

# Big Ten Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Friday March 2, 2018

**Tim Miles**

**Isaiah Roby**

**James Palmer Jr.**

Nebraska Cornhuskers

Michigan - 77, Nebraska - 58

THE MODERATOR: Coach, an opening statement.

COACH MILES: Well, credit Michigan. I thought they played terrific. Their offensive pace really got us on our heels early. And when they make 11 3-pointers, you're in big trouble because then your defense gets too spread out, and it's hard to get them under control. And we've done a good job all year of taking away 3s but we didn't today.

Again, I think Michigan just really played excellent sound, too, put us in a position of, I thought, overhandle the ball and take real questionable shots. And we just couldn't get back up on top once we got down by 11 or whatever it was. But I think the credit goes to Michigan. They played excellent basketball tonight.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for the student-athletes.

**Q. I'm sure your coach will get asked the same thing but I'll ask you what's the next week or so going to be like sort of waiting to see what happens with the NCAA bid?**

JAMES PALMER JR.: I think we're just going to wait to see what happens. Whether it's NCAA -- which I think we should be. But we're just going to wait this week out, see what happens. Because I don't think this loss should affect us.

ISAIAH ROBY: I agree with him. I think we're going to have to just start working hard again and just get ready for whatever postseason we're in, hopefully it's the NCAA. I think we should be in there, too.

**Q. James, what made Xavier Simpson so good defensively against you guys this afternoon? What made him excel on that side of the floor?**

JAMES PALMER JR.: I don't think it was just Xavier. I think it was a good team effort with their defense. They was in some good help spots and made us take tough



shots, which I took some of them. And I think they just did a good job defensively and they got it going on the offensive end. That definitely helped them on the defensive end.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Questions for Coach.

**Q. Tim, do you guys think you deserve an NCAA bid? And what would be your case to make to the committee?**

COACH MILES: Well, I believe we're an NCAA Tournament team now. That was -- we just ran into a buzz saw with Michigan, but I don't think that undoes what we've already accomplished.

What we've done is we've won games away from home. We've beaten the teams that we should beat with maybe one exception. And to go through that type of season where you have to win, I think we won eight out of our last nine, four of those on the road, we showed we could win away from home.

And to put 13 league wins, I know that's not a marker or anything like that, but to be able to do that in a difficult environment, because those teams -- Indiana is a good team. You saw today, Iowa is not easy to beat.

And at the end of the day if Quad 1 is the holy grail, that's a tough deal. But I don't think Quad 1 is the holy grail. There's tough wins in Quad 3. You just have to see where it goes.

**Q. In retrospect would you have done anything differently in schedule so you got more Tier 1s? I know it's a little difficult, obviously, but is there anything you would have done differently?**

COACH MILES: We had some bad luck with the Big Ten schedule. If you look at our Quad 1, I think we've got five games against the Top 25. There's no top 75 in there. I mean, it's all loaded, top-heavy.

And most of those were on the road. I might have switched a screen against Kansas. That would have made me feel a hell of a lot better. But we didn't do it.

And so we've competed well against good teams. We weren't able to beat Central Florida when they had Tacko Fall, so we lost out on the chance to play West Virginia. And we end up playing Marist and Long

Beach in that tournament last year. We beat Dayton in the Wooden Legacy, then we got UCLA and Virginia Tech, which was almost too much. And this year we just missed a little bit.

We've never underscheduled. We played at Creighton. We took the Kansas game on our own volition which not many people are doing.

I think Villanova is the next home-and-away they've got. It says a lot about what we're about. We're in the Gavitt Games, went to St. John's early when LoVett was there. We beat Minnesota when Minnesota was basically a Quad 1 win. That was a very good team.

We've won some excellent games. But I don't know that the league schedule and the quirkiness of that, there's nothing you can do about it.

**Q. Same question as I asked James earlier, just you touched on Michigan, how good they were defensively. Within that, what made Xavier Simpson so good on that end and making things difficult for your guards?**

COACH MILES: Xavier was really tough on the ball. He wouldn't let guys past him. He'd defeat the ball screen and get back in front so we couldn't get downhill, we couldn't turn the corner. They also did a good job zoning up, getting guys into the mid-line and then getting back out to shooters. And that got us standing around and overdribbling. So when you overdribble you stand around.

And I'm begging guys, cut, cut, on the ball screen stuff, to force them to have to pick up a cutter and then maybe we can skip and drive or closeout, shoot an open shot from there. I thought they did a good job getting us -- your goal in defense is to stand the ball up and stand the offense up; get them standing still as much as you can.

I thought they did a good job, all of them, with active hands, handling ball screens, just defeating screens, guarding the ball one-on-one in a really good manner.

Now we did get to the foul line some, but by the time we started getting downhill there was only three minutes left. We had that little run early where we hit some shots but then we stood around for a long time. And then I think we got score-sensitive in the second half. We got a little panicky. And Michigan will make you do that.

**Q. As it stands now the Big Ten might only get four or five NCAA Tournament bids. Just curious, if you sort of look at the overall strength of the league, how would you compare it to what it's been in the**

**previous three seasons since the league increased to 14 teams?**

COACH MILES: Well, you know, like I was looking at the KenPom numbers and what is Michigan like defensively, like 12? Ninth or tenth. And the league is just a little different.

Now, we had some changeover. We had some injuries. Certainly left a few teams with less talent. But Maryland still has a lot of talent, you know what I mean. You play a Maryland team you're playing Cowan and Huerter and Fernando. You're playing plenty of talent. They lost some guys here, but I'm just using it as an example. It's too bad guys were injured, but everybody kind of goes through that at a different time. But I believe the Big Ten's always a grind.

I thought we were going to have a good team anyway this year. I've read that this is a decidedly down year. I don't know who the hell decided that, but at the same time when you look at this, the Big Ten, I think how many other teams we get in the tournament, we'll all do very well.

**Q. With all the talk about how big this game was going in for your resume and profile, do you feel your kids put extra pressure going into the game, and did that play on as the game continued on?**

COACH MILES: I don't think there's any question the guys kind of felt a burden of expectation that way. You could see and you could see in the reaction afterwards. The other thing with the double bye, you just don't get in the facility. And that advantage of playing that day before, you have seen that with even Wisconsin and Michigan State, I think, there's a true advantage there.

But not being in the facility I don't love that but I don't know what our options are either. I think our option was like 8:00 a.m. or 7:30 this morning. You're not going to get your guys out of bed for that. So I do think when we arrived we arrived a little tight. But they've also done some excellent things this year, and I don't think that one game takes away all that hard work over months and months.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.