



## 2024 TIAA BIG TEN MEN'S BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT



Game 12 • Saturday, March 16, 2024  
Target Center • Minneapolis, Minn.  
FINAL: #2 Illinois d. #3 Nebraska, 98-87  
Records: Nebraska (23-10), Illinois (25-8)  
#2 Illinois to play #5 Wisconsin at 3:30 p.m. ET on Sunday

### GAME NOTES

#### NEBRASKA NOTES

- Nebraska lost for just the third time this season when leading at the half (previously were 18-2).
- Today's semifinal appearance marked the deepest the Cornhuskers had gone in a conference tournament since 2006.
- The Cornhuskers shot 58 percent from the floor in the first half and 36 percent in the second half.
- Brice Williams scored 23 points to lead Nebraska in scoring for the fifth time this season.

#### ILLINOIS NOTES

- 13th-ranked Illinois overcame a 15-point deficit in the second half.
- Illinois advances to its eighth championship game, which ranks second-most among Big Ten schools.
- The Illini's 98 points are the most scored at this year's tournament and set a team record for the BTT.
- Terrence Shannon Jr. established a Big Ten Tournament single-game scoring record (40 points). The previous record of 35 was set by NU's Michael Thompson in 2011.
- Shannon Jr. has surpassed 30+ points in a game on five occasions this year.

#### MISCELLANEOUS/TOURNAMENT NOTES

- This afternoon's contest marked the first meeting between the schools in the Big Ten Tournament.
- Illinois leads Nebraska in the all-time series, 23-8, having won nine straight.

# Big Ten Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Saturday, March 16, 2024  
Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA  
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**Illinois Fighting Illini**  
**Brad Underwood**  
**Luke Goode**  
**Marcus Domask**

Postgame Press Conference

Illinois - 98, Nebraska - 87

THE MODERATOR: We're joined by the University of Illinois, head coach Brad Underwood, along with Marcus Domask and Luke Goode.

BRAD UNDERWOOD: Well, obviously we're pleased with the outcome. It was a tale of two halves. Nebraska and Fred have had just an incredible season. I have so much respect for Fred. He's a dear friend.

Obviously they played a little bit man down today with Wilcher being out. It was a frustrating first half, just because I didn't think we had any pop, we didn't have any life. We looked like we were still in bed asleep. My halftime wasn't about any Xs and Os. It was animated. Probably didn't want to check my blood pressure.

But we had to find some life. It obviously didn't work because we had to call a quick timeout in the second half, and then they responded. It was on them. It wasn't me. It was all them deciding to play. That's who we can be in the second half.

I thought Luke and Ty were just unbelievable today with their offensive rebounding, I think they had 11 of our 14. Impacted the game. Obviously Luke made some balls, which is absolutely great to see. He's been fighting some injury with tendinitis in his knee and an ankle. Then Marcus, you look down, and it's 16, 8, and 7. You're talking almost triple-double type numbers.

You sit here, and you talk about a lot of things. Obviously Terrence breaks the tournament record. But the most important thing I hope our guys learn is it's lose and go home. We can't have first halves like we had. Today the



second half was fun to watch this group play because we can be pretty good when we do that.

**Q. For both you guys. 40 points is obviously a record. What's it like to have Terrence Shannon on your team right now?**

LUKE GOODE: It makes it easy for us. Get a defensive rebound and look for him in transition. That's basically the key to it. When you have someone that's gifted as a scorer and gifted as an athlete and can get downhill and still go 5-for-9 from three is pretty special. When you have a teammate like that, all you can do is look for him. He was able to knock down a bunch of shots tonight and help our team win.

**Q. Marcus, obviously a little more comfortable tonight, shot it better. What went into that and what did you feel? Started the game a little bit slow, but then you got into rhythm.**

MARCUS DOMASK: It's just basketball. You miss a shot, you make a shot, it's another possession. The mindset is next possession. In this possession, how am I going to help my team win?

I try not to think about what I'm doing other than the next possession and how am I going to help my team?

