



Ohio State Postgame Quotes

Final Score: Ohio State 79 – Penn State 75

Thursday, March 10, 2016

Q. This question is for Lyle. The last time you guys played Michigan State, you said that you thought that they were the best team in the country. And now going into maybe facing them a third time, do you still believe that? And what makes them so tough?

JaQUAN LYLE: I still believe that. It's just a great basketball team led by great seniors. So what makes them great? They get through adversity real quick, get to the next plays quick, and they shift defenses real well on the offensive end.

Q. Right away in the second half you got all the way up by nine. What happened right out of the gate and how were they able to claw back into it a little?

MARC LOVING: Penn State was working a lot of tough shots especially in the first half. They were like 7-for-12. They were really hot. In the second half we wanted to make them uncomfortable and make them take as a tough shot as possible. They still got some to go in, but I felt like we did pretty good job of that.

Q. Marc, what is it going to take to beat the Spartans?

MARC LOVING: It's going to take us bonding together, not turning the ball over as much and just trying to make them uncomfortable on offense, try to break their pace with ball pressure to the best of our ability.

Q. This is for Lyle. I think there was about two minutes left. You guys were sort of discombobulated with the shot clock running down. And I think you took it upon yourself to go and score. How much of a boost is that, knowing that you can make what looked like a terrible situation into a good play?

JaQUAN LYLE: That just comes from my teammates and coaches believing in me, and it gives myself confidence. With them believing in me, I feel like I can pretty much get to the rack and score every time. The opportunity presented itself, and I just took it.

Q. Marc, you've really had great surge the last three, four weeks. What has been the difference in your game as you progress through toward the end of the year?

MARC LOVING: Coach Matta's shooting school. We do shooting school every day in practice. So just being able to knock down shots from good position JaQuan and A.J. put me in.

Q. Things were spinning out of control a little bit in the first half at one point, but you decided to not call a timeout, didn't even look like you said anything to the team on the floor, just sat back and let them play. Is that the strategy that you took on this year, to let them learn from their mistakes instead of calling a time out and yelling at them or whatever?

COACH MATTA: Absolutely not. The biggest rule change is the lack of timeouts. I knew that we were probably going to struggle a little bit early, and as I told these guys afterwards, Marc has played in a conference tournament, and we had a combined 24 minutes of other guys that have ever played in the conference tournament. And that's unbelievable if you think about it in today's day and age with college basketball.



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But with that said, we knew what the problem was. We weren't playing hard enough defensively. Our rotations weren't -- we weren't helping each other. And, simply, it's one of those where I thought we were doing okay offensively and they were hitting some pretty tough shots, but I wanted to see how we could play. I thought we had a little run in us and we cut back into it, but that was -- I don't know. It was sitting at seven, and they got up to nine or 10 or something like that.

Q. Coach, with such a young team, how much has this group really grown over the course of the season?

COACH MATTA: They've made strides. There's no question about it. Looking back to where we started. The one thing, and I remember talking about it this summer, was we have to act more mature than we probably are. And at times we do and we do a decent job of it; other times we don't.

And I was trying to explain to these guys coming in this week coming in that if you hang on to something in this tournament, you're going home. You have to really play forward. And fortunately for us I thought probably the last 24 minutes with the couple of blips in the second half, I thought they did a pretty decent job of that.

Q. You played or coached in conference tournaments enough. Conference tournaments present anxiety in and of itself. But given your guys' situation with the NCAA Tournament, the possibility of that, describe what it's like to watch your team sort of play with extra anxiety, given the circumstances, and watching them play well once they did take the lead.

COACH MATTA: It's funny, because -- and Dan Wallenberg is going to check on it. But I think, in 12 years of this tournament, our margin of victory in our first game is probably about four points. It's been amazing. And with that said, as I told these guys, hey, we got this one out of the way. We got what we came for. We didn't play as well as maybe we wanted to. With Penn State, those guys were fighting for their lives, and Pat did an incredible job. But we have got to continue to grow, and that's been probably the biggest challenge with this team is continuing to make strides and finding consistency throughout that we know what we're getting.

