

State Farm Champions Classic: Duke vs Michigan State

Tuesday, November 14, 2023

Duke Blue Devils

Jon Scheyer

Caleb Foster

Kyle Filipowski

Ryan Young

Press Conference



Duke - 74, Michigan State - 65

JON SCHEYER: Well, for me it was a hard fought game. It's what you expect when you play Michigan State. I have so much respect for Coach Izzo. I've known him since I was in high school, and he's one of the best in the game at what he does and you always know his teams are going to play hard, they're going to defend, and they're going to rebound.

We came off of our first two games where we didn't rebound the ball well. So to outrebound a Michigan State team, that's a big deal for us. We're going to play the guys that you saw tonight. We're not as big as we have been, but we're tough, and five guys needs to be on the boards, which I think you saw tonight.

I just thought for our team, like, for our guys, we stepped up in a big way. We want to play this schedule. You play Arizona, Michigan State, two of your first three games. Let's see where we're at. I've learned more about this team in the first three games than maybe any team I've been with, as an assistant coach, as a head coach, obviously in the one year, and to respond that quickly in a couple days, I think says a lot about their character.

I'm going to talk about one guy, and then I'll answer any questions. But I'm going to talk about No. 1 over here, Caleb Foster, and Caleb, he's as hard as any worker we have on the team, first of all, and he's coming off a game on Friday. He didn't like the way it went and whether he's pissed at me, pissed at how he played or the game. Like, going to play at Duke or going to play anywhere there's going to be ups and downs, there's going to be moments where you get knocked back, but the program that I know Duke to be, it's all about how you respond.

For us as a team coming off of Friday, but especially individually -- like, what Caleb did tonight, he won us the game. I mean, these guys did too. Are you guys feeling bad? You guys did some okay things too. But yeah, we win together, lose together, except tonight, Caleb, you know, really.

But I just think it says a lot about him, as a freshman, being in this environment, in this moment, and not just the points, you know, 7-8, 18 points is great, his defense, his rebounding, his passing. I just thought it was a big-time response, and I can't say enough about his attitude, and the two guys next to me really brought a toughness to our team tonight.

Q. Caleb, what did you learn from the Arizona experience? How did you feel after that game and how did that impact what happened tonight?

CALEB FOSTER: I mean, I was definitely mad that we lost, but one thing my dad always told me is to stay steady. There's going to be ups and downs throughout the season, so just keep your head up and keep working.

Q. Throughout the pre-season and after the Arizona game, you talked about the toughness and togetherness that's needed to win games and in particular big games. What did you see from your guys tonight and then what did you guys see on the court from your team?

JON SCHEYER: Well, I'll go, and you guys can add in. But they have it. I didn't question that for a second because I've seen these guys do it before. I know what Caleb, Jared, TJ, Sean, what those guys are made out of, but it's still -- the best way I can explain it is, even though we're returning a lot from last year, it's still so new because everybody is in a different role. We're playing differently because of the way our team is. So you're having to adjust to what the team needs.

But I thought the rebounding, the response, and just doing whatever it takes to win. That's what it's all about, doing whatever it takes to win, and these guys did that tonight.



You guys got anything to add on that?

KYLE FILIPOWSKI: You said it.

Q. Kyle and Ryan, Caleb made four threes in the second half. What could you tell the difference in the inside when he had the gravity that he did from the perimeter? How much was that opening things up and allowing you guys to help win the rebounding battling, like Jon was saying.

Ryan Young: I think it's a big job. Michigan State is a big team. They prides themselves on being physical, tough, and what comes with that is being a tough interior team. They're a big team. I want to say maybe they're bigger than us, at least that starting lineup.

So to have that freedom to kick out and have confidence in our guys to make threes, that's a big deal. Obviously a focal point of our offense is throwing it into Flip, and I thought in the first half, you could tell -- occasionally they're doubling, but even when they're not, they got three or four guys that are really honing on him when he's in the post. So he did a great job throwing the ball out and then good things are going to happen when we hit our guards for wide open shots.

Q. Caleb, this is a huge stage this early on in the season. In the arena, you have so many NBA scouts and executives. Coming off the Arizona game, what was your mindset coming into this game knowing, like, what big of a stage this is and when did things start to click for you in the second half?

CALEB FOSTER: My mindset was just to be ready when Coach called my name. Before the game, my teammates and my coaches were just telling me to be ready. I feel like I work hard for this moment, it's a moment I've dreamed of, and so, yeah, just coming in and be ready.

Q. They were coming into game 2-31 from three. How did that affect or impact your defensive strategy as you approached this game?

JON SCHEYER: Well, we treat it like a paint team, but also at the same time, it scares you because the law of averages. I mean, look, they shot -- they were third in the country last year with three-point field goal percentage, and of course Hauser shot almost 50 percent and that's a big deal.

