

Indiana University Basketball Media Conference

Monday, February 9, 2026

Bloomington, Indiana, USA

Coach Darian DeVries

Postgame Media Conference



Indiana 92, Oregon 74

Q. Darian, obviously you talked about kind of Lamar, your confidence in his confidence essentially. How have you seen him -- I think he's shooting career-highs in twos, already attempted more free throws than he did in either of the last two seasons; assist numbers are up; rebounds. How have you seen him embrace the all around role of being this team's focal point?

DARIAN DeVRIES: First I want to first recognize the '76 team for being back and having so many of them back tonight. I thought that was great. Special night for everyone. Had so many of them that were able to make it back. Quinn Buckner is a big supporter of IU athletics. That's a pretty cool event.

But Lamar, he's pretty special. I told you that after our Wisconsin game, that he's one of those guys that's going to play this game for a long time. You can see as he's gotten more comfortable with what we're going and we've challenged him with some things defensively, play making, creating, he's accepted those challenges and just took off with it.

Now you're seeing kind of the full package of what he's able to do. He had a few extra ones out there I hadn't seen before that were pretty cool, so that was as impressive of a second half performance as I've seen.

Q. Just following up on that, Lamar, some people are starting to discuss what kind of honors he should be getting and be considered for. If you were going to make a case, he should be considered for...

DARIAN DeVRIES: All of them, yeah.

Q. Okay. All of them. Make the case from the Coach's view point.

DARIAN DeVRIES: Yeah, just look at the numbers. Look at what he's doing. He's a big focal point of defenses. What he's able to do at both ends of the floor. He's a

complete player. That's something that -- you know how hard it is to get 41 points? And he's done it twice this year already and putting up monster numbers with percentages to go with it.

And he is an incredible teammate on top of it. So there is nothing I would not be in favor of him being the best player and voting for him being the best player in the league.

Q. Lamar was obviously kind of a cheat code in the second half, but what else did you see was? The difference? There was like nine lead changes in the first half and you guys took off there in the second half. What was the key to the other parts outside of Lamar just going off?

DARIAN DeVRIES: Yeah, I thought we wanted to get to a little more of our screen actions in the second half and take advantage of what we thought could be some good opportunities there. You know, using Lamar a little bit as a screener, using Tuck as a screener, using Tucker as a facilitator a little bit as well. Just get them moving a little bit more.

I thought we allowed them to play a little bit more in some shell spots. They didn't have to chase us as much as we would've liked in the first half.

I though we came out at halftime and the guys really moved and shared the ball. We cut with more force, screened with a little more force, and then they were able to knock them down, too. That's part of it as well.

Q. When you all hit the hard patch, mid-January to where you are now, why are you guys playing at this really high level now to where the year really probably was on the edge of spiralling and it's now on a really strong track?

DARIAN DeVRIES: Yeah, I think we just really found an identity at both ends of the floor. It's just gotten better and better and better. Even during those rough patches. Yeah, there was a game or two where we weren't great. There was also, like we've talked, also 30 minutes of a lot of those games we were pretty good. We just weren't



sustaining it for a full 40, and that's a problem. You can't be that team.

But I think we've gotten much better. Our floor spacing has been better. The ball movement has been better. Defensively I think we've gotten more connected. I think there is still some work that we've got to continue to get better at as we wind down the season.

I just like the effort they give every day. Even during that losing streak they never came to practice and hung their heads. They came to get to work the next day and they came to get better, and go win the next one. That's all they really care about.

That locker room, I mean, they have great energy, great enthusiasm, great love for the game and love for each other. You can tell they're really enjoying being out there and playing for everyone.

Q. Curious, you have a little bit of a break and then you have two intriguing road games. How much time are you able to enjoy this before you dial in on that?

DARIAN DeVRIES: Probably get home in about 30 minutes, so, yeah, start in on it. Yeah, it is nice to have a little time here.

