

NCAA Men's Basketball Championship: Second Round - McNeese vs Purdue

Saturday, March 22, 2025
Providence, Rhode Island, USA
Amica Mutual Pavilion

Purdue Boilermakers
Coach Matt Painter
Fletcher Loyer
Trey Kaufman-Renn

Media Conference

Purdue 76, McNeese 62

MATT PAINTER: I really like the fact that we did a great job in these two games rebounding the basketball. It's really put us in a great position from a possession standpoint. We outrebounded by ten in the first half and seven in the second. We had some careless turnovers and keeping the game close, but I thought our execution was really good. It's a hard -- I wouldn't say it's an adjustment, but it's a hard thing to do is play them in the second game when they switch everything because people will switch a lot, but they normally don't switch with your center so when they switch everything, you've got to be able to manipulate the defense, but you have to also make good decisions when you're passing and catching. I thought PJ Thompson, our assistant in charge of our offense did a really good job of getting us ready to play. That's where it starts for us. We can't go further without playing great offensively. We have to execute well, we have to shoot the ball well. That's not really pressure, that's just a fact, but the part of getting rebounds and getting more possessions there, we got to clean up our turnovers and keep rebounding because both teams that are going to play in the next game that we'll face in Indy both are very, very good teams across the board, but also elite at rebounding the basketball.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much, Coach. We'll take questions for Fletcher and Trey.

Q. Coach mentioned with regard to execution and such in the first half but it seems like you got what you wanted. How happy were you with the decision-making and the execution and what you were



doing offensively in the first half?

FLETCHER LOYER: Yeah, I thought we were really hooked up, starting the game, handling their pressure and really only towards the end I thought was the only time we didn't for the full 40 minutes, so I'm impressed with that and impressed with how we handled the physicality of the game.

Q. More work to do, but can you speak to the team's sense of pride, accomplishment and drive? You lost one of the best players in college history last season, here you are for the six time for the past eight years as a program going to the Sweet 16. What kind of statement and how proud are you of getting back to this point?

TREY KAUFMAN-RENN: I'm very proud. I'm proud that the older guys get to experience this without, like you said, one of the best basketball players in college basketball history, and so I know they had something to prove, but also the new guys we have on our team that are getting, whether it be the people coming in and their roles, but also the older guys that are getting more of an opportunity now, so I'm just proud of our team. I thought we played really well these last two games. We executed well and we stuck to our game plan and then we outrebounded both teams. So we do that, it's a winning game plan.

Q. Fletcher, coach talked about this earlier this week, that when you get into this tournament, it's just a different monster and nothing else really matters in terms of what happened before. For you guys, you weren't playing your very best basketball the month leading what's happened the last week. Was there a reset at any point before you hit the floor this week in Providence of let's get this going and get back to Purdue basketball?

FLETCHER LOYER: I think it's just the confidence we have continued to have in each other in this locker room and coaching. We were playing at one point our best basketball and we can get back to that point if we rebound the basketball.

THE MODERATOR: You can head back to the locker room. Thanks for your time. Good luck next week. We'll



take questions for Coach Painter.

Q. You talk about manipulating the defense. How many of your individual work stuff in the offseason is pumpfakes, pivots, pass fakes, things like that that you're not installing anything, just developing those traits?

MATT PAINTER: Yeah, they do a great job, when they get into a rotation or they get behind a little bit, they don't play the ball and the man, they play the pass and that's different, but they got another guy coming. You got to work that through a lot of drill work in your rotations. There's no doubt that they have a lot of drill work there where they're very good, and so sometimes it's like when Trey gets into those short roles, we talk about catching the ball and pausing, wait and see because some people you know how they will help. These guys will help with anybody but they swarm the basketball and do such a good job in those situations where when you're in a rotation and you have four out. I call it a pinball, a one more pass, you pinball and they go and they bracket and play in that passing lane. If you will pump fake and pause but catch it on the arc, you can make a post feeder and stick that three but they get you playing at a speed that you're just not accustomed to and I thought our guys did a great job most of the game. We got careless at the end. But you're not going to be a great rebounding team in rotations. Nobody is. That's when they're at their best. When they rebound well in their rotations, that's when they're tough to deal with but that's where we thought we could get them. We shot well in spurts today. We made enough, right? But we also had a lot of good looks and I thought our execution was good. I know Braden had some turnovers but he still gets the ball to where it needs to be and understands what we're doing in switching.

Q. I noticed you were on your white board on the bench there a couple minutes before the game. Were you drawing up a play there? Can you say what you were doing on your white board? Is it common for you to draw up a game plan or something right before the game?