**Q. Luke, Coach obviously mentioned you've been battling injuries. How does it feel just to have a game like you had today?**

LUKE GOODE: It feels great. It's kind of just like I've said since I got to Illinois, just believing in the process. Anybody that's watched Illinois over the past month knows it's been a lot of ups and downs, especially for myself. But I just got to keep going and keep working hard in practice.

I feel like I've brought it in practice. And to have a game like this, it was nice to have for sure, for the confidence. I'm excited to help the team in any way, and today I was able to hit shots and get offensive rebounds. That's what impacted it in a winning way.



I was happy to do that and give us an opportunity to win a championship tomorrow.

**Q. Coach said there wasn't a lot of Xs and Os at halftime, but what changed defensively with giving up 52 in the first half and only 37 or so in the second. Did anything change scheme-wise for you guys?**

MARCUS DOMASK: We started switching a little more with Rienk Mast. In the first half, he got us a couple, and he popped and we were in our drop coverage. We switched a little more, and not let him get the threes. I think it was more of a team effort than it was Xs and Os.

**Q. Luke, I know you had the four threes, but you also had four big offensive rebounds. How does that impact you when you're hitting it on both ends of the floor like that?**

LUKE GOODE: Well, one of the biggest plays in my opinion you can do is offensive rebound. It usually leads to good things. I can recall two that -- one of them was a Marcus wide-open three that he was able to knock down, and another one led to layup.

When you can get second-chance opportunities on the glass, it's huge for the team, and it gives us another opportunity to score.

Especially Ty with seven, that's big time. When you have two guys that combine for 11 offensive rebounds, you're doing some good things. Any way to impact the game, and that too.

**Q. Luke, obviously you've been a part of a Big Ten title team. This team won this a couple years ago before you got here. What's it mean for this team to have a chance to get a banner tomorrow?**

LUKE GOODE: It means everything. I'll remember it for the rest of my life when Iowa missed that last three in the corner and we ran on the court. That's a memory I'll remember for the rest of my life. We have a ring to go with it. That's what we play for. We play for championships.

To have the opportunity tomorrow to win another championship, it's what we work for. We work all summer and the preseason and throughout the whole season to put ourselves in a position like this, and we're excited for the opportunity.

**Q. You guys shot a lot better from behind the arc in the second half. What did you see out there, and how did you adjust and shoot better?**

LUKE GOODE: So we were -- in the second half -- at halftime, we knew what they were going to do on defense. We started running some actions that put their defenders in a tough situation, long closeouts and stuff like that, and we were able to move the ball.

I think the second half we made quick decisions. We were able to swing the ball a lot faster and get way better looks, in my opinion. I remember a couple shots. Quincy got a wide open three late just from moving the ball. I was able to get a couple of locks. Marcus got a couple of wide open looks.

I think it was just the movement of the ball in the second half that allowed us to step into those threes instead of taking contested threes.

**Q. Luke, even with Terrence doing his thing tonight, just how important was it for guys like yourself and for Quincy to still be able to knock down shots down the stretch?**

LUKE GOODE: Yeah, it's super important. When somebody can score that well, a lot of the defenders on the other team will crowd the paint and do everything they can to stop him. When somebody has 40 points, you have to do something right.

For us to step up and hit shots, Marcus 16, Quincy 13, I was able to hit some shots as well. I think that opens up the floor as well, because now you don't have a bunch of guys that can go into the paint on his drives, transition, it opens up a lot of lanes for him because you can't have guys helping off of Quincy in the corner, me in the corner, situations like that. So I think it just works really well in itself.

**Q. Marcus, Terrence has 25-plus in 8 of 11 games. You're a guy who can go off like that. What's that do for you guys as a team?**

MARCUS DOMASK: It helps with spacing. When you've got guys that can shoot it as well as he does, everything opens up more for everyone else. Then it just, teams have to focus so much on getting back in transition against them, and that's tiring. Teams don't want to sprint back every single possession.

Terrence, he's got a motor that keeps going. He doesn't get tired. Little by little, he wears teams down. He drew ten fouls. That hurts teams.

**Q. Brad, similar situation in the second half today, early timeout first couple minutes. Yesterday you were pretty visibly upset. Today not as much. What was**



**your message different compared to yesterday?**

BRAD UNDERWOOD: At some point, it's not me. They've got to want to do that. You can't -- this team has a lot of pride. I challenged them at halftime. Then we didn't -- there wasn't much there. So I just sat there for a good little bit. I didn't say much. I didn't say anything.