Q. The game had its runs -- each team had its runs. Just talk about when it got closer at the end and what was ultimately the difference for you guys blowing the game out?

COACH MATTA: Well, we got some stops down the stretch and made our free throws. And I thought that that was probably -- and JaQuan had a couple of big plays down the stretch. Marc had a couple where he got in and got fouled and, you know, knocking down. The majority of the free-throws was the biggest thing for us.

But also I thought -- we told him going in there, because there was a stretch there where the game was stopped for, like, seven minutes. And I'm telling the guys, "Come on, man. Don't lose focus. Don't lose focus." And I thought they did a good job coming out of that.

Q. Coach, what makes you think you can beat Michigan State, assuming you do?

COACH MATTA: They are a great team. You know, they just -- they pose so many problems. But with that said, as I told these guys, we have to play better than we played the first two games. If they shoot 68 percent or whatever they shot



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against us five days ago, we're probably in trouble. So we know the first thing is we're going to have to defend and do a great job doing that. And we're going to have to play harder and we're going to have to play smarter, and anything can happen now.

Q. This is going to sound like a loaded question. But, Thad, where do you think your team is in terms of poise and recognition? I mean, you just said earlier that you think that strides are being made, but I saw some eye rolls too and some -- I don't know -- some weird things that developed during the game. Where is this team? Obviously we know they're young, but you're 30-plus games into it now. Are they still an enigma to you, or getting it, or where are they?

COACH MATTA: They try my patience at times. But I think we're growing. One of the biggest things, when you come to colleges, you have no respect for every possession of the game. And I think that has been the biggest thing that we have tried to get these guys to understand, that every single possession is vitally important; first half, second half, whenever it is.

And my message has kind of been, going in, that you can't hang on to things in a tournament like this. You can't pout. You can't complain. You got to get on to the next situation. And you know, I think we do better at that, but probably still have a ways to go. But every time I watch this team play, I think back to '08 when there some young guys named Diebler and Lauderdale and Lighty, and those guys. And they turned out to be good players for us.

Q. This is a little unrelated, but one of your former protégés, a guy that coaches with you across three stops, John Groce, had a nice little run to start this tournament. He's had a rough couple of years.

Are you able to communicate with -- I know you're in the same conference. But what would you say to him to kind of get through it? You know the new AD came out in support of him lately, but it looks like he's going to keep it going now.

COACH MATTA: Well, I think that John is doing a great job there. I have always said that Bill Carmody to me was maybe the most unluckiest coach I have ever seen in the Big Ten in terms of injuries and the time that the injuries happened. I'm so glad that he got in last night with Holy Cross.

But I say that from the standpoint, John has been -- the injury bug has hit, and not only Jae'Sean Tate. But there's nobody that is going to outwork John. There is nobody that is going to do it the right way the way John does. And I'm happy to see those guys on a run right now. And I'm not even sure who they play tomorrow, but I know today was a big win for them.



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COACH CHAMBERS: I'm proud of my team this year, the way they competed, the way they stuck together. Our schedule wasn't easy, especially the first 10. And they were a determined bunch. I really, really enjoyed coaching this group. And they showed you today why. Ohio State looked like they were going to take it and run away with it. We came right back and threw a couple of punches and took the lead. That's what this team did for most of the year. They just kept punching back. It was so much fun going to practice. The work ethic was off the charts. I really appreciate our seniors, especially Brandon Taylor for everything he's meant for this program, everything he did this year.

Q. Shep, it looked like their press in the second half didn't cause a lot of turnovers but maybe took you out of your offense a little bit. Can you talk about how that impacted you guys offensively?

SHEP GARNER: I guess it just slowed us down a little bit, but we still managed to stay aggressive and attack them. It just took us a little bit longer, but we still attacked their press.

Q. One other thing. You guys had seven threes in the first half, two in the second, couple of them really late. Were they doing something other than to press defensively or were you guys not getting the kind of looks you got earlier?

SHEP GARNER: I don't know. I don't think they did anything different. We just didn't take them. We started to attack them on the dribble more in the second half.

Q. Shep, what can you say about way the seniors carried the torch for you guys this year, and especially Brandon Taylor and what he left on the floor tonight?

SHEP GARNER: They taught me so much. In the two years I have been here, I've learned so much from Devin all the way up to BT. I appreciate them. They came in to practice and set the tone every day. They worked so hard. They work so hard for us. Everything that they put into this program, I just wanted to come out here and give it my best fight. Just came up short.

Q. You and Taylor and Jack scored all but 18 of your points. Did you think that made it maybe harder in the second half as you guys got tired to trying to keep up that scoring?

SHEP GARNER: No, it didn't make it any harder.

Q. Did it disrupt the offense that you were going for when it's really just three guys doing a lot of the lifting?

SHEP GARNER: No.

Q. Pat, along the lines what I was asking Shep, what was different in the second half and how much did their press impact you early on especially?

COACH CHAMBERS: I think foul trouble hurt us. We didn't have the same guys in. We were deep in our bench. And sometimes that's going to throw you a little bit off kilter; you're not going to be as free flowing as we were in the first half.



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This kid deserves a lot of the credit. He is top 15 in a lot of categories in the Big Ten, and nobody talks about him. He just came up so courageous and spoke in front of all of you. Just shows you what kind of leader we have for our future in Shep Garner. Not only did he do that, but look at the game he had. Played terrific. He almost played 40 minutes.

Q. Coach, what can you say about the effort Brandon Taylor put on the floor tonight and just what has he meant in terms of laying the foundation for what you want to see in the future?

COACH CHAMBERS: No doubt. He has left an imprint on this program, much like D.J. and Tim. His leadership in the locker room was second to none. Terrific. That was our biggest concern coming into this year, who is going to be our leaders? We had a leadership council. But he emerged and he wanted the torch; he wanted to lead. A little bit uncharacteristic of him. And he came out of his comfort zone and did it anyway, and he became a terrific leader.

And the seniors were great all year. They battled. They helped the younger guys stay positive, especially when we started 2-8, keep getting better, trust the process, trust the coaches. And that's what they did. And I'm forever indebted, especially to BT and Donovan, for staying committed and loyal these last four years.

Q. Pat, looking on the other side for a second, what do you make of this Ohio State team and if you have any thoughts on the upcoming game?

COACH CHAMBERS: Loving has been playing great. We knew that coming in. We needed to keep him off the foul line. We know he likes to shot-take. But you're so amped up, you fall prey to some bad habits. Lyle, I thought one-on-one really hurt us. And then we're trying not foul, and I thought we lost our aggressiveness because we were in foul trouble most of the day. And 39 free-throws says it all.

So we have to get better. We have to get bigger. We have to get stronger. I saw our weaknesses, and they were glaring. I was excited to coach this crew. You saw a lot of young guys out there that are the future of Penn State: Shep Garner, Josh Reaves, Payton Banks, Isaiah Washington. Really excited about that group. But give Ohio State credit. They went after mismatches and they capitalized.

Q. Pat, just talk a little bit about you guys have had a good season as far as the Big Ten is concerned, you've beaten a lot of good teams. Do you feel like you have done enough to at least get in NIT?

COACH CHAMBERS: That depends on what happens with the 19 other conferences. I believe RPI-wise, we are right there, strength of schedule. In-conference, we're right there. Nonconference, I believe we're very close. I felt like we needed this game to be a lock. But we're close.

And these seniors and this team put us in this position to be a nine seed, to be a 10 seed. And to me that is progress. In this process that we have taken over here at Penn State.