MATT PAINTER: No, PJ handles our offense. It doesn't mean I don't interject but I write the same thing on the boards every game. There's those pillars, those constants that don't change, run, rebound, defend, stick to our rules, things of that nature. They're general and hokey but they're true. People who get caught up sometimes, we can overload them. You have to give a lot of information to go against that kind of a defense. You have to understand what you're doing. I think the fails we have in the teams in the nonconference that switch a lot and play that way really helped us to adjust and be able to play.

Q. Matt, obviously going into this season you knew that Trey Kaufman-Renn had to play a significant role for this team to be successful. That being said, in terms of what you knew you needed from him versus what he's ended up being for this program, how would you speak to it?

MATT PAINTER: Yeah, I felt he was going to be an all-conference player. We watched him and he was around. At times he didn't coexist with Zack the best. We would play Mace there because Mace would stretch the floor. We wanted to give Zack that kind of space to play from a decision-making standpoint. I know he started last year at the four, but he waited. He waited his turn and he was very honest about it when we had our end-of-season meeting the year before and said I can wait one year but I can't wait two years so Zack only stayed one more year but he's fabulous. He's very unique, he's stronger than he looks. He's a good passer. Tonight was probably his best rebounding game of the season. He hasn't rebounded like that. That really would be a separator from him in terms of a national player.

Q. Speaking of what you said about Trey and developing him and your ability to keep guys in the program and keep them progressing to a point where they're going to be contributors, how have you done that?

MATT PAINTER: Obviously signing good players. Brandon Brantley is one of our assistants that works with our big guys and he's done a really good job with that. Trey is a very simple person. He's to the point. Academics, basketball, that's about it. He puts a lot of time into his game and just finding those guys with that passion and competitive spirit that want to get better. Braden Smith, Fletcher Loyer, you can go down the list. You have to give them the credit more than us but you have to give us the credit for finding that out about them that it matters to them and they care because players are made in the offseason. Those guys had great offseasons and they love Zack Edey. All of us do. He makes you a great coach, right? It's hard to adjust without him because he meant so much to us and how we played and what we had to change. We played through ball screens. But what Trey does and how we get to the pocket passes and the short rolls, we never did that before because we had the real big guys. AJ Hammons, Isaac Haas, Caleb Swanigan, JaJuan Johnson. That was our adjustment, our adjustment was that but it makes it work because Braden can pass the basketball so well. He's always been a guy that's been able to score. He did a good job scoring against Zack in practice. That's always a good indicator it's going to work against everybody else.

THE MODERATOR: Two quick ones here.

Q. Coach, you got up 25 and then they went on an 11-0 run. Talk about withstanding that run and not letting them get back into it.

MATT PAINTER: Yeah, we had adversity in the High Point game too. You don't want to have it. You want to push the game out and win decisively, but just trying to get them to keep their composure. We made a couple of mental mistakes there, we passed across our body, didn't pass fake before we went, that said, they're active and tough to go against. Any time you can put yourself in that position, it's kind of the human behavior, like if you haven't been part of it, it probably drives you nuts but it doesn't drive you as nuts if you're standing on that sideline. Do everything that you just did to put yourself in that position. Don't get away from it but it does happen. It was good to see that composure from our guys just to hang in there and be able to finish the game.

THE MODERATOR: One more here.

Q. Matt, after the way things ended last season, how hungry were you guys during the regular season to get back to the big dance? And now after two wins, what's the mentality like in the locker room?

MATT PAINTER: We have a lot of guys that work hard and put a lot of time into it. It's more trying to set our offensive identity and work towards that. Our guys put in a lot of time working out in the summer but when we get our time as a group, we practice. I think it's so important in June, July, August, when you get your time because we start school around August 20th, 21st. The first day of school we practice. We take those four hours and try to put it towards how to grow into it. When Daniel Jacobsen got hurt, we felt with Daniel that we would have played two ways offensively. When he was out of the game and Trey was more at the center, Will Berg was playing at that time so we were trying to figure out all the different ways.

Sometimes you have too much, right? So that's really the time that we put in to doing it and becoming just a really sound defensive team. We knew we weren't going to be great in terms of keeping the ball in front of us all the time. You see how they play. They were isoing us and taking us and we're loading up against them. So just trying to create that identity on both ends of the court and then having that foundation. A lot of people don't realize that if you're just talking about it and working out in the summer, your foundation now starts when practice starts. We want it to start in June so now we can grow and then be at our best at this time of the year.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thanks for your time. Best of luck in Indy.

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