At some point, it's got to be their leadership take over. Quincy Guerrier really stepped up. That became a happy huddle in terms of encouragement and so on and so forth. It's amazing how that worked for our team.

I didn't sub very much. I let those guys run for a long time. Boy, it was really encouraging to see because it's on them. It wasn't me. Yesterday was more me. Today was more them.

**Q. The Big Ten tournament's never seen something like what Terrence did today. Have you ever seen anything like what Terrence did today in your time coaching over the decades?**

BRAD UNDERWOOD: I was very, very fortunate in that I coached Michael Beasley. Michael Beasley as a freshman averaged 26 and 12. Unfortunately, I saw Michael do that quite a bit. I saw him have an unbelievable thing in Allen Fieldhouse one night against -- big game. So I have, but that was pretty special today.

I didn't realize he had that many. You get going just in the flow of the game, and we liked the matchups, and we put him in situations. It was kind of just fell into those things. It wasn't strained.

**Q. Brad, obviously there's been a lot going on with him throughout the year. Can you put into context what his mindset has been to be able to play at this level?**

BRAD UNDERWOOD: Great. He's handled it like a professional. He knows there's a serious situation out there. He's been an unbelievable teammate. But he has been great. He has handled it. His work ethic hasn't changed. Took him a little bit to come back because he's a great teammate. But he's been very professional.

**Q. Brad, you guys, second half, you're able to get in the paint. Nebraska doesn't -- they really leave a guy in the paint almost, but you were still able to get to the basket. What did you change offensively to make that happen?**

BRAD UNDERWOOD: I think Luke and Marcus both mentioned it, ball movement. We've got ball movement.

We call what we do point five basketball, and that's making the extra pass. It hits your hand and then it's out. First half we held it. I bet half the time we threw it back to the same side we got it from. So we were driving it right back into the defense.

That's all we talked about literally at halftime and one of the timeouts, just get rid of it, and then you can drive it. We've got some guys who were good at driving it, driving mismatches, and Ty and T.J. were those two. I thought Coleman had some opportunities to do that. It freed everything up.

**Q. Coach, we've seen Ty Rodgers this weekend just play, just refusing to lose. Can you talk about the importance for you guys?**

BRAD UNDERWOOD: It's nice to see him play well because he's been working his butt off in the gym. It's amazing how that works. Good things happen to those who work hard. He's always a great teammate. He's guarding with intensity and purpose. His rebounding has been phenomenal.

Again, we made a change in the second half, putting him on the ball and getting Marcus off of it. He just got downhill and creates some easy opportunities for himself as well.

**Q. In the previous matchup, Coach, Keisei Tominaga had an amazing game shooting the ball. What did you guys do differently against him today to make sure he didn't get off against you guys again?**

BRAD UNDERWOOD: Prayed. He's the one player in the country, maybe the one player in this league that really gives me angst because you can guard him great and it not matter. We really guarded him very, very well in Champaign in the game. I think the one thing we wanted to do is make sure they were twos or give him uncontested threes or blown assignment threes.

For the most part, Terrence had -- my game plan going in was to keep Terrence in on him all the time and not have to sub that. Again, it shows why Terrence is really good.

But he's a terrific player. He's had a terrific season. I'm glad we don't have to play him any more.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

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Saturday, March 16, 2024  
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## Nebraska Cornhuskers

**Fred Hoiberg**

**Sam Hoibert**

**Rienk Mast**

Postgame Press Conference

Illinois - 98, Nebraska - 87

THE MODERATOR: Joined by Nebraska head coach Fred Hoiberg, Sam Hoiberg, and Rienk Mast. We'll start with an opening statement for Coach.

FRED HOIBERG: I want to say, first of all, I'm proud of our guys for accomplishing something that has never been done in the history of Nebraska basketball, getting into the semifinals of this Big Ten tournament.

I like where we are heading into this week, heading into tomorrow, where we will find out our fate.

