

# Purdue University Basketball Media Conference

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## Matt Painter

Press Conference

Purdue - 78, Wisconsin - 50

**Q. What's it say about your team that Isaac Haas and Dakota Mathias, combined 1-for-10 and you still beat the team by 28 points?**

COACH PAINTER: I thought our defense was pretty good. Obviously we forced them into a lot of turnovers in the first half. Our ability to make shots early and get that quickly and then our defensive pressure I think really caused them problems.

And their field goal percentage wasn't that bad in the first half, just didn't have very many attempts and that really kept us at a distance from -- a lot of times when you get those quick, early leads that team is going to find their way back into the game. But I just think Dakota and Isaac can help us in other ways.

And Dakota has done a great job for us and so has Isaac. But it's now one of those things where that's your value as a player, just scoring. We have a balanced attack. I thought our bench (indiscernible) three 3s tonight. Matt Haarms has, I think, 10 to go along with Carsen and Vince both scoring 20 and above.

Just a good balanced effort, and P.J. stepped up and knocked some 3s down. It's not going to be each guy's night from a scoring standpoint.

**Q. As the wins rack up, tell me the expectations. Do you let the team embrace them?**

COACH PAINTER: I think the thing you have to do when you win -- because then you're making mistakes -- you're obviously not making more than your opponent or you wouldn't win. But you still gotta make improvements and you've still gotta have a fight to you.

And that's one thing we keep talking to our team about in practice is really pushing them to improve and to see some of the mistakes that they're making. So that's how you get better. When you lose a game, everything magnifies as a player in your mind.

When you win a game, everything's great. That's simply not the way it is. Bad things are happening



when you're winning and good things will happen when you lose.

So that's really what we try to do is stay and have that competitive edge, but also be honest with ourselves. And we got outrebounded today. We had some things that wasn't perfect. So just to keep trying to improve.

And I think a lot of times expectations is the talk. If you want to read every article about yourself, I think you've got an issue. Because you don't want to read every article about yourself when you lose. So just kind of keeping that mature pulse to you as a young person and understand that there's people out there that are gunning for you the next game and that's how you win a championship. You win a championship by keeping a focus and staying together.

**Q. This might be a corollary to that, throughout this winning streak you guys have gotten off to good starts, you've built big first half leads. Is that a product of having a veteran team or is there some kind of focus right now?**

COACH PAINTER: Obviously you like to start off the half, each half and be productive. And we've been fortunate enough to do it. I think the one thing that we've struggled with, even though we didn't do that today, is getting a lead and keeping a lead.

I think that's a hard thing to do in competitive sports. Probably the thing for us -- one of the hard things to do for us, I think, has been to close out the first half. That's where we've kind of struggled.

You saw that at Minnesota, we're up 20. Then all of a sudden they make that run, we're up 13. You saw a little bit tonight. We miss a front end of a one-and-one, we split free throws. We miss a dunk, miss a three-footer.

And so instead of making your free throws, making your dunk, making that, now the game is really technically over at halftime when the game wasn't over at halftime.

So we're able to push the game out as the second half went along. And I think those are some of the things, and you might be nitpicking a little bit, but by talking about it -- because you'll always have some peaks and

valleys within the course of a game.

**Q. You've been talking all season about protecting the home court. You stole a couple on the road this past week. How concerned were you that this was going to be a track meet coming home with these guys who have been there?**

COACH PAINTER: Wisconsin has a great program and we've had some injuries and a younger team. But we have a lot of respect for Coach Gard. They went to two Sweet 16s in his first two years. He's a fabulous coach. Ethan Happ is an unbelievable player.

And our guys respect him. And being able to watch film and knowing that they have some young guys that you can't allow them to get their heads up. I think we did a good job of that today. But if you let them get their heads up, they're competitive guys; they're skilled, and it was good to see our guys come out there.

But in all fairness when you come out and you make your first four 3s, that helps. If we miss those shots, where are we in that game? But that's the grind-it-out mentality: When your shots aren't going, can you still play well?

**Q. Just the pressure of P.J. and Carsen they put on the guards really seemed to make a difference.**

COACH PAINTER: I thought they did a great job. One of the things when they wanted to alleviate pressure by having Ethan bring the ball up the court, we felt that even though we wouldn't go and pressure him, still made him do a lot of things and making him play post defense, guard Vince Edwards, guard Isaac Haas, bring the ball up the court. We wanted him to expend a lot of energy. And he has to do a lot for their team.

But I thought when the guards did have to handle it, P.J. and Carsen and the rest of our guards did a great job.

**Q. Defense on Happ. I know Isaac (inaudible) but seemed like he got frustrated the first half.**

COACH PAINTER: It was really a team defense. I thought we did a good job of getting big a couple times. He made some plays. And we were going to live with those. Obviously you don't want him to have 10 field goals that way. But he's such a good passer, that now he can get those and he can pass the basketball and they get 3s.

We wanted to be able to stay with Ford and stay with Davison and stay with Pritzl and not allow them to have 3s. Those are their three main guys from beyond the arc. And we wanted to bottle him up as much as we can. But we didn't want to overextend.

I think sometimes when he gets the ball in a sweet spot and you overextend, you're playing with fire. You're just going to get into a rotation; you're going to get fouls more, give up more 3s. So at times we stayed one-on-one. And he scored some. And then the other times I thought we did a pretty good job.

But you've got to live with it a little bit with Ethan Happ. If you try to stop everything that they do, he has you right where he wants you. He's just too good of a player and too good of a passer.

**Q. Matt Haarms, specifically, were you able to glean anything about Matt Haarms as his development growing into such an efficient player?**

COACH PAINTER: Right. I think he learned some tough lessons against Happ, too. And I think Happ took him off the dribble and broke him down.

And Matt uses his quickness and his length against other big guys. And I think Happ used the quickness and length against him a couple times and was able to make plays.

But obviously Matt was pretty active. And we have some film now we can go watch for the next time we play. Because Ethan Happ is just so illusive. He's so different than everyone we play. But Matt actually showed his length and his ability to play today. He gets five blocks, which is huge for us.

**Q. Didn't see Jacquil out there.**

COACH PAINTER: Yeah, he was under the weather. He had the flu and couldn't get through shoot-around. And we told him to go home. P.J. was sick. And now he was sick. And some other guys on our team weren't feeling well also. You just don't want to spread it.

**Q. The way Wisconsin guarded, doubled Isaac all game and then Isaac coming away committing zero turnovers, what does that say about his development and just improvement in that area?**

COACH PAINTER: Just keeping it simple. They were going to take something away like that, not let us get him the ball. When we do give him the ball, they're going to come at him. He has to get the ball out of his hands. I thought he did a good job tonight.

He had a couple of opportunities. He should have finished a dunk and a couple plays in the first half. But it was one of those things where it wasn't his night from scoring.

But he took care of the basketball. I thought he did some good things on the defensive end. And you've just got to push through. It's not going to be your night every single night. And other guys really played well.

**Q. 14 steals is a season high tonight. Is that something that, can you see production like that through the second half, is it a very matchup-dependent statistic for you guys?**

COACH PAINTER: We try to be solid, put some good pressure on the basketball without getting beat off the balance.

It just depends on how people scheme. We wanted to be in there and help. We wanted to kind of see, if they attacked us and they took their eyes off of us, we'd be more aggressive. If they kind of stayed face value, looking at us while they were playing, we wanted to stay with our guys and make them score over us.

But they got into a couple of rotations in passing. And we were loose with the ball a couple times. I thought our guys did a great job. Especially Carsen, I thought he was very active with getting those five steals.