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BIG
MEN'S BASKETBALL
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Michigan State – 66
Iowa – 61

An Interview With:

COACH TIM IZZO DRAYMOND GREEN DURRELL SUMMERS

COACH IZZO: Well, it wasn't a pretty game, there's no question about that. But as I told my guys, the last year we played New Mexico State in the first game (of the NCAA Championship), and as Draymond said when he walked in, it's about advance, surviving advance, and that's kind of the way it is. I thought at times we did some really good things, and at times we did some really not so good things. But the bottom line is I thought I had some guys that didn't play as well early, Austin (Thornton), Delvon (Roe) struggled, Durrell didn't really get as many shots. But late, he really hit the big three and hit the two free throws but maybe as important got two big rebounds late.

Draymond will probably tell you that he was not as good, you know, part of the first half, but I thought he too sucked it up, and we went to him. And Kalin is hurt a little bit, and that created some problems there.

But really Austin Thornton bounced back, made some plays, and yet the two big guns for us in money time down the stretch with Durrell and Draymond, and hopefully that will give us a shot in the arm.

Q. Draymond, you guys were down the second half, your backs were against the wall so to speak, so much to play for at this point. Talk about what you guys were kind of thinking, and it didn't seem like you guys really thought you were out of it.

DRAYMOND GREEN: Not at one point did we think we were out of it. We just said we thought we had to get it back on the defensive end. We got like a seven-point lead there in the first half, and what we said in the huddle was we got that lead off of defensive rebounding the basketball, and we got away from it.

And then the second half was kind of just back and forth. They kind of took a lead, and we just said we had to get stops on the defensive end in order to cut the lead and get back in the game, but never at one point did we think we were out of the game.

Q. Durrell, could you talk about the end of the game? I know you've had struggles this year, but can you talk about hitting those free throws and coming up with the big rebounds late and what that means for you moving forward?

DURRELL SUMMERS: As far as rebounds, I was just being aggressive, just finding the ball really, just happened to notice where the ball was. And as far as the free throws, I just kind of talked to myself at the line and said -- basically I just told myself to go on up. That's something I tell myself as a confidence builder, and that's pretty much what I did, and just let them go.

Q. Durrell, I wanted to ask you about another point. You got free in the corner, got the ball, and it sort of looked like you waited for a second, then hit that big three-pointer that put you guys up four. Talk about that play.

DURRELL SUMMERS: Yeah, I kind of hesitated because the reason was to go inside, and I was so wide open, I just let it go. The guys are yelling from the bench, "shoot it," so I just shot it and it went in.

Q. Draymond, could you just talk a little bit about what makes Michigan State so good and why you guys are able to have success,

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and does that play into this year when obviously you've got to kind of play your way into the tournament?

DRAYMOND GREEN: Um, I'm not sure if it's just that we're so great in March, but I think just with us, as any other team in the nation, our focus level just goes up. Everybody picks their intensity up, all the focus is turned up and everything is turned up, and we -- I wouldn't necessarily say we're that great in March. It comes with having a great coach and a great staff and a little bit of luck. You know, all those things add into it. But the main thing is just the focus and intensity level that goes up, and we do a great job of picking ours up.

Q. This is for Draymond. You don't get much of an opportunity to relax and enjoy this one because you've got to bounce back into the fire tomorrow night. You've had two interesting games against Purdue this year. Can you take a peek ahead and anticipate round three with the Boilermakers?

DRAYMOND GREEN: We'll enjoy this one until we get back to the film room in the hotel and get our minds focused on Purdue. You have to enjoy it a little bit, but once it's time to hit the film room, it's time.

You know, the first game with Purdue, it was a good game up until they made one run, and that run really lost us the game because we never really got back from that run in the first half. We kind of got back in the second half, but when you're on a roll like that, it's hard to let a team make a run like that. And we played them even the second half, it was just that one run, which was I think an 11-point run. You know, at the Breslin Center that was real uncharacteristic of us and not only us but the Michigan State basketball program, you know, all the guys that came before us, pretty much an embarrassment to lose at home by 20. You can lose anywhere by 20, but when you don't defend your home court and you lose by 20 in a game, that is very critical to a season, that's an embarrassment, and we haven't forgot about that. We need to come out and redeem ourselves from that, as well.

But I think one of the key things tomorrow will be containing their role players. JaJuan Johnson is a great player, he's going to do what he do, and E'Twaun Moore is going to do what he do but it's not letting Lewis Jackson get 17 points and not letting D.J. Byrd come out and get 11, 13 points or Ryne Smith come out and get 15. You've

got to control those things, and just try to contain the other two guys.

Q. With Kalin barely seemingly able to walk, did you feel you needed to step up at the end to make up for your friend?

DURRELL SUMMERS: You could say that, yeah. I mean, I was just trying to bounce back myself from a bad first half and just be aggressive, and the game was on the line, so I just -- that's pretty much winning time. I just tried to do whatever I could to win. When I saw the balls bouncing my way, I just tried to chase them down. I'm constantly hearing that from my coaches, so I just went for the ball and made sure I knocked down the free throws.

Q. Draymond, just after what you were saying after the game Saturday, how important of a game was this for you and what did you think of coming in after?

DRAYMOND GREEN: It was a very important game for me to come out after having a performance like that against -- I'm from the state of Michigan, so the rivalry is going to mean a little bit more to me than it means to an Adreian Payne, Delvon Roe.

When we play Ohio State, that's when it's time for those guys to step up and get up for the game. It's a big game for us, but when you're from that state it's a little more added to the game. So when I came out and had a performance like that, it wasn't anything -- not being able to get the shot I wanted. I had lay-ups and I missed them, and I just wanted to come out and have a better showing because I know my coaching staff, my teammates know that's not me, and I felt I let the whole program down and the guys that came before me.

