

# Big East Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Wednesday, March 13, 2024

New York, New York, USA

Madison Square Garden

**Butler Bulldogs**

**Coach Thad Matta**

**Pierre Brooks**

Postgame Media Conference



**Q. Coach, I gotta give you first of all, credit for doing the job that you did this year with the four returnees and the kind of production. On the other side of the situation, it seemed like you were running a first and second half, you tried to get JD going and you?**

THAD MATTA: DJ.

**Q. Sorry. And in doing so, you ran. He had a nice look at the opening. Could have been a completely different ballgame right off the top with the confidence it gives as far as three-pointers. Second half, you went underneath and took advantage and got a three-point play, started things up in the second half. I have to ask the question. What about five, six games ago as far as the shooting is concerned, could have been a completely different season.**

THAD MATTA: Yeah. Unfortunately, a lot's tied to shooting and putting the ball in the basket. But here's the thing I'll say with our guys. And I haven't had this much fun coaching a basketball team as I've had with these guys in a long, long time.

What we've asked these guys to do -- 11 new guys, you know, like I said, we came into a program that hadn't won. And to be where we are in year two, I'm proud of these guys. For guys like Pierre that took a chance on us coming in here, I feel good.

This league can beat you up. You know, there's not good players. There's great players in this league, and as well as coaches. You know, as you go through the season, I did this last weekend, you know, I got this play, that play throughout the game. And it sort of is what it is. And like I said, I'm disappointed we lost, but I'm excited where we are and where we're going.

**Q. Thad, what do you tell the team after this tournament is over for you guys?**

THAD MATTA: Well, like I just said to the gentleman here, I mean, I'm proud of what they were able to accomplish, just in terms of, you know, I think we were projected to

Xavier 76, Butler 72

THAD MATTA: You guys go ahead with questions. Go ahead.

**Q. Coach, what allowed Xavier to shoot so well from the three in the second half? They didn't hit a three in the first half and then they kind of caught fire in the second?**

THAD MATTA: They did. They caught fire. It was kind of reminiscent of the Providence game at home where they made their first seven threes. Some of those were challenged deep. We made a couple of mistakes. But give them credit. They got rolling, and the shots were going in. They did a heck of a job.

**Q. And how hard is it to play a team twice in a week? I mean, obviously there's no secrets, like you said, in the Big East, but just to see a rival in this stage, just how much kind of does that add to the game and how difficult is it?**

THAD MATTA: Well, it's one of those, it is what it is, and, you know, you can't -- I mean us not playing this weekend, having a bye at the end maybe hurt us just a little bit. I think we were the only team in college basketball that didn't play. But that's how the schedule fell out.

But I thought we were prepared, and one of the biggest things the first half, we could not finish around the rim. I mean, we had some unbelievable looks, and just couldn't get in. We went on the 11-0 run and then Posh got hurt. Fortunately he's okay. But we just couldn't catch a momentum. We were right there, right there. We couldn't get the stop we needed, we couldn't get the score when we needed it.



finish second to last by one vote. And, you know, I think that these guys scraped, they clawed. You know, hopefully we're not done playing basketball. I want to keep coaching this team. I'd love to go to practice tomorrow if we could, because I enjoy them so much.

But, you know, we lose two guys off this team. And hopefully we can get this thing back and continue to build Butler basketball back to where it needs to be.

**Q. Pierre, when you see Posh go down and him to not get up -- obviously he's a very tough person, so when you see that what's going through your mind and what's that say about him that he was able to come back and play all 20 minutes in the second half?**

PIERRE BROOKS: Posh is a tough guy. When he went down, it was kind of scary for us because he brings a lot to the floor in his defensive intensity, his playmaking ability, and his ability to finish the basket. So when he went down, kind of frightened a little bit.

Posh is a tough guy. I've always known him to be tough. So he came back and played his butt off and he came back in. He's done a lot for us.

**Q. What's this season been like for you? Like Coach Matta said, you came to Butler after not really getting a lot of playing time at Michigan State. To have this season that you've had to really showcase your talents and be with these guys, what's that meant to you?**

PIERRE BROOKS: It's meant a lot to me. He said that I took a chance on them, but really thankful that they took a chance on me. I'm glad that I chose the school, and I love to play for Butler. I love everything about the school. And like I said, I'm thankful that they gave me a chance to come here and showcase my talent, and they kept believing in me even when things were going wrong, and they continued to believe in me and fight for me. So I really appreciate Butler.

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