

# Big Ten Conference Men's Basketball Tournament

Thursday, March 13, 2025

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Gainbridge Fieldhouse

## Purdue Boilermakers

### Matt Painter

### Trey Kaufman-Renn

### Camden Heide

#### Postgame Press Conference

Purdue - 76, USC - 71

THE MODERATOR: We will begin with an opening statement from Coach Painter and take questions from the student-athletes.

MATT PAINTER: Obviously it was a very tough, physical game. USC was very resilient. Tough covers, like they have good players. Obviously Yates had 30 against us in the first game. Claude didn't play in the first game. He obviously got in foul trouble.

Their ability to break you down off the dribble and make plays is difficult to guard. You go through scouting reports, you go through a lot of different things to work on to try to really kind of build in your help and get them, but when people just get in space and look to attack you, sometimes that's something that is pretty difficult to do.

I thought our guys showed some discipline, very fortunate that they missed a pretty good shot there at the end and were able to get that rebound. But I thought the difference in the game probably for us was just barely outrebounding them. If you look at a possession game and just getting three more rebounds. It doesn't look like it's much, but I thought Cam's ability to rebound really helped us.

TK obviously had 30 and 7, but it wasn't our best night. I think USC had a lot to do with that. Just happy to see our guys hang in there and make enough plays to pull out the victory.

**Q. Camden, there in the first half, you guys fell behind by ten. You came in, knocked down a couple 3s, and the guy next to you, he made a couple field goals also. Just your thoughts on getting hot at the right time on**



that certain run by the Boilermakers.

CAMDEN HEIDE: I'd just say that comes from us doing what we need to do offensively. We kind of talked about it and we can't have energy only when things go well. I think that we had a few things we could have done better before that stretch where we started to make shots, but one of the main things is we've always got to bring energy whether the ball is going in or it's not. We've always got to be able to rebound and defend.

I think obviously it helps when we make shots and we can get the crowd on our side a little bit. Besides that, we just have to continue to do what we need to do even when the ball is not going in.

**Q. Trey, just Cam's effort on the boards throughout the game, but in the first half, getting some defensive rebounds, how much did that help you guys maybe get out of that 10-point hole and maybe set a tone there for the rest of the game and the rebounding?**

TREY KAUFMAN-RENN: It's the difference really. He led all players in rebounding by four rebounds. We only won the rebound battle by three. Obviously he came out, had a double-double, but just playing hard, man, giving that effort that we needed because our energy was horrible at the beginning of the game.

To have somebody really step it up, give us it all, defend and rebound, that's what we need. So we're going to need him to continue doing that. We've got to get other guys too, me included, getting better energy to start the game.

**Q. Cam, you talked about staying confident, whether the shots are falling or not falling. You also seemed to be getting more confidence even when you were getting those rebounds. Did you feel yourself getting more confident and build some energy when you were able to crash the boards like you were tonight?**

CAMDEN HEIDE: Anytime with my kind of role when you can get involved in the game, whether that's getting a steal, getting a rebound, making the hustle play, obviously we have two of the best players in the country, and they



normally score a majority of the points, and they should.

Any time for someone like me to be able to make a play like a rebound, something that a few people might view as a simple play, but it kind of helps me get engaged in the game, especially a few trips up and down the floor.

**Q. Cam, take us through that play where Claude shoots a short jumper there at the end and kind of where were you at, and what did you see to be able to corral that rebound?**

CAMDEN HEIDE: I think he actually almost got his own rebound. Then it was just kind of at the peak of his jump and I was just kind of able to hit it out of his hands and grab the rebound. Then I think it went to Braden and then TK.

It was really just seeing the flight of the ball and then being able to make a play on it when it kind of went through his hands.

**Q. Trey, just the job Myles did for you guys tonight along with Cam to get that production off the bench and get a win out of this game, just how important was that?**

TREY KAUFMAN-RENN: Like I said, it's everything. It's coming in and being ready to defend and give effort. It really shows up, whether it be in the actual box score, but also just hustle plays and making sure our rotations are well. So I think they both did a really good job.

