a little off script, maybe sometimes he'll take the shot --

MATT PAINTER: Yes, sir.

Q. -- he's not supposed to. What does that give you this year, his ability to do that?

MATT PAINTER: Right. It's like the one tough three that he took, like, there, like, just drive the basketball when you get low clock. People don't like to get disconnected from Zach, so the more you have penetrating dribbles and get in there, they worry about it. It's kind of like the flip-ups that they run for Oso. They get you in that bind where you get in between, and so if you can get by your guy and get into the paint, good things can happen.

But Lance gives us another ball handler, he gives us quickness, he's got an edge to him, he's a good defensive player, and I think that's really helped us.

Q. Coming out of PK last year and coming out of this, how do you maybe compare, contrast these two teams?

MATT PAINTER: Yeah, obviously, a lot of the same players. I just think being seasoned, being a little bit more experienced, a little bit better from playing together, going overseas, having extra practices, things of that nature, but kind of relatively the same. We've started Trey Kaufman and he gives us a guy that can score on the block and it's a little -- it's kind of like an old school starting lineup as a traditional power forward. I like having those different options there. One of 'em's normally going to have lesser minutes, right? Sometimes two. So I think that really helps us.

I think Lance gives us quickness. I like Cam Heide's athleticism, Myles Colvin's athleticism. Both those guys can make shots. But like I said earlier, it's hard to play in those roles, right? You get in and, like, you want to get 'em shots, you want 'em -- but you got to get adjusted to the game and by the time you get adjusted, like, the coach takes you out, yeah. It's a hell of a thing.

So I think we're deeper, more than anything. But we're similar. There's no question to that. Like, we're similar. We've been able to play really well in these tournaments. We just got to keep building off of it.

Q. Obviously Lance had the huge shot and a solid game as far as the box score went, but it seemed like all night he made several plays that really don't show up on the stat sheet. How important was he in this

game?

MATT PAINTER: It's really important because he can pick up and guard point guards, and Braden can guard off the ball. He can obviously guard off the ball too, so he gives that versatility to where he can defend multiple positions, but then he also gives you someone who can drive the ball that's not a point guard, right? So it gives you another guy driving it, and then they got to make a decision, who do they put on Fletch, who do they put on him. Then sometimes when Fletch gets a little bit lesser of a defender or Lance gets a little bit lesser of a defender, I think that really helps them in terms of driving, because Fletch had a pretty good tournament in terms of getting angles on some of our action and trying to attack. We just got to keep doing that.

But, no, Lance has done a lot of little things. I like his approach. He's mature, he's competitive, he wants to win, he's learning how to play in our system, and he's learning how to you play with our guys.

Q. On Sunday we were talking about how there's going to be some pretty good teams finishing this 1-2, and sometimes you have an event like this and it makes sense how it lays out afterwards. But what's your sense of the gap between the 3-0 team and some of these teams that are going to finish 1-2?

MATT PAINTER: Yeah, I don't feel like there is a gap. You don't feel that way, but I don't think there's much of a gap it's just where you are on this date, right. It's just, UCLA/Marquette game came down very close. Our game against Tennessee, very close. This game, very close. That's what we all are. We're all very close as teams right now. We just want to make sure that our success helps us, right. Like, sometimes you can get on edge after a loss. Like, we got to try to stay on edge and be ready to go for Tuesday.

Q. You've taken one of your teams to Maui for the Maui Invitational before, but I was wondering your thoughts on the tournament here this week and how you thought it came together here just in a matter of weeks after what happened on Maui?

MATT PAINTER: Yeah, I thought it was great. It's hard to run something like this. It's not easy. People don't understand. Go run a simple summer camp and, yeah, then you'll see, like, who is going to complain, right, who is going to be mad. Everybody's always mad about something. But these guys were great. They're professional. They were great in our hotel. Everything that we had to encounter, from meals, to the hotel, and the games here -- the space is hard sometimes, right. You got

eight teams coming in and out that's difficult. People don't understand. We're used to going places and it's just, you just got one game, so they put up and you have your space and you have your, you know, kind of what your set and your schedule. Then you come here and it's different, it's always different, like, in MTEs and stuff like that. But I thought everybody here was really professional and was great. Obviously when you win, I don't care what happens, you enjoy yourself. Everything else can be awful, it doesn't matter, but it wasn't, it was fabulous.

Q. So the foul shooting this week seemed like an outlier. Obviously, you'll work on the turnovers. What does that tell you about what this team might be capable of, once you clean some of that stuff up?