As I told the guys in the locker room after, one thing that still -- it was such a pit in my stomach last year at this time, a couple days earlier when we lost, because I just had a feeling we wouldn't be able to play again and I wouldn't be able to coach that group, and I loved that group that we had a year ago. It was such a fun group to coach.

The blessing we have is we're going to be playing next week. Whether that's Thursday or Friday, we're going to have the opportunity to continue to compete and hopefully make a little run right here and continue to do things that have never been done with this program.

I thought fatigue set in for us a little bit. We got back to the hotel at midnight last night and had to bounce back and play basically a 2:30 game this afternoon. That's hard.

I thought not only physically did we hit some fatigue, but I thought mentally, and we just didn't finish the way that we had that had us ending the season winning 8 out of 9. Our possessions weren't what we needed to have, and defensively they were beating us to loose balls. I blame

some of that on fatigue.

Give Illinois credit. They played unbelievable the last 17, 18 minutes of that game. It's an incredibly hard team to guard, especially when your guys are in foul trouble. When Juwan picked up that fourth, that was hard for us. He's one of the keys on that end of the floor. Rienk picking up two. He was in a great rhythm on the offensive end. And Josiah picking up two.

I give Matar a lot of credit for getting us great minutes. I give Jeff Grace credit for getting us a steal late in the game. That's what it's all about this time of year, is to have guys step up when their name is called.

I'm proud of our guys. I like where we are. Learn from this one. Get back on the court on Monday, and like I said, hopefully go out and make a little run.

**Q. Sam, Coach kind of talked about just the second half and fatigue, both physical and mental, maybe setting a little bit from your vantage point. Did you kind of sense that a little bit that maybe the legs were a little tired and the energy wasn't where it needed to be?**

SAM HOIBERG: Personally, it did set in pretty quickly on that step-back late in the clock, I kind of felt my legs cramping a little bit. But I took something and that kind of took care of it for me. I didn't play that much yesterday. Other guys played more than me.

We don't want to make any excuses for why we played bad. We could've been better. It wasn't just because of fatigue. We've just got to be better the next game.

**Q. Rienk, obviously you came out hot to start the game. Did it kind of mess with their rhythm with the foul trouble? Hard to get it going a little bit after that? That's after sitting.**

RIENK MAST: Yeah, looking back at it, at the half I was super cold, and then during halftime you try and get going again. Yeah, the foul trouble definitely didn't help with getting back in that rhythm that I had at the start.



**Q. Sam, I guess going forward now, a big opportunity that awaits you guys next week. How quickly are you guys going to be able to turn the page on the sting of this loss and kind of look ahead at the opportunity that awaits you the next few days?**

SAM HOIBERG: We're going to do what we've done all season, and I think we've done a pretty good job bouncing back from losses and learn from what we did wrong. See what we're playing tomorrow and just start prepping for them.

We're not going to do anything different than we've done all year, and hopefully we can bounce back in the first round.

**Q. Rienk, same question for you. Yes, today stung, but how meaningful could this next week be, just with the opportunity that presents itself for you guys?**

RIENK MAST: Over these last two games, we've shown that we can play with the best of them. Coming into this tournament winning last 6 out of 7 or whatever, we've shown that we're a good team. This one stings. So I hope this one gives everybody a little bit of extra motivation to not lose any time soon.

We've got to take it one game at a time. We'll know tomorrow who we play and start prepping for that and put our best game forward for that game.

**Q. Fred, when did you know that C.J. was sick and wasn't going to be able to play today, and how did that affect things for you today?**

FRED HOIBERG: C.J., he gave it a go in warmups, and he didn't feel good. He was throwing up after the game last night. That carried over, didn't give him much rest. Unfortunately, just wasn't able to go. He was feeling pretty miserable. You could see it in his face and his eyes. He didn't get any sleep last night. So wanted to play it smart.

He's been awesome for us all year. Obviously it shortened our rotation. Again, it leads to the fatigue that we had in that second half, when you take one of your main guys out of the lineup.

Again, our guys stepped up. Especially when we had the foul trouble. Again, Illinois gets a lot of credit for how this game ended. You look at Terrence Shannon making five threes and getting to the free-throw line 16 times. They took advantage of some matchups out there as well.

Again, Sam hit it on the head, it's all about now, going back to the film room and learning from this one and preparing

for the next one. That's what we've done after every game. All the cleanup for our guys on Monday, and we'll get on the floor. Depending if we play on Thursday or Friday, we'll go to our first look and work on some execution type things to hopefully be better next time we're on the floor.

As I said to the guys after the game, I love how this team is playing right now. We can't let one game disrupt the good things that have happened with our program. We've got to get right and have good prep, and I'm confident that we'll do that.

**Q. Fred, just in your mind, what was the shift in the second half? What did you see as the turning point?**

FRED HOIBERG: We got that thing up to 15 right away. It was great. Forced them into a timeout. It just became a foul-fest. They got to the line on multiple occasions, and that just kind of takes the flow out of the game or taking the ball out of the net.

I thought we were really good in transition in the first half when we rebounded the ball. When you're taking the ball out of the net, whether it's after a free throw or after an offensive rebound kickout, it's hard to have the same type of rhythm and flow that we did offensively.

I think we shot almost 70 percent in the first half, 60 percent, I don't know. It was just one of those things where we just had it flowing so well. When you start taking the ball out of the net like we did, that gives them rhythm and momentum and confidence, and they took advantage of it.

**Q. You mentioned, after the game you talked to the guys about next week. What's kind of the approach to turning the page as quickly as possible on this one, and what types of lessons can you learn from this experience that you can apply to next week?**

FRED HOIBERG: Like Sam said, we're going to do the exact same thing we've done all year. We're going to learn from this one and start focusing on whoever our opponent will be, and we'll know that tomorrow at probably 5:30 or 6:00. Coaches will get in the film room and start working on the game plan, and we'll get the guys in there and present a first look to them and start working that way.

We haven't played a back-to-back all year. Our MTE last year was different than last year when we've had the experience of a back-to-back. Especially the late game to the early game. That is hard. That is really, really hard. Especially when you have one of the main guys out of the lineup.

Again, I give the guys a lot of credit for the way we came



out of the gate. They were phenomenal for the first 25 minutes of the game. Unfortunately, we weren't able to sustain it. Give Illinois credit, they had a lot to do with it.

**Q. Coach, I wonder if you could talk about just being back in this arena with the time you spent with the wolves. Recently Kevin McHale came to senior night for you and supported the team. I think you mentioned that it would take a special someone to beat you. It certainly was that with Terrence Shannon.**

FRED HOIBERG: Yeah, I love being back here. I had seven of the best years of my life in Minnesota, certainly the two best of my playing career, playing on that team back '03-'04, where Sam Cassell, we're a healthy hip away from winning a championship that year. I still have great memories. It's so much fun coming into this building and reliving some of those.

We've still got a house on a lake up in northern Minnesota, so we absolutely love it here. So to be back, our kids spent a lot of their lives. Everybody was here, except for our son Jack, who was working for the Spurs. It was great for the family to come back and relive some of those memories.

My wife took our son Charlie, Sam's twin, on a little memory tour. They went out and saw our house and went to the Target where they used to get pizza when they were 3 years old, and she had to shut them up when they were complaining and just throwing stuff in the cart. It was great to be back for that and really a special place with a lot of great memories.

**Q. After Keisei scored 31 points in February against Illinois, they did everything to not let that happen again this time. What did they do differently, and how do you think Keisei played against that?**

FRED HOIBERG: Terrence Shannon is one of the not only elite offensive players, but he's a great defensive player as well. Keisei missed a couple of shots that he's been making. I think he had three or four open ones early, and he makes those, maybe he does have another 25, 30 point game, but he didn't. Some of that may have to do with his legs after playing a lot of minutes last night and making some unbelievable plays for us with his 24 point game.

I thought Keisei was playing with a lot of confidence right now. I thought he forced the issue a little bit late when we should have had better execution. He's got the confidence to make those shots. I thought he had a couple of one-mores that were there as well. We'll match those and learn from it, and hopefully we'll have a better 40-minute stretch in the next one, and we'll need it.

We're going to play a great team next week, and we'll need everybody. They're all on board. They're ready to go and ready to start preparing, and we'll get back to work on Monday.

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