But those other guys on the court are capable, and so we want to protect our paint, but knowing at the end of the day, you have to get out to at Akins, you have to get out to Walker, you know, Hoggard still is capable.

I thought that these guys did a great job following the game plan. Walker, he hit some tough shots, man. I mean, he hit some tough shots. Hands in his face and his ability to shoot off the bounce, to shoot contested shots, but to me the biggest key, is they get fouled a lot. So playing them without fouling was a big thing for tonight and then protecting our paint. Overall, we did that.

Q. For Caleb and Coach, I know that Arizona game Jared McCain played well, and I know, Caleb, it wasn't -- maybe you struggled a little bit, but you bounced back and you kind of stepped up for Jared, who was struggling a little bit tonight. Can you talk about the partnership? It seems like one guy is kind of helping the other out there.

JON SCHEYER: Yeah, well, let me go first, all right? Is that okay? All right.

Well, look, those two guys have a great bond. It's not just the two of them, though. Look, we have four dynamic guards in the backcourt, and we have to get in a routine with that. It's not going to happen the first or second game of the year. We made an adjustment. Tyrese is great with the ball in his hands, but also, he can wear down through the course of a game.

So one of the things for tonight Caleb was on the ball. He got that thing up fast, he got it out of his hands, hitting other people, making 'em better. So it can be where him and Jared are in together. Jeremy. Tyrese. Jaylen Blakes didn't play as much tonight. He can play a key role. It's really going to be -- it can be somebody different each night. I thought both those guys, their attitudes, just to be all about winning, because, look, no matter what, you see people talk about NBA, you see people talk about all these other things, be in the moment, man. Like, these guys don't get this time back.

If you throw yourself into winning, good things will happen, and Caleb is really -- like, every high school player in the country should follow what he's done the last two games because it's what it's all about, the attitude, the mindset, the work, he's crushed it.

CALEB FOSTER: Yeah, yeah. Like Coach said, it's whoever's night, we feed into that. We're just throwing ourself into winning. It's the end goal and we do whatever it takes to get there.

Q. I know this is only your second time at this event as a head coach, but over the years, we have seen sometimes this is the first game of the season, sometimes you have a game or two before it. I was

wondering if you had a preference.

JON SCHEYER: Yeah, I'm not sure. At first, I would have said the first game of the year and now say maybe it's good to have a couple games under our belt. I do know it's a great event. I feel each time -- I don't know if it's 10 or 11 times playing in this, like you said, second time as the head coach, you always learn something when you're playing against an opponent who really believes they're supposed to win.

So it's a great test. It's on a neutral court, which is -- if you're fortunate to go on in the season, you're going to play on a neutral court. So, again, I know it's the third game next year, so I'm great with that. Probably that's what I would say, third game. But if they go first game, I'm good with that too.

Q. Michigan State is 3-14 against Duke over the last, like, 28 years, I think it is. Why do you think that is?

JON SCHEYER: I have no idea why. I'm not about to take credit for all the games that Coach K won. You know, I don't know. Look, I have memories of them beating us in an Elite 8. Like, that was a big time. It's one of the hardest losses I've ever been a part of. With Zion, Cam, Tre, all those guys, R.J.

But we've played these guys a lot over the years and there's been such a healthy respect, I think, for each other's programs. We're fortunate to win tonight. I don't really think about that too much, to be honest with you.

Q. I wanted to ask you about protecting the rim. You guys struggled a little bit in that area against Arizona, but tonight Michigan State did not have much success in there. What is the key to -- what's the difference between those two games? What's the key to you guys being successful in that area as you go forward?

JON SCHEYER: I think I have to help them better with what to do when the defense breaks down. Even though we're playing three guards most of the time, or all the time, we have Flip at a different position this year a lot of the time, we still want to have that same mindset to fight for the rim, and you would think that we're going to take more threes. We took 22 tonight. Not that many. But the spacing is more open, so you have opportunities to drive more.

I thought Flip did a great job tonight of when there's one-on-one attacking and then when he got double-teamed. Like, one of the biggest plays was him hitting Caleb for that three. So we need to continue to learn how to play with the group that we have in and really

be forceful driving the ball. When they commit, we'll have spacing and shooting. But really our bread and butter is always going to be getting to the rim, getting to the foul line, and everything else comes from there.

But I'm disappointed there's no Chicago questions, by the way, you know. This is great to be back.

Q. How is it being in Chicago?

JON SCHEYER: Thank you so much. Thank you. I told these guys, I don't know if you know, but we went on a bonding trip this summer. We had a Brotherhood CEO trip here, and afterward they were very skeptical. I think they wanted to go somewhere more tropical, and then they realized that summertime in the Chi is actually not a bad thing.

Right? You guys would say that, right?

So, again, we came back and to do this event here was a special thing. So, anyway, thank you, guys.

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