MATT PAINTER: Yeah, you know, there at the end obviously missing those two front ends, like, you got to put the game away, and we weren't able to. But had some struggles there and just got to work on it. Just keep putting in time. The turnovers was too high. When we played 'em last year at our place, it's rightfully so, it's at our place. We only had six turnovers. So they pressured last year, too. They got after us last year too. We only had six. So got to do a better job of taking care of it, got to do a better job of understanding. We have a little bit of an issue just because you face some people that don't post double at all, and then they're going to post double. But you don't see it on film. But at some point they're coming. How they're coming, we don't know. Then we have to adjust to that during the game. I thought we had a little bit of an adjustment in the first half. Even though we were up 12, he still had five turnovers, right, and those were all in the first half. So, that being up 12, and he's got five turnovers, yeah, we had a drive where they called an offensive foul on him where we thought we had that basket. He takes care of the basketball. You knew, with Oso being out -- that could be the difference, too, you got to understand that. They had to play without him. So we're up 12, you know, their key guy, who they facilitate -- and who facilitates through a point center? You know what I mean? It's hard, like, how do we prepare for that. It's hard. It's really difficult. But how do they prepare for it. So there's a little bit of gamesmanship there trying to get things figured out on both sides.

Q. Can you just put in perspective just how good Zach Edey has been and how much better he's even gotten?

MATT PAINTER: Yeah, man, he's a horse. He's a moose down there. When he comes to compete, which he does, he just can't, the way he plays, like, he just can't do that in practice every day. He just can't. Like, it's, like, keep everybody healthy, right. But he does, he plays hard. He plays hard. So it's one of those adjustments that until you

go through it you don't realize. You see a lot of the stuff that people do with the knees and the grabbing and the holding and doing all of that, like, what are they supposed to do? Like, no, he's great, like, you know, I was on a podcast or interview or something and they asked me who the greatest player we've had at Purdue, like, that I've coached. You're like, you don't want to put one guy before another, like, all those guys, if it wasn't for them I wouldn't be the coach. It's a players' game. But he's National Player of the Year. Caleb Swanigan was runner up National Player of the Year, JaJuan Johnson was a consensus first team All-American. But now he could be a two-time National Player of the Year. He doesn't have the crap that a lot of young people have that get recruited heavy. He doesn't have that. He doesn't have a sense of entitlement. He's going to play, he wants to earn what he gets. He just hasn't played organized basketball very long. So, nobody told him when he was 14 or 15 that he was the next coming. He's had to work. He averaged three and a half points as a senior in high school, guys. Three and a half points. I don't know what you guys averaged. I averaged 29. And I was a terrible college player. So put that in perspective. Now he backed up Mark Williams, right, who is a good NBA player. So he's just been about his improvement. He has these little rituals he does before and after, and he gets mad when he can't do it because of time or whatever. Like, he's just, you know, about winning. Like, what he says, people get interviewed a lot that play, they learn to say the right things, but do they really mean it? Like, he means it. Like, he's for these guys. We went out to L.A. for one of those awards and he got National Player of the Year, he brought four or five of his teammates with him. I get out there and the guy that was running it goes, This is pretty cool. He goes, We've never had somebody bring their teammates. I go, Ever? Yeah, ever.

So he understands how important those other guys are for him, but he has that, he just has a good way about him. He's competitive, but yet he's unselfish. He just wants to win and compete. So, lucky to coach him, fortunate to coach him. When I went to see him and I evaluated him he was so good in the workout and he was just okay when they played live. But, like, how do you, you want to see it, you know what I mean, you want to see it before you take somebody. You want to see it with your own eyes. Sometimes you got to project, and you get in trouble sometimes projecting too much, because you don't know deep down what's inside somebody. He was just so big and he had a skill level, but when they played five-on-five the two times I watched, like, he's kind of a non-factor, to be frank with you. But then you go back to that workout and you be like, Man, he is huge and he's got a jump hook and he's got good hands. I think it's just worth, you know, obviously taking him obviously, right. But, like, Brandon Brantley, our assistant, has really done a good job with

him. He sits up there and watches film with him all the time, he works him out. But Brandon's also a truth teller. And that's the one thing that we tried to do with him is just tell him the truth and then be positive with him. Be positive, just openly talk about what's going on at all times instead of constantly yelling, Do this, do that. It's harder than you think to have three, two, three people on you and trying to read what's going on when you have the basketball. It's easy to see it when you watch film, but it's not easy to always see it when you got an octopus around you. So, thanks, guys.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Coach.

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