

# Players Era Power College Basketball Tournament

Tuesday, November 26, 2024

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

MGM Grand Garden Arena

**Rutgers Scarlet Knights**

**Coach Steve Pikiell**

**Jeremiah Williams**

**Dylan Harper**

Postgame Press Conference

Rutgers - 85, Notre Dame - 84 (OT)

STEVE PIKIELL: I want to thank Rutgers nation traveled. Made it loud in there. That's how hard it is to win a college basketball. Played 45 minutes, and it comes down to the last 3 seconds.

Just proud of our guys. They bounced back. And we're learning a lot. We're learning the group. Obviously these two guys have been key guys for us. And the night Dylan had, unbelievable. But what J. Will brings, too, brings a lot of energy and he brings that vocal and toughness that we need.

But Jordan chipped in. Tyson Acuff led us in rebounding. And he was just ready to play. And every night it's going to be somebody different for us.

But Notre Dame, terrific. I have a ton of respect for Coach when he was at Penn State, the job that he did and the job that he's doing here at Notre Dame. They're going to be terrific.

It was a good win. To come in here, and Players Era has done a great job with this tournament. And very thankful for the way they've run things here. And we've got a huge night's rest that these guys need now and tomorrow it doesn't get any easier. So we'll enjoy this for 5 seconds.

**Q. Dylan, what do you say about your performance today? How did it feel? How did it feel coming off?**

DYLAN HARPER: I feel great, not just for me but the whole team. How we bounced back, fought through adversity. The one key thing that stood out to me.. we're in



the huddle, J. Will talking about let's learn how to win right now until winning until later.

Just everyone is coming together as a group. Everyone played well from Jordan to me to Jeremiah to even Ace. Even though, I see what Ace usually do, he did everything else. He was the loudest on the court all the time, calling out switches, knowing who he's guarding, know everything else on the floor. And big ups to Tyson Acuff. He came into the game, seven, eight rebounds, just a dog and he's going to do whatever he's got to do to win.

**Q. Your dad just said when the stage gets bigger you're going to get better. Do you believe that?**

DYLAN HARPER: I really try to approach every game the same way. Gotta go out there with that same chip on my shoulder that I always had. That's one of the reasons I think Coach Pike recruited me, because he's seen it in me at a young age even before I seen it in myself.

**Q. (General question on Dylan Harper's performance)?**

STEVE PIKIELL: It's his sixth assist, too, in one tournament in a game like that. His best basketball is ahead of him, too. He just keeps working.

And I'm proud of him, but it takes everybody, and those guys had to set the screens. We had to rebound the basketball. The whole group came together. And guys really stepped it up tonight against a really good basketball team.

So proud of the whole group. He certainly had a special day. He certainly did some things out there that are quite impressive.

**Q. Jeremiah, there was that open 3-pointer you had, when Dylan went in and penetrated and passed back. When you see that play, do you sense the ball's coming to you?**

JEREMIAH WILLIAMS: Yeah, Dylan Harper is a great player. He finds open players. The ball ended up in my hands and I just had to make a shot.

**Q. (Indiscernible)?**



... when all is said, we're done.®

JEREMIAH WILLIAMS: As I said, he was making unbelievable shots. And he made it a very interesting game for us. I mean, a player like that making shots like that, all you can do is tip your hat and keep competing and just keep showing up.

DYLAN HARPER: Same thing that he said, great player, great shots. I mean, some of those shots were crazy. That's the type of player he is. Deep shooter, always been a shooter.

But for us it was more just staying the course. Doing what we've got to do to win and listen to Pike. And that's what we did.

**Q. (General question on adjustment after Notre Dame's Markus Burton left the game with injury)?**

STEVE PIKIELL: I hope he's okay. We had as good a scouting report you can do in a couple of days. They have really good players and brought out a couple more shooters, too, which sometimes is a benefit and the way they shot the basketball, too, but he's certainly a terrific player.

But you've got to play who is on the court, and those other guys very, very good. I like their bench a lot. I think those guys have a chance to be very good. But obviously changes things a little bit for them, I'm sure.

**Q. Steve, you mentioned this in your introduction comments. To hear that crowd, loudest game, the buzz?**

STEVE PIKIELL: It was great seeing the sea of red also. I'm thankful. It's a long trip out here. It's the holidays. The Rutgers Nation to come out, and these guys deserve it too. It was great to have them there. Enjoy this opportunity, great location and great teams. You saw all the games today. Can you get any better than what you had to watch? Unbelievable.

**Q. For you, what was it like to see and hear the fans react as you were coming off the court?**

DYLAN HARPER: It's a dream come true. Coming out, watching Rutgers basketball. For my brother, those fans have been there through the thick and thin and the good and all the bad. To have them fly all the way out here, it was a long flight. I was dreading the flight. The flight is way too long but it is what it is. But it's honestly the support they give us is crazy day by day.

**Q. (General question to Dylan about getting some**

**revenge against Notre Dame, which knocked his brother's Rutgers team out of the NCAA Tournament in 2022)?**

DYLAN HARPER: Yeah, I mean, that was in the back of my mind there in the game and the same thing was happening, hitting 3s, overtime, stuff like that, I was getting déjà vu, but we stuck it out. Coach Pike, he gives us a platform. We go out there, we perform.

I was at home. I had school the next day.

**Q. Was it like déjà vu?**

STEVE PIKIELL: That game was a long time ago. I worry about the games today. Games today. It's a new world and we're out here in Vegas, whole new team. Thankful. Thankful for these guys, but I don't think about that much.

**Q. You've got Cliff tomorrow.**

STEVE PIKIELL: Yeah, I love him. Great kid. I saw him in the lobby. Big smile, big hug. Always love Cliff. And thankful, first time, and looking forward to playing him.

**Q. You play Alabama tomorrow. If you win the game, you go to the championship game in this tournament. Had a game like this in November against a top 10 team, a lot of opportunities?**

STEVE PIKIELL: Obviously Brandin Knight's team is as good as there is in the country. I saw them today, the war that they had to fight through, but we're going to just enjoy. Tomorrow is another opportunity to play a great basketball team with a lot of players, and we look forward to this tournament. We're looking forward to tomorrow.

JEREMIAH WILLIAMS: Just to piggyback off what Coach Pike said. We have another opportunity to do something special, play a great team, play some great players and a great coach.

I'm pretty sure they went to the Final Four. It's an opportunity we want to capitalize on and we came here for competition, and that's what we're happy to see.

DYLAN HARPER: We're going to play Rutgers basketball at the end of the day. That's what we're going to do.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports