

Crossroads Classic: Purdue vs Notre Dame

Saturday, December 19, 2020
Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Eric Hunter, Jr.
Purdue Boilermakers
Postgame Media Conference



Purdue 88, Notre Dame 78

Q. Eric, you seem like a different player this year. How do you feel like you're different?

ERIC HUNTER, JR: I think just the opportunity. Everybody gets an opportunity, especially in this program. At some point everybody gets an opportunity to kind of flourish and do what they do, and I think right now it's kind of my time.

Q. Are you kind of just sort of more comfortable in those moments where you guys need a big shot or you just need somebody to make a good decision and have the ball in their hands and whatnot, because it seemed like you did all the right things in those sorts of situations today?

ERIC HUNTER, JR: Yeah. I definitely think so. I mean, I give a lot of credit to Coach Painter, Coach Bloom, and definitely my teammates. I mean, you see I had the ball a lot down the stretch, and they trust me to make those winning plays and get it to the right guys, make shots, and go make plays for myself, as well.

Q. Do you remember the three that you made to start the 9-0 run after they tied the game up? If you do, can you walk us through it?

ERIC HUNTER, JR: Which one was that?

Q. They had gotten the game tied up.

ERIC HUNTER, JR: Was that the end of the shot clock?

Q. I can't remember. You might remember better than me.

ERIC HUNTER, JR: Was it Zach's ball screen? If it was at the top of the key I know which one you're talking about.

Q. I don't remember. So moving on, Prentiss Hubb didn't score. What was your approach to defending him?

ERIC HUNTER, JR: The coaches let me know that that was my assignment. I think he came in averaging a little over 20 points per game, and we knew if I kind of basically eliminated him from the game that that would give us an even better chance of getting a win. For me it always starts on defense first.

I think that's really what gets our offense going, is being able to get stops, get rebounds, get the first rebound, and be able to get out in transition and stuff like that.

Q. What does this win mean to you guys?

ERIC HUNTER, JR: I mean, I think it definitely means a lot for our team's confidence for sure, and definitely for guys' individual confidence, you know, making plays within the game.

I mean, we were 0-2 within the ACC before this, so just to end the non-conference with a win like this is pretty good.

Q. Eric, just when you guys take care of the ball the way you did tonight, is this the potential that this offense can show?

ERIC HUNTER, JR: Yeah. I think we had six turnovers I think it was? Yeah, I mean, it just gives us more opportunities. We know we can make plays just by trusting each other and just passing and catching. It's simple. I think we did a really good job of that tonight, other than a couple spots, obviously.

But if we continue to take care of the ball, how good we are on offense will definitely show.

Q. Just the production and the minutes and the quality play you got from Mason Gillis tonight, how is he kind of evolving into that player at the 4 position for you?

ERIC HUNTER, JR: I mean, he's definitely one of the hardest playing dudes on our team, if not the hardest. I mean, and that just takes you such a long way. He's bought in to what we were doing, and he knows that it starts on defense for us. Our defense gets our offense



going.

He always just uses defense as a first priority. He goes and gets those rebounds.

Q. Just the contribution from Aaron and Mason at the 4 position, to get the number of rebounds they got tonight, to maybe keep them off the offensive glass and maybe getting some second-chance shots.

ERIC HUNTER, JR: Yeah. I mean, I think they had 15 or 16 rebounds between the two of them. I mean, if you've got two guys that play the same position, you can be interchangeable, that's only going to make us even better, especially in tough games against tough opponents like this where we're playing a 4 -- I forgot his name, No. 14, he was really good -- and we know we would have to kind of lock in on him. They did a good job of that.

Q. What was it about you guys' defense that kept Hubb from scoring tonight?

ERIC HUNTER, JR: We were together. I think I owe a lot to Trevion for sure and Aaron and Mason, as well. They were very vocal on our ball screen balls and what we were doing on different type of stuff, whether it was a ball screen, whatever it was. We just communicated at a high level, and they helped me a lot.

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