

# Crossroads Classic: Butler vs Purdue

Saturday, December 18, 2021

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Gainbridge Fieldhouse

Purdue Boilermakers

**Coach Matt Painter**

**Isaiah Thompson**

**Jaden Ivey**

**Zach Edey**

Postgame Media Conference

Purdue - 77, Butler -48

**Q. The half-court defense seemed to have a different purpose and energy to it maybe than some other games. Reason for that?**

ISAIAH THOMPSON: I think we really brought into the scouting report this week. We knew what they were going to do, and we was trying to execute and just be really aggressive and physical and knowing when the down ball screens and knowing when to stay tight on dribble handoffs and whipping on dribble handoffs.

As a collective group I think we were just together and on the right page at the right time, and I think that that's why we got a lot of stops and easy baskets tonight.

**Q. Jaden, to have that kind of performance defensively as you inch closer to the rest of the Big Ten season, how important was it to maybe start building some things defensive going into the Big Ten?**

JADEN IVEY: It was very important. I think coming off from last week, I didn't think -- we didn't bring the physical presence on defense. And I feel like today, you know, we just brought it, and we're going to need that going into the Big Ten because those Big Ten games are tough. Especially on the road. We just got to be high and tight defensively.

**Q. Jaden, (indiscernible) just kind of right from the outset there?**



JADEN IVEY: Sorry?

**Q. Where did the shooting (indiscernible) right from the outset there?**

JADEN IVEY: Just taking rhythm shots, just taking what the defense gives me. Sometimes they play me to drive the ball. Well, you know, I feel confident if my shot, so I was just confident today and I'm just thanking my teammates for putting the ball in my hands to make plays.

**Q. Isaiah, right here. Watching the team, I thought you played a lot of good team basketball for good long stints of the game instead of individual basketball. Is that something you guys are going to strive to do for the rest of the season and make everybody kind of be a good component to think as you look forward into the Big Ten?**

ISAIAH THOMPSON: I just think we want to get the ball moving and get it into the right spot, whether it's getting into the post and playing off that, whether they double the posts and our bigs can kick it out to the shooters and just play playoff penetration.

When Jaden has the ball in his hands, we know the defense is going to try to corral him and collapse on him, and we just want him to just be able to drive the basketball and make the right reads. He made a lot of good reads tonight. We want to continue moving forward, just moving the basketball, playing well together as a team and just keep going.

It's a big January for us. We have another game on Monday we have to get prepared for tomorrow, but this stretch of January will be big for us and really see where we're at heading into the final Big Ten play.

**Q. Hey, Coach, you're a guy from Indiana. Reflect back on the Crossroads Classic. You've been coming to these for a while, and you've watched at Crossroads. What does the Crossroads mean to you and with these guys that are playing and in front of the home state fans?**



MATT PAINTER: It's obviously been a great event. We would like to win a few more games than we have, but for us we get to play two traditional NCAA tournament teams, so we get to play Butler and Notre Dame, who are both great programs. They've been very successful. They have great coaches through the years.

So without elaborating, I'm just befuddled how it's going away. It's a great event. It's great for the fans. What was bad about today? Even I've been on the other end of those, I've been in those games where we've lost and walked away.

The one thing the losses always did for us at this time of the year was it just told us the truth, and that's all you want as a coach. You want to win every single game, but then when you play real people, you get the truth.

Today the ball went in for us. Jaden, 6 for 6 from three. Things always look good when you are hot, but we still did some good things defensively. I thought our guys had good carry-over.

Sometimes you get in these games, and you realize we're not quite as good as we think we are at this point, and we have to get better. And then sometimes we've gotten beat, but then somebody gets a chance to play in that loss, and it brings a guy into the rotation or he plays better or something. You just get a silver lining from playing good people.

But from the fans for all four institutions to -- people said it's like losing its luster, well, they're not playing and coaching in this game. Their opinion really doesn't matter, but the people who play and coach in this game, this has been fabulous.

Why it's going away makes no sense to me, and I've scheduled for 30 years, and the one thing that we do at Purdue is we try to play really good people, and sometimes we take it on the chin, and Notre Dame is great, and Butler is great in my opinion, and so they've always -- they've been great opponents for us.

And we've been on the short end of those games more times than not, but it's helped our program, and it's helped us get ready for the Big Ten, and it's helped us get ready for the NCAA tournament, and that's what it's all about.

**Q. Zach, when did you know the line-up flip was going to be made with Trevion this week starting, and how much or how little does that sort of impact your preparation and how you go into a game?**

ZACH EDEY: I knew the day after the game. In practice we switched our shirts, which means you either start or don't start. It doesn't really affect anything. I played 20 minutes today. I still played -- it's not like it affected my minutes or anything like that. It's just I don't get to be on the floor when the ball gets in the tipoff, so doesn't change anything.

**Q. Coach, going back to what you just said about losses showing you guys the truth. Do you think your struggles last week showed you guys the truth this season?**

MATT PAINTER: No question. I told our guys before that we had a great seven-game run. We shot the ball well from three, from two, from the free-throw line. Who are we when the ball doesn't go in? The ball didn't go in for us in those games, and we found a way to win one of them. We found another to lose one of them, and when you allow the game to be close, crazy things can happen, and we allowed the game to be close.

We got to work on those things, but it's going to happen again, and I don't think it's from a lack of effort. Where we get lost sometimes is we don't have a concentrated effort. Our guys are playing hard, but they're not always playing smart at the same time.

You have to combine that in the game of basketball. You got to play hard, and you got to play smart, and things are always changing. Hopefully those experiences at Rutgers and NC State and neutral will really help us going forward, but today the ball went in. We made our free-throws, we were 11 for 22 from three.

Defensively we were sharp, though. I still think if we don't make shots today, we win because I felt we were pretty sharp today defensively. We did some really good things. We were just aware of what's going on. Sometimes we do breakdown drills to prep us for the live play, and then at times when it happens in the game like we don't know what's going on.

Today I thought everybody knew what was going on. They were talking. They were helping each other. That's what makes it fun. You got to be ready, man. Take good shots, but sometimes when it doesn't go in, man, you got to be able to grind those games out, and I thought our guys did that at NC State, but we just were one possession better than them.

Obviously, Rutgers is one possession better than us the game before, but that can knock you out of the tournament, so that's why those lessons are so important.

**Q. Matt, decision to flip the starting line-up with Zach and Trevion?**

MATT PAINTER: Zach has done a good job, but he hadn't started the game well, and so that was the reason for doing it. Then I thought Trevion's just competitive spirit got us over the hump in that game, and he really had been doing that throughout the season. He really handled not starting. I thought Trevion handled not starting and did a great job and was professional about it, and then I thought Zach was professional about it.

I don't have a sit-down meeting and do stuff. I'll talk to them sometimes, but just try to be honest and try to be fair with guys. But we got ten guys that can start for us, so that's not the big deal. They want to finish more than anything.

But Zach has done a really good job for us, but he had some struggles starting the game, and so that's -- the way Trevion kind of played at NC State and that factor is the reason I made that decision, and then they get to play with the other guys, so it's not -- you can't just look at it independently.

And now it's like the guys that come off the bench get to play with Zach, and the guys that are starters, they get to play with Trevion, and they're different. They're both different. Trevion's ability to pass maybe can help a couple of those guys starting or they got to stay home and now he is one-on-one more, and now Zach garners more attention in terms of, like, low man help, weak side help, and now maybe that could help out another guy.

You don't know organically how that unfolds, so it's kind of cool sometimes not to make those major decisions and put three different guys in the line-up because they've been playing together, just move one guy and just see if that gives you a little bit better start to the game.

**Q. Zach, as the coach was just kind of talking about, playing with this new group of guys, is there any skills that you think maybe people don't talk about with you that you can showcase more if you are playing with a different group of players?**

ZACH EDEY: He said threes, and that's definitely one. My game is pretty simple. I keep my game simple on purpose. I like to catch in the paint, get key position, score over people. I think I'm a better passer than people give me credit for, but other than that, my game is pretty -- I like to keep it simple on purpose so I can work on it usually, and it works in the game.

**Q. Matt, Butler has really scuffled on offense most of**

**the season except for a few moments. What do they do offensively that you are maybe trying to take away or were concerned on? They didn't have Harris either.**

MATT PAINTER: We were trying just to keep them out of the paint, and the thing that -- to Butler's defense is they've constantly had moving parts. Guys are injured. Guys are -- sometimes guys coming back hurt you too. Not to say that guy is not a quality player, but he needs adjustments when he comes back.

We've all seen that. Like a guy comes back and plays 20 minutes, glad to have him back. Well, he is 1 for 8. It just takes a game or two to get guys. The moving part, sometimes guys -- they don't have Nze. They don't have Bo Hodges. They don't have the guard. I'm losing my -- the kid that had 26 against Oklahoma. We really prepared for him. Him and Bolden and the ability to shoot and then Aaron's ability just to play hard. Aaron is such a good leader, and he is great off the bounce and breaking you down, but he is a piece of their puzzle, and so if he doesn't have some shooters with him or he doesn't have another guy with him, now the weapons if you can keep him out of the lane and keep them from shooting the basketball, now you are just making it a little bit harder because Harris is not in the game, but ultimately, we wanted to bottle them up and ball screen defense and try to contain the dribble and just keep them out of the paint and not allow Bolden to get going. We thought him and Harris could really carry the water in terms of having a 25-point night, so we wanted to make it really hard for those guys.

And then Golden had 20 against Eastern Illinois. He was 2 for 2 from three. Sometimes stretching our bigs gets to be difficult. I think he had 17 tonight. He is a good player. No, I thought our guys did a great job of just understanding the scouting report and playing hard and sticking to it.

**Q. Jaden, just something random I've been wanting to ask you. What's the back story behind you head-butting the cushion under the basket before games? I noticed you have been doing that?**

JADEN IVEY: It's just to get myself going. Self-talk, what I do game before every game. It's just a ritual I do before games. It started last year.

**Q. Something random?**

JADEN IVEY: Something random. I seen Steph do it before games, so it's working. Leading three-point shooter, so I just -- it's just a little thing that kept me going.

**Q. Matt, is there any way to put into perspective just how much Zach has improved from the time you first**



**saw him even in the last two years?**

MATT PAINTER: He made a good decision in my opinion. A lot of people don't do this. When he was at IMG and went and played on the best team because his first year he didn't play on the best team, so even though he didn't play as many minutes in games, he played against Mark Williams every day in practice. He played against Bacot a lot the year before.

He got good reps, but it was honest reps because Mark Williams is a potential NBA player, starter for Duke. Very good player. He went against those guys every single day, and then when he comes into our program, obviously, it's during the pandemic, but he is going against Trevion every single day.

The biggest jump he made was his ability to pass and not get offensive fouls, so that was his Achilles the first five, six, seven games of the season last year, and then once we got past that point, he just kept working on it.

Like he said, he keeps it simple. A lot of kids want to go out and they want to be great at everything, and it's just pretty hard to do, so Zach really just locks in to pass it out of the post, playing in the post, and shooting competitions he is actually a good shooter, even though we don't let him shoot the ball in the perimeter. As you can see with his form and free-throws, you know, he is a good free-throw shooter, and his ability to get offensive rebounds without fouling, that's gotten to where that's a weapon for him. Just keeping that basketball high.

More than anything, the passing. He was throwing balls all over the place when he got here, and now he makes good passes. He reads. He takes his time. He has done a really good job with that. I can't remember the last time he has gotten an offensive foul like he was getting at the beginning of the year. He has done a good job of just keeping his composure and just kind of understanding -- just have a sense of where you are.

Bill Bradley, a few old-timers. You guys didn't read the book, "A Sense of Where You Are" by Bill Bradley.

**Q. Yeah, yeah.**

MATT PAINTER: Nope, nope, nope. Don't act like you've read it. You are asking questions about head-butting and stuff. No.

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