Mateen Cleaves never did that against Michigan and Magic Johnson never did that against Michigan, and I try to put myself in a category with those guys because I want to be one of the best leaders to play at Michigan State. They never did that against Michigan, so I refuse to let myself do it.

Q. Coach, could you speak on Draymond's performance, good all around the board, shooting was a little off, but talk about what he was able to do and the leadership he did provide?

COACH IZZO: I thought one of the main

things we went into the game with was to try to get off to a better start. As you know we've been off to some bad starts. We thought our shot selection was poor in a couple of games in Ann Arbor and at home against Purdue. So we went inside more, we went to him. We got something out of it. We got to the rim a little bit more, we got some three-point plays. I thought we did a great job to start out. And I think he said it right. He got tired, I thought, asked twice to come out, and that's why you never know how much time off helps you and it hurts you. Usually when you have time off at this time of year, we actually try to do what we could do, but we definitely didn't do a lot of running because we figured guys are worn out. Even though we have all day off with no school, we just tried to do more mental work than physical work.

I thought Draymond, he did a lot of good things. We were able to go to him. I thought he broke down a couple times and threw some passes I've never seen him throw, but when he's inside like that he's a better rebounder and getting six offensive rebounds and put-backs, 14 rebounds for the game, that's what we need if we're going to be successful.

Q. I was wondering if the Kalin injury is basically reinjuring what he did against Purdue. How concerned are you about that for tomorrow, and also with Delvon having to go up against JaJuan Johnson 24 hours later. How concerned are you about the health of your team right now?

COACH IZZO: Well, I don't think it would be very good if we were healthy. We were a little too healthy today maybe, so if we're back to digging and scratching maybe that's the way the whole year has been. I don't know that much. I talked to Kalin right before I left, but he was doing an interview with the Big Ten Network, so I didn't really get a chance to talk to him about it. I mean, I think he sprained it when he drove that time and kind of foot slipped out as he went to pass it. So it's a little bit of a sprain. It's not his Achilles, it's his ankle. If it's a bad sprain, then it's going to swell up and it's going to be a real problem. If it's a slight sprain he's a tough enough kid to get through it and handle it, and whatever it is, we still get to play, so we're going to play.

Delvon, you know, didn't complain about it, so I kind of asked gingerly with those guys, 'Are you OK? What? I didn't hear you,' and I just walk away. So that's about the way I handle that right now.

Q. Just if you could, just your thoughts seeing Summers make that big shot at the end that fell for you.

COACH IZZO: Well, there are no secrets that it's been a disappointing year for him and it's been a disappointing year for us. And I thought he struggled during the game, just fumbling the ball and doing some things. It all means he's pressing. Sometimes if you just do a couple things to feel good about yourself, you can get over that. There's no question he had some looks and he had some shots, and that last shot was big. But I'm not kidding you, the rebounds were just about as big. One thing he could do a better job is his rebounding, and I think it would help him. But making a shot, making the free throws, getting a big rebound, hopefully it motivates him because if his buddy is able to go, it probably won't be at full speed, and we're going to need some more bodies.

Q. How much does it help just to have (Keith) Appling with his 10 points to kind of create some more balance on offense especially in the second half to help out Green there?

COACH IZZO: Appling did a great job and we asked him to really press up on people and guard the best players, and he wore down, too. He had that one breakaway that normally he breaks away and probably should have thrown to Durrell, but I thought I've never seen him get caught from behind before. So hitting a couple shots, he's worked awfully hard at his shooting the last three weeks. It's been great, and I think he's shooting it better even when he's missing now, and that's encouraging. Again, he's another guy we'll need to step up. But hitting two threes, he hit as many as anybody, definitely helps us become a better team.

Q. You talked about it being surviving and advance at this point. Do you even think about whether your team mentally has turned the corner, found its confidence, or hey, we won, get on to the next one?

COACH IZZO: I think that will be determined when you get back to the hotel and get in the film room. I think they were a little relieved. They looked like they did at New Mexico State. There's been pressure on this team and then

there's been pressure, but this one was about as good as it's been in the last couple years. So I don't think -- I think they're going to be excited when we get back because I think we had some key guys step up, especially Durrell. That's going to be big, and Delvon played better the second half. We just need more guys to play as good as they can play, and those two guys would be two of them.

Q. You mentioned working on the mental game over the break. Do you think Durrell was better mentally and he stayed in the game throughout the whole thing and that's how he was able to finish strong?

COACH IZZO: You know, it was really strange. He had a great week of practice, and early in the game I just thought was -- struggled some, you know, whether it be defensively or catching or had a couple good looks. But we've got to get him more shots, too. It's that Catch 22, do you get him more shots if you're questioning whether he's going to make them, what do you do on that. So there's a Catch 22 on that. But I think for everybody, there's going to be a little bit of a lift to say, 'Hey, you know what, we won a game in the tournament.' You know, we're back to taking baby steps. I mean, I've admitted that. We're back to figuring out how to do some things. Any time you win, they shot 39 percent, that was good, we turned it over a little too much but out rebounded them. The things I think we need to be successful. With the two guys gone, we're not going to be a team that's going to score 85 points, we know that. We're going to have to win the old-fashioned way. At least we did some of those things right, and I think we can survive and advance again. But Purdue is an awful good team, playing very well up until the last game, brings a lot of bodies at you, brings a lot of pressure at you. It'll be a great test for us. Thanks a lot.

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