

# NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: First Round - High Point vs Purdue

Wednesday, March 19, 2025

Providence, Rhode Island, USA

Amica Mutual Pavilion

## Purdue Boilermakers

## Braden Smith

## Trey Kaufman-Renn

## Fletcher Loyer

Media Conference

**Q. You guys have been through a whole lot of NCAA experience being very good, very bad in the last few years. How much has that helped ease and maybe some calm walking into another round of all of that this year?**

TREY KAUFMAN-RENN: I just think any time you have a certain experience it helps you. Just the fact that we've been here before, we've done it, we've had success and we've had failures. We know what it takes.

FLETCHER LOYER: Yeah, like Trey said, being prepared, so just making sure we're prepared and the guys in the locker room are prepared for you.

BRADEN SMITH: Just understanding each scenario, like they said, we have been through it, we understand how to handle it and just to help these younger guys out and I think that's our biggest thing, so...

**Q. Braden, you have the number one assist record in the game. How are you able to manipulate the chess pieces out there?**

BRADEN SMITH: Yeah, number one, it's my job, but when you're surrounded by other great players, it makes the job easier. I get them the ball and they make the shot. Having great teammates my three years I have been here, that's a huge help. I wouldn't be here without those people so it's more credit to them.

**Q. Trey, just going off that, what's it like to play with a point guard where you know he's looking to give you the ball and he'll get it to you in spots where you can**



**score it?**

TREY KAUFMAN-RENN: I think it's great, especially for people who like to score. When you get the ball in your sweet spots and they're on time, it allows me to be efficient at what I do, but it allows the team to be efficient at what they do. Whether it's big guys getting layups or open shots, it allows everyone to do their job better.

**Q. Braden, there's a lot of history in this tournament of point guard play being successful, leading a team to being successful. For you, having been here before, does it feel like your ability to recognize things quickly and get the team in position to react to whatever a team is throwing at you in a tournament like this becomes that much more important?**

BRADEN SMITH: Yeah, like I said earlier, just going through all the situations, and we have an older group. These guys up here we have all been through those situations together.

It's not just me understanding how to handle certain situations there. They understand it, as well, because they experience it and we have a great head coach that's been through everything, as well. So he also understands that and can help us. I think just having that great supporting cast and people around us and our experience in the three years we have been here, I think it's just our job as the older guys and the people that have had that experience to help the younger guys out, so...

**Q. Braden, you guys, 3-6 down the stretch, some rough games there that didn't turn your way. What's been the mentality and the attitude, though, practice back at home, all that kind of stuff? What have the conversations been like the last three or four weeks?**

BRADEN SMITH: Yeah, kind of flush it. It's a new season. Each game is important moving forward and we have to win one at a time. Whatever we have to do to do that, we have to do that and we all understand that, as well. So I think for us, or at least my mindset, is flush all those losses down. They don't matter anymore. This is what matters, this is what we're here for. We made it to where we want.

It's our dreams as kids to be in this tournament. We're



here. Have fun while doing it and enjoy every step of the way and try to get one win at a time.

**Q. For any of you guys, they have a fair amount of guys who transferred down. I don't know if it's like when you look at them, do they look a little more similar to maybe a Big Ten team? Are you even familiar with some of these guys because they were in your orbit in recruiting or high school? What's your impression of them and are you familiar with some of these players because of where they were before?**

BRADEN SMITH: Yeah, they're here for a reason. They're a great team and, yeah, when we scouted them we knew they had players from a higher division team that came down and things happen, but they're still great players so we understand that and we're not going to overlook anybody. And I don't think we have ever done that since we have been here and we understand that.

They're a good team, they play well together and we have to do our thing and take it as if it were a Big Ten game or a high-level game.

**Q. Braden, I will give you one to assist to Fletcher and Trey. There's that saying... anything can happen in this tournament. When you guys have been to where you have gone, I know this is a brand new tournament, what are the keys to showing up for a one-game playoff every time and putting a run together that you can look back on as you get ready for tomorrow?**

FLETCHER LOYER: Yeah, I think you said anything can happen and we're a prime example of that. We have seen the lowest of the lows and the highest of the highs, having lost to a 16 and making it to a championship. Just making sure we're at the tip for 40 minutes. I think a team could come out and not miss a single shot, but ultimately it comes down to who can take care of the ball, who can play harder whether the shots go in or not.

TREY KAUFMAN-RENN: Yeah, exactly what Fletch said.

THE MODERATOR: All right. Good luck tomorrow. Thank you.

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