

# State Farm Champions Classic: Michigan State vs Kansas

Tuesday, November 12, 2024

**Kansas Jayhawks**

**Hunter Dickinson**

**Dajuan Harris Jr.**

Press Conference



Kansas - 77, Michigan State - 69

**Q. For both players, Hunter played well but not as much the others. How should people view this performance by a No. 1 team in the country to win but obviously not your best effort.**

DAJUAN HARRIS JR.: You got to grind games out like this, especially against teams like Michigan State. They play super hard and play super fast. That was a game you had to grind down and play together in, really play through the big fella. He brought us home the W.

Coach drew up some big plays for us too. All the credit goes to Coach and our big fella here too.

**Q. Hunter, how much did this game motivate you?**

HUNTER DICKINSON: It was a very big game for me. It was a very big game. Definitely a big game.

**Q. 11:37 left and had the timeout, what were you saying?**

HUNTER DICKINSON: I was saying they was too small. They can't guard me, and I was putting emphasis on it.

**Q. What were you feeling maybe that first four or five minute stretch?**

HUNTER DICKINSON: My players that put me -- my teammates were putting me in really good spots where I saw a couple go through the net and they just kept feeding me.

Guys like Zeke Mayo, Juan, they were throwing a lot of help and kind of giving me easy shots to really get my rhythm going. Once I got my rhythm going, I started feeling it out there.

**Q. Does Michigan State as an opponent add to the**

**feeling of it being a big game?**

HUNTER DICKINSON: Obviously I went to Michigan. I graduated from Michigan. I still got that rivalry inside of me. Like I said earlier, it was a big game.

**Q. You guys will probably take the next step. What will it take to maybe get it going?**

DAJUAN HARRIS JR.: We got a brand new team, and the season just started. We really don't get -- new people really don't get the coaches, but Coach won't until like January, end of December. So it's going to take time.

Today we got me, Hunt, and KJ back. We got some vets back. We're still building, trying to help them out. Coach going to get everybody right. You know how he is. Got to keep trusting Coach because Coach knows what he's doing, he knows what he's talking about. That's all for real.

**Q. What do you think of the two-big lineup with Flory playing alongside you?**

HUNTER DICKINSON: I thought it was really fun. Flory is a freak athlete, so athletic, so energetic. And playing with him makes it really easy because, if I'm able to set a screen and roll and the guy doesn't step up, I can get him a free run in the lane. Or if they step up, I've just got to throw it anywhere near the backboard and he's going to go get it.

He's a really great defender, really great teammate. I think he definitely helps us when he's on the floor. Whenever he's in the game, he makes plays.

**Q. (Question regarding Coach Self).**

DAJUAN HARRIS JR.: Coach Self changed my life. All the credit goes to him. I just want to be there for him because he's been there for me. I just want to win basketball games. All he cares about is winning, and I care about winning. So I just want to keep winning games. It's my last year with him too, so I want to win every game with him.

HUNTER DICKINSON: It's really special. He's never

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going to admit it. He's always going to try to downplay it and give off the credit, but he's the best coach in Kansas basketball history. We're super special and fortunate to be playing for him.

I know the fans realize that he's the best coach to come through here. We're just, like Juan said, trying to win more basketball games for him, try to make him even better than he is.

**Q. Is there anything that Michigan State may have brought to the table that maybe you didn't see in the film or didn't prepare for?**

DAJUAN HARRIS JR.: I think our coach has played against them for a long time. We prepared pretty well. But Michigan State is not going to back down. They're always going to be a tough team. It's always going to be a dogfight.

**Q. How do you respond to those that wonder if this is still the No. 1 team in the country?**

HUNTER DICKINSON: When you're looking at it, it's impossible to be better than 3-0 right now for us. Can't be better than 3-0. We beat a top ten team in the country. We beat a Michigan State team that probably will end up in the top 25. Obviously they're not there right now, but they're a really good team.

Playing a Coach Izzo team, he's going to have them prepared for the No. 1 team in the country. We knew coming in we weren't going to be able to blow them out. They play really hard. They execute their stuff. He's a Hall of Fame coach too. He's going to get his guys ready.

It was a great win for us on a neutral site. Like I said earlier, you can't be better than 3-0 right now.

**Q. Do you guys feel like there's a big difference from last year already?**

DAJUAN HARRIS JR.: We have more shooters. Even though our shooters, they didn't fall today, but it's easier for me.

He got some more space. Surprised Michigan State didn't double him. We just let the big fella just handle business. He made it easier for us.

HUNTER DICKINSON: Even though we didn't shoot it that well, our best shooter, he didn't make a three, but he had 10 boards and 7 assists. He might have not had his best shooting day, but he impacted the game, probably the most impact on the team. He made all the winning plays

out there for us, made some big drives down late that help helped us win.

Obviously Rylan Griffen, we don't win without that 3 in the corner he hit. Very unconscious, very unconscious. AJ Storr is still getting it. Did he play great today, no, but he's still playing. It's super early for him. It was a big adjustment for him, but he's doing it. Like really great attitude, great attitude.

**Q. What is the biggest adjustment needed?**

HUNTER DICKINSON: I mean, Coach Self isn't going to take anything but your best. If you're not giving your best, he's going to let you know every time. Some guys aren't used to that. I don't know where people came from, but it could be a big adjustment for guys coming in their first year.

These guys are taking it really well. Attitudes have been great from the newcomers, even the freshmen. Attitudes have been great so far. They're willing to learn, hungry to learn. We're just trying to help them as much as we can as teammates.

**Q. Michigan State was 1 for 19 from the 3 to start. Was that you or them?**

DAJUAN HARRIS JR.: Some plays was them. Some plays was us. Most of the time, they missed a lot of shots too, though. Of course we've got to get better on our defense, but time will come -- Coach emphasized defense first anyway.

That defense will get there. I think our offense is there. It's getting better. We've got to come in every day and get better and better, but I feel like the defense was good there.

**Q. You think they got up good shots?**

DAJUAN HARRIS JR.: They got some good shots, yes, of course. They run some pretty good stuff. You're not going to be able to contest everything, but I feel like we did a pretty good job on defense.

**Q. DaJuan said he was surprised that Michigan State didn't double on you. Are you surprised?**

HUNTER DICKINSON: I played them four times, so they have doubled me in the past. So I was expecting that. We prepared for that. So I was a little surprised when they didn't, but I was thankful that they didn't.

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