You know, we got a big road game coming up with Illinois, followed up at Purdue. This is a big week for us just from, hey, we got a stretch run coming up. It was good timing. We need a little rest. We hate that we're in a great rhythm but we also got get healed up a little bit.

So great for us to have a day or two here to get our feet back under us and get refocused and ready for a big road game on Sunday.

Q. Coach, you're obviously quite familiar with Dana Altman. What's it like to strategically coach against someone you know so well, and then also, is there a little added level of satisfaction to beat someone you consider a mentor?

DARIAN DeVRIES: No, I have so much like love and after affection for Coach Altman. He's one of the best there is out there. I felt honored to be on the sideline with him because he's been doing this such a long time.

He's been so good to myself and my family. Gave me a start in this profession, so I have the utmost respect for him and what he's done, and just an incredible person and coach obviously.

So it was for me a special moment just to be there and

share that moment with him on the sideline.

Q. Coach, speaking of special coaches, Bob Knight, obviously the announcement tonight there will be a statue in the south lobby. What was your reaction to that knowing his history here at IU and what the legacy is here?

DARIAN DeVRIES: Yeah, I think it's great. Any way you can honor especially Coach Knight and the greats that have played here, I think it's something that's well deserved and great that it's going to be recognized.

Q. With Sam, is there anything you can pinpoint that like has allowed him to what seems like go to another level here of late?

DARIAN DeVRIES: Yeah, I don't know if it's -- I think it's a little bit of us maybe figuring it out, too. He's given us these last two games some low presence that maybe we haven't utilized enough to be honest with you. Sometimes as coaches you got admit your mistakes.

I think he's done a great job of taking advantage of -- Wisconsin game was a little more on switches. There was a couple like on likes, but tonight he was able to do it big on big and get to a spot and get into a move. Thought he had a couple nice kickouts out of there as well.

That's something that we're going to continue to try to utilize. Getting some more paint touches, whether it's off dribble penetration, cutting, or post-ups certainly helps our offense and frees up our shooters maybe even a little bit more.

Q. Coach, Nate Bittle obviously comes into the game pretty effective throughout most of the season when he has been on the floor. What do you do from a game plan perspective to take him out of being able to kind of muscle down in the paint? Obviously 3-14 from the floor but did have six assists.

DARIAN DeVRIES: Yeah, we started out the game we were going to double him on the block. As the game went on we felt like he was catching a little bit outside the block and he was -- he's really good at finding the weak side when you come and double, so we didn't want to give some of their shooters clean opportunities.

We started to just play him a little bit more one-on-one and give a little bit of some digs, rakes as we call it, so he just felt more hands around him from other guys but not fully committing to two people.

Q. Coach, when you have a guy like Lamar, you said

ASAP . . . when all is said, we're done.®
sports

it, two 40-point games this season, how much does that raise the ceiling for what this team is capable of this season?

DARIAN DeVRIES: Any time you have a guy like Lamar you always have a chance because he can do what he did tonight. That's a special player. You got to have one of those to go make a run and he can certainly do that. He can win a game. Not by himself, but he can certainly change and impact the outcome of a game in a hurry.

It's fun when you have guys like that. Been around a few guys like that in my career. When they get in that zone, as long as they're on your team, it's really a joy to watch.

Q. You talked about the screening and cutting kind of opening up things. How important was it for you to get to the hoop early in that second half it open things up? I think you guys went 11 of 11 from two point range after halftime.

DARIAN DeVRIES: Yeah, I thought that was a great start to the half. Oregon has been hanging around in all their games. Even though they maybe haven't had the success in the win column, they've been right there with some high quality opponents. Just played Purdue and it was -- last minute it's still up in the air. They had Michigan, Michigan State in the second half all right there.

So we knew coming out of halftime we needed to try to make a push, and I thought the guys, again, did a great job coming, executing, were able to get some layups, some shot opportunities around the rim.

Again, I just thought they did a good job executing some of our sets and we were able to take advantage of that.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports