

Maui Invitational presented by Novavax

Wednesday, November 27, 2024

Lahaina, Hawaii, USA

Lahaina Civic Center

Michigan State Spartans Coach Tom Izzo

Tre Holloman Xavier Booker

Postgame Press Conference

Michigan State 94, North Carolina 91 (OT)

Q. Great win tonight. What did you see from your team the last three days in Maui?

TOM IZZO: Well, Maui has been good for us. I really wasn't happy with some of our guards yesterday. We challenged them, and let me say a couple things right off the bat.

As you know, Jase Richardson couldn't play after the game. His head was just bothering him and didn't pass all the protocol. I think he's going to be okay, but that was one thing.

We talked about what we wanted to do with their quick guards and we wanted to get him in and Frankie Fidler came to me and kind of agreed with it, and started Tre, so hats off to Frankie. Would you agree, guys?

TRE HOLLOMAN: For sure.

XAVIER BOOKER: Yeah.

TOM IZZO: So hats off to Tre for taking advantage. Then there's Book. We've all been looking, that aggressive dunk, the couple of plays, he just missed a couple of other ones. That's the Book we've been waiting for now, and we're going to get more consistent on it.

But for a guy that's gone through what he's gone through, he deserves to feel good and be a major part, a major part of a big win.

Q. Tre, talk about the start, the look you guys had



coming out of the gate. You guys seemed pretty determined out there and it was a quicker start than I've seen from you. What was the mindset coming in?

TRE HOLLOMAN: You know, they beat us last year in the tournament, so we just came out and we tried to come out fast, strong, because we still had that bad taste in our mouth from last year.

We just had something to prove, and we just came out and started strong.

Q. Xavier, take me through that second half, that second. You were a huge catalyst of -- I think you had six points in less than a minute. Take me through your comfort level. You looked like you wanted the ball and your teammates were looking for you.

XAVIER BOOKER: Yeah, I mean, really I just wanted to affect the game in any way. Obviously you guys know me as a three-point shooter but I know I can do way more than that, and I wanted to impact the game in other ways that my team needed me to. So grabbing offensive rebounds and then putting back up, playing the right spots, playing defense, posting guys up.

I'm more than just a three-point shooter, and the guys around me, the guys I practice with every day, they know that and I know that. That's kind of the main goal for me is to keep building on this game.

But no, the second half, that was my main goal, just try to impact the game in any way possible.

Q. Tre, I had the opportunity to meet your parents at the airport and I followed up with them after the game and they said that they're proud of you. What did this game mean for you tonight?

TRE HOLLOMAN: It just meant a lot to me because, like I said, we lost to them last year. We just came in with vengeance, like we're not going to lose. This is a must-win.

I am proud of my teammates, and I'm proud of Coach for just getting that win.

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Q. I know you've been focused on how you're handling ball pressure. They extend the pressure on you towards the middle of the first half into the second half. They seemed to disrupt and then they settled down. What do you want to do to continue to build on that and try to get better response to the ball pressure?

TOM IZZO: Yeah, Jeremy and Tre are pretty good with the ball, but make no mistake, we missed Jase, too, because he's cool and casual -- cool with the ball and doesn't get rattled by anything.

I thought Jeremy did a great job in a lot of ways, and then the mistakes were glaring, and he's got to -- he told the team that's not going to happen anymore, so I give him credit. He did make his free throws, and that was big.

We didn't turn the ball over too bad, but we had our moments. In an overtime game, 12 turnovers, they only had 11. I thought our rebounding, we out-rebounded them by eight or nine and that was a big factor, and we got to the free-throw line, which we think is important, and we shot 77, 78 percent from the line when we got there.

For all the fans back at home that are mad at me about our three-point shooting, it was in the 30s yesterday and we lost, so thank God we got it back down into the 20s and won because that's what it's all about is winning games, not how pretty you win them, not any other way you win them, you've just got to win them.

But I will say this: That is a very good basketball team we played. Right now those three guards might be the best three-guard tandem I've ever seen, and I mean that.

We did a good job, but I didn't think RJ was himself in this tournament so far. I've seen him just light up things.

And I love Trimble. He just has gotten so much better. Hubert is a good coach. It was a good win for our program. I'm sure they'll learn stuff from it. Too. They're never out of a game as you saw. We warned our players, they've been down 21, they've been down 19, they've been down 18, and Hubert is probably saying why are we down. But he'll figure that out.

That'll end up a very good basketball team because guard play is so important, and they've got good guard play.

Q. So many momentum shifts late in the second half there. How difficult is it to win and prevail in that situation considering this is your third game in as many days?

TOM IZZO: Well, I mean, give them credit, it's their fourth game in a couple extra days. They stopped and played in Honolulu. I did that a few years ago, and I didn't see any of their guys cramping, but we thought if we could keep running maybe we could wear them down.

That's tough, and the three days in a row is tough. But it is the same for them, and if anything we had a little advantage because that played that extra game.

Now, losing Jase, one of our leading scorers yesterday, was tough, because we just didn't have the rotation at the guard spot we normally have. But I felt like in that overtime, the shot Trimble hit -- I think it was Trimble, right? It was incredible, very well-executed play. They had the hammer on one side and we fell asleep on the strong side.

But I felt like our players believed we were going to win. I thought we deserved to win the game. So when you can say that in a huddle, for a guy who's more negative than positive, maybe for once in my life that helped.

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