**Q. Obviously Cam has kind of been the talk of the press conference. He was perfect from 3, hauled in those 11 boards. Can you speak to the impact he had on today's game.**

MATT PAINTER: I thought in the first half he had a couple opportunities to shoot the basketball, especially in the shot clock play, and we had a couple other guys that just weren't ready to shoot the basketball. When you come in off the bench -- and he kind of alluded to it -- when you play through Braden Smith and Trey Kaufman, they're going to have the ball in their hands a lot.

So if they want to double them, like they were really being aggressive with Braden in the first half, and he just has to get the basketball out of his hands and get moving because now they're down a man, it's four-on-three. You've got to make the right decision and move the basketball.

So I thought they passed up on some things. He passed up on a couple, and obviously we want him to shoot the

basketball. He had a couple chances right as he got in the game to get a couple 50-50 balls, and he didn't. That was kind of like the energy of our team at the time. We just didn't have that. We weren't getting loose balls. We weren't doing that.

Then we picked it up from there. Once we got down 10, we picked it up from there, and he was a big part of that. He was getting 50-50 balls, he was getting tap-backs. We had a play where he got a tap-back, and he kept it alive and had a wide open shot and we end up missing it. But we were getting extra possessions. At the end of the day, that's what you want. You got to win the possession war. We win it by three in a very close game and it ends up being difference in my opinion.

We're also fortunate that we didn't play yesterday too. You can add that to the equation. That's kind of like the tournament. That's kind of how things are in postseason tournaments.

Cam was great. He can keep shooting 100 percent from 3 and getting 11 rebounds, I think we're going to benefit from it.

**Q. I asked Coach Gard after the Wisconsin game, they were playing on Thursday, Purdue is playing on Thursday. Some of the top teams in the country. What is it about the depth of this Big Ten that there's just so many good teams out there?**

MATT PAINTER: Obviously we have a corporation, and we have 18 teams. Anybody can beat anybody, especially on a neutral court. We have a great league. We have a physical league. We have a tough league. The offense, and then you see the game before, Iowa-Illinois, that's the most points ever scored in a Big Ten tournament game.

Exciting basketball, good coaches, good players, and anybody can win this. Anybody can win this.

**Q. Five points down there late in the first half. Talk about Myles, Myles with an offensive rebound, a putback, and he also ended the half knocking down a 3 to tie the game. I also want to throw in Harris with one lone rebound, it was an offensive rebound, and he put it back in. He was part of that 5-0 run to get you tied up at halftime.**

MATT PAINTER: When you're struggling, you've got to be able to get something in transition or get something off the glass. If you're just playing in the half-court, it just gets to be too tough against a really good team.

Those were sparks for us. Those guys being able to get

those putbacks. Then obviously you alluded to Myles making that 3.

Those guys have just got to come in ready to shoot, like take good shots. The one he lost for the turnover, Myles got there, and it ends up being a turnover. It was a good shot. It was a good pull-up for him. We got the pocket pass to him, a lob, and he missed the dunk, and it was right there.

Even though those two plays don't go for him, they're still quality possessions. We're still making the right play. We're just not finishing off. That was key for us. When we got down 10, to be able to have those guys get some offensive rebound putbacks to give us the spark to tie it up at halftime.

**Q. You heard Trey talk about you didn't like the energy at the beginning of the game. I think you probably agreed. Is it more concerning that they didn't have the energy that you would like, or is it more encouraging they were able to find it and get a win anyway?**

MATT PAINTER: I think both. Obviously we've had a tough time finding our energy. We're obviously a good offensive team. So like we make shots, right? We have the best field goal percentage in our league, the best three-point field goal percentage in our league. The problem was the team that got second in both of those was the team that we were playing.

So we make shots a lot. We've had some pretty good starts to games over the course of the year, so then you don't look at it like energy is a problem, but when we miss it, miss shots, it becomes a problem. You hope through experience and maturity that that's not the case because we do have a lot of guys that have been in games such as this.

So we really had to fight them and battle them to try to get going, to try to use some different things, whether you're rebounding, getting 50-50 balls, you've got to be able to find your energy. Great players when it's not their night still find their energy and help their team win. It took us a while, but we eventually got there, which is a good sign.

**Q. Next up you face Michigan, a team that you've been up against both times. One time you were able to put them away. The other time they came back, won by three. What goes through your mind preparing for this Michigan team, one of the few teams you got to see twice with how big this conference is?**

MATT PAINTER: Obviously they're well coached. They have a physical front line that's very unique because both

of them are very skilled. Like a lot of times you'll have guys of that size that are low post players or can make 3s, but they can't drive it. Both of those guys can drive the basketball, can post the basketball, can pass.

I think that's where it starts with. I think Trey Donaldson is one of the most underappreciated guards. I think he's very talented, he can score. I haven't watched him a lot since we played that second time because you just kind of move to your opponents. But he always seems to make plays late in games. Even if it's one of those games where he has 8 to 12, he still makes plays late in the game.

They have a lot of good pieces, they have good young guards that come off the bench for them that sometimes they play, sometimes they don't play as much. Those guys are talented and good players. They've just got a good mix.

Obviously they didn't have a good finish, like we didn't have a good finish. But we've all had good finishes and then not play well in the tournament. Then you look at it and you'd rather play well in the tournament, right? Sometimes that can wake you up a little bit and help you. Sometimes it's not a factor.

They're trying to find their way just like we're trying to find our way at the end of the year. We put ourselves in a position to win the game at their place, and they played better than we did the last five minutes, no different than the Illinois game. We really played well leading up to the last five minutes, and then Illinois just played better than we did.

You just want to be able to finish off games and do better. That's why it's such a good sign for tonight that we didn't do well leading up to there but we still were able to find a way.

Dusty is a really good coach who's done a great job this year. They have a very talented team, skilled team. Like I said, very unique. How you prepare for them is a little bit different because of a lot of that 4-5 action that they go to with Danny Wolfe.

**Q. Matt, you talked a lot about keeping teams out of the paint. First half USC had 20 points. They only had 8 in the paint in the second half. Was that just an example of them hitting the tough shots and you doing things defensively, or do you still have some defensive lapses in the second half?**

MATT PAINTER: Sometimes just how you shape it and where they have their isos, because they play a lot of isolation basketball, and we try to load it up on the perimeter and try to load it up low. So if they're not going

to pass through that, you've got to worry about the 45 cuts, the opposite wing cuts, you've got to worry about that and be able to see it. See the ball, see your man, your man takes off to the rim, you've got to be able to go with him and kind of change responsibilities when things of that nature happen.

We were just trying to do our best to load up and be encouraged -- we were really trying to encourage Myles Colvin and Caleb because he made three pull-ups in about the last eight minutes, and that's what we wanted to give him. We wanted to keep him off the free-throw line, keep him out of the paint.

Let's be frank about it, he shot that floater at the end, and we got lucky. He has an eight-foot floater that he makes a lot, and he just misses it. Give us credit for getting the rebound, but they got to a pretty good spot right there, but that's what we were trying to do.

We just gave up way too many layups in that first half.

**Q. Tonight Braden only had 12 points on 10 shots. What was USC throwing at you guys, at Braden that limited his ability to get the looks that he usually wants?**

MATT PAINTER: He's a good player. He's not someone that's going to shoot 20 times every single game or 15 times every single game. Each game presents different options like takeaways, whatever. Just like let the game come to you. If they're giving you shots, take them. If they're not, get that ball. Get that ball moving.

When we run something, he's very knowledgeable as a player, as an offensive player. So just like understanding the purpose of what we're running, and then just trust your instincts and trust your skill. If he gets 20 shots, cool. If he gets 10, cool. There's another team out there, and a lot of teams people look at it. Why did you -- we got beat by UConn, and a bunch of people are like, why did you guys go away from the 3s? Well, UConn is the best defensive team we've played in 10 years. They took them away, so we went to Z Bo as much as we could because he's 15 for 25 from the field, and they didn't think we could beat them without getting any 3s.

Well they took it away. There's nothing you can do. People think you push a button and say, hey, we're going to shoot 25 threes tonight, we're going to shoot 35 threes. We are going to do this. If you're that dominant and that good, God bless you.

With him I don't look at it like you need to score 30 points, you don't need to get 20 assists to win. Just play the game

and have fun and let it organically happen. He's that talented and that good and he can affect the game if he doesn't score.

With that being said, I'm a big proponent of him shooting it. Like the other night against Illinois, he misses 4 of his last 5 shots. They're all really good shots. That's all I try to tell him, keep taking those shots. That's what they were giving you, they were playing more in a drop. These guys weren't. They were up on the line. They were aggressive with it. They dragged him out a little bit. Get the ball out of your hands, get it to TK in the short roll, get him as a diver, get the ball behind you, skip it opposite, but get it out of your hands and let's get them in a rotation and get them playing from behind.

So just trying to play intelligent basketball.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

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## USC Trojans

## Eric Musselman

## Matt Knowling

## Desmond Claude

### Postgame Press Conference



Purdue - 76, USC - 71

ERIC MUSSELMAN: Just want to give Purdue credit tonight, but I've been doing this a long time, and the amount of text messages I got from an NBA head coach, an NBA GM -- that was tough for us. I thought our team did everything we could to put ourselves in position to win the game.

I feel for the locker room. This group came here to try to win this tournament, and I thought we put ourselves in position tonight to play one more day tomorrow.

But I get it. They had a great fan base tonight, and they'll have a great fan base tomorrow. Just unfortunate that we couldn't pull out a victory.

**Q. Matt, you came in and had an immediate impact, scoring the first five possessions down in the paint. What was your goal down low trying to help the offense if they needed it?**

MATT KNOWLING: I just wanted to stay ready, come in and impact the game any way I could. This is it for me. No more eligibility, so I'm going to go out and play as hard as I can, do anything I can to win.

That was stay around the basket, rebound and defending tonight.

**Q. Desmond, how tough is it for you not getting in the flow of the game and being on the bench with foul trouble and wanting to be out there and having to spend more time on the bench when you'd like to? How tough is it to come back in and when you're not in the game?**

DESMOND CLAUDE: It was a little tough, but I just wanted to stay ready and be supportive of my teammates, just give feedback of what I could see just from the bench.

I used the halftime to get warmed back up. But I was ready. I was ready. I stayed ready. At least I had the half to be fresh for the second half. I don't control what the refs call even if I don't agree with it.

I just try to be helpful in other ways, like I said, be supportive, give feedback, and just cheer on my teammates.

**Q. Des, they trapped you a lot in the second half. What were you trying to do, what were you trying to see on the court just to get some plays going?**

DESMOND CLAUDE: I mean, just to make the right reads. Basketball is just a thinking man's game. I just have to make the simple passes. If I've got an angle to get downhill or take the shot, then I've just got to make the right play.

**Q. Desmond kind of hinted on it, how frustrating was it that he was out for that long a time during the game? I know there's nothing you can do about it because they're going to officiate the game that way, but what kind of predicament did that put you in knowing that he's sitting next to you?**

ERIC MUSSELMAN: A pretty tough one. I didn't know that Desmond was so physical, but he was tonight, I guess. The game's on tape, so anybody can watch it. It doesn't do me any good to sit up here and get fined or whatever. The game is reviewable for anybody that wants to.

When Buzo dug down in the post, that's as clean as can be. Look, I've got to go face a locker room that their season's over. I thought the game plan, even with guys in foul trouble, I thought we could have won the game, but we didn't.

Like I said, credit to Purdue, and we go home.



**Q. Wesley Yates, what have you noticed about his confidence throughout the season? He played 50 minutes last night, 39 tonight. How has he evolved?**

ERIC MUSSELMAN: I think people need to recognize we played a double overtime game last night, that we're three hours difