

Penn State Basketball
Micah Shrewsberry Postgame Press Conference
vs. Michigan State - February 15, 2022

Opening Statement

First off, I say it all the time when I come in here. I grew up in Indiana. I grew up in Indianapolis. I've been watching Big Ten basketball for a long, long time, and there's nobody I have more respect for than Coach Izzo and his program. Based on all of his accomplishments, what he has done consistently year in and year out - there's almost sometimes where you just look down there and you're like, 'Man, that's Tom Izzo.' He has won more games than me and probably 50 other people like me, combined. The greatest honor is to compete. He said before the game, 'You guys, you're going to get one of these. I hope it's not tonight.' I thought our guys really competed and I'm happy for our guys. They deserve this in terms of how they've played and what they've done. But, it's an honor for me to coach against Tom Izzo. He gives a model for how we build our programs and what we do and how his teams get better and better and better as the year goes on and they stay consistent and guys get better and guys wait their turn and then they come in and they're a good player and it goes on and on and on and it runs itself. That's who we want to be. Hopefully we're building that way for the future.

Q: That technical foul seemed like a long time coming. What set you off and how do you think your team responded to that emotionally-charged moment?

A: Yeah. I don't know, it was probably them playing a lot better that maybe set me off a little bit. I thought our guys were competing. I disagreed with the official and what he called but at the end of the day he called a tech and it was over right after that. I went over to him and was like, 'Hey man, sorry. It is what it is.' He said the same exact thing and we kind of moved on from it. Immediately, Myles [Dread] came over and was like, 'Hey, we got you, Coach.' We had an older group on the court at the time and I think they really responded and really played hard from that moment defensively. We really locked in in terms of what we needed to do. I thought our offense got better from that moment on so, I don't know, maybe I'm a dummy for waiting this long to get one.

Q: I wanted to piggy-back off of what you said in your opening statement about Coach Izzo. He sat down here just a couple minutes ago and was very complimentary of the program, very complimentary of you saying you were 'certainly the right guy for the job' - what is something like that from him to you?

A: Yeah. Like I said, there's a lot of really good coaches in this league. But what he has done, like winning national championships, going to Final Fours - maybe eight Final Fours? We were in one. 2010, Butler vs. Michigan State in the semifinals in Indianapolis. The pros, the guys that are in the NBA currently and before that - that's a model for who we need to be and who we want to be. For him to say that, it's an honor for me. Like I said, it's an honor for me to be down the sideline against him. This might come as a shock, but I've said it before, I watch the pregame shows. I was watching all the stuff and was like, 'Man, he is about to tie Bob Knight for Big Ten wins for coaches. That's so impressive.' But, that's longevity. That's winning year after year after year. If I can be half the coach he is and I've had a successful career.

Q: Can you speak to the job that John [Harrar] did? 16 rebounds against that team is like 25 against a lot of teams and how big was the and-one at that moment of the game when you guys had been struggling?

A: John is a warrior. He gives you everything he has. There is no 'Did John play hard tonight?' Yes, John plays hard. That's probably like a Twitter thing, I always see that. Did the Celtics win tonight? Yes. Did John play hard? Of course, John played hard. He was in there battling by

himself. We sent four guys back in transition and John fought. We could do that because there wasn't a fear of John not sprinting back on defense every single time. He was going to go as hard as possible on the glass and run back as hard as he needs to. I talk about those clips that were going to show of John [Harrar]. These will be some of them. You can play this hard. If John [Harrar] can do it, anybody can do it, right? In terms of effort. That's all it is is pure effort, heart, determination, and love for Penn State. He wants Penn State to do really well and 16 points and 16 rebounds is really impressive. They have a bunch of good players at the five and they threw those guys all at him and he just kept going and going and going. We got to get him some rest, he's got to do it again on Thursday.

Q: Coach, your team was down 14 at one point. What started the 8-0 run prior to your timeout?

A: You know, they came out of the second half really determined. That's one thing we talked about. I didn't think halftime was probably going to be a picnic for them, but they came out on fire. We weren't great in terms of closing out and getting to their shooters. They got some offensive rebounds, they were attacking around, they were doing everything right. And you know, we were a little slow out of the gate. So once we got down, we've been down before, and we've come back and we chipped away, but we do it. We talk about doing it one possession at a time, right, there's no 14-point shot. But everything gets magnified, I think every defensive possession gets magnified, every offensive possession gets magnified. I think we finished with two turnovers in the second half, so we were maximizing the shots that we were going to get, luck was with us. We made some tough shots, we made some timely shots, and you know knocked in our free throws down the stretch.

Q: What changed with the turnovers in the second half?

A: That's a great question. Once you insert Sam [Sessoms] with [Jalen] Pickett, you have two guys who are both ball handlers. Like John [Harrar] is getting better and better in terms of how he's handling the ball and now he's up there catching it, moving it and doing different things. So, we were just sure handed in terms of what we wanted to do. If you look at it throughout, mostly throughout this year, we've turned the ball over like we shoot ourselves in the foot early. But as the game gets going, we get tighter and tighter, and we don't normally turn the ball over late. Minnesota game will be one of the exceptions where we turned it over late, but we usually don't late in the game. We just started a little bit earlier, and I'm glad we did because we needed every single one of those possessions.

Q: Back in East Lansing in December, I thought it was a similar type of game script because it kind of felt that way when you guys are in in the first half then it started to slip away down 14 points. What has been the growth in this team since that?

A: That game was crazy because they scored more transition points than like we've scored all season in one game, and it came in spurts. We had to adjust what we did in terms of on the offensive glass and on the defense of glass where they couldn't get those. Now they're so potent in transition you got to almost slow it to a crawl. And that's what we did. We made it a half-court game and we made every possession be magnified. Like the eight turnovers for us, the 11 turnovers for them, in a game like this add five more because that's what it usually is in the regular game. So, we got the game how we wanted it. We tried to do some different things defensively. Nothing special, but I thought our guys really competed and played hard on the glass. I thought we boxed them out as best we could and went after it. That's where they crushed us in game one, transition and rebounding. When I went back and watched it, it was so long ago. You see growth from both teams. But I think our guys, you know, played with the same spirit and when we got down like we got tighter as a group. We came together as a group and that's kind of where you've seen the growth in our team like, when adversity hits who are we? Who are we? And tonight, we responded when adversity hit us.