

GEICO Players Era Men's Championship

Monday, November 24, 2025

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

MGM Grand Garden Arena

Michigan Wolverines

Coach Dusty May

Roddy Gayle Jr.

Postgame Press Conference

Michigan - 94, San Diego State - 54

DUSTY MAY: We connected as a group. It's exciting going forward when you have the guys that have done what our players have been able to do at different places and different situations for them, to put all of that aside and try to do it completely together, especially on the defensive end. So, good win but obviously we have more mountains. We have a tough, tough game in about 20 hours.

Q. Second straight game at a half the team looked a lot better and got that separation. What has been the key to that?

DUSTY MAY: I don't want to put any secret sauce out, but the last game someone said, man, our locker room was really quiet at half. And this guy to my right has shown amazing leadership all year.

So, as we were talking about how that was a negative, I said, guys, like, I don't mind us thinking about what we need to do. We don't need rah-rah speeches. We need everyone to be their authentic selves as long as that clock starts running in the second half, 20 starts ticking down, they're locked into play. We don't need a mosh pit at halftime to get what we need to get done.

And usually when you have a high basketball IQ team, which we do, when we go in as a staff to meet with them, they've already talked about the same things. So we're not rehashing this or that. We try to make one or two corrections and then try to go play better basketball.

But I thought our guys, a few of the guys that didn't play nearly as well in the first half as they're capable of really, really picked up their game in the second half and made a



lot of contributions.

Q. You played against a program that as you know in 2023 played for the national championship. Came into last week, one spot out of the Top 25. Most of their team back, overwhelming favorite in the Mountain West. Did you expect more resistance out of them?

DUSTY MAY: Obviously, yes. But I don't -- we had a night -- we had a great night. They're still finding themselves obviously with Magoon being out and then just coming back.

It's not that simple to put all these pieces together. It takes a lot of intentional effort by the players to really have some self-awareness and play off of each other and do the things that are necessary to really click.

We showed our guys, we're the third winningest program in over the last, whatever, 12 years in all of college basketball. There's not a program that I respect personally more than theirs because of the consistency they do it with. And they do it their way and everyone comes in, from Kawhi Leonard to whoever else to play a certain way.

So, yes, we didn't expect that to happen. We're very confident in our group. I think we have a really good team, and we haven't played up to our potential, but we also felt like we were on the cusp of breaking through, and we haven't broken through. There's so much more ball to be played. But we do feel like we've been better than the scores have indicated.

Q. (Indiscernible). What worked so well for you guys defensively?

DUSTY MAY: I can let Roddy have that, but we're pretty big at the rim. So I think when you get in the paint and Aday swats a few of them, and Rez comes out of nowhere to go vertical and block the shot. The next one, you're kind of looking around.

And I think the perimeter guys have done a really nice job of scrambling, flying around and just making smart basketball plays on the fly and covering for each other.

But it starts with, if you don't give up easy baskets at the rim, and then you take away catch-and-shoot 3s you're

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probably going to be a good defensive team assuming you can rebound it. And I thought tonight we were as physical as we've been on the glass. I thought our perimeter guys were as quick as we've been to the long, loose rebounds. It's a testament to those guys in practice making a commitment to doing these things that winning requires.

Q. Roddy, this is your fifth game. How much better do you feel you guys can get defensively moving forward?

RODDY GAYLE JR.: I thought we showed strides definitely previously, but I think it starts with our preparation. I feel like we had really good practices leading up to the tournament. And I just feel like as the season goes on we're still building chemistry, especially with guys like Aday and Morez, like Coach said.

Just being able to protect the rim makes my job a lot easier. If I can get the guard going downhill and be able to veer into the big's, it's easy for me to be able to get the big guy off the rim when there is guys like Morez and Aday to be able to alter their shots.

Q. How cognitive are you of the format of the tournament are you guys when you're playing and thinking about scoring margin and what it will take to get to the Final Four on Wednesday?

RODDY GAYLE JR.: It just brings me back to AAU days. I'm excited. It reminds me what it felt like to be young, playing back-to-back games three days in a row. I know a bunch of our guys are excited. But just approach every game like it's our last.

I know we have a chip on our shoulder to be the best team at the tournament. That's kind of how we were able to present ourselves today.

Q. Roddy, you said how much easier Aday makes your job when he's inside. Have you dunked on him in practice yet? Can you?

RODDY GAYLE JR.: I have tried a few times. I was not successful at all.

DUSTY MAY: We've given Aday a lot of credit for Roddy's float game now. At least it's forced him to develop a consistent floater.

Q. He threw that nifty little behind-the-back pass in the paint. When he was at UCLA last year, I heard stories about crazy passes that he would throw in practice a lot. Does he get pretty creative behind closed doors with the ball?

DUSTY MAY: Yeah, he does that a lot. In our last game at home, he did it, was it the Middle Tennessee State game? He did it three times against Middle Tennessee State. And the third one -- the second one I got on him.

And actually, the next day, in film, I told him he made the right play. And all of them we didn't win the catch, the guy cutting didn't win the catch. It was a 60/40 ball for a layup and we didn't win the catch.

Now, there was one that was a time-and-score situation, where we turned it over two straight times, they were on a run. And we just don't want to take that type of risk in that type of situation.

But to be honest, that's what he's capable of doing. And we're not going to handcuff him as long as he can show us he can do it consistently and hit singles along with those grand slams.

That's his biggest problem right now: He'll hit the grand slam, and then it feels good, so he wants to do it more and more, as opposed to connecting our group and going back to hitting singles and sacrifice bunts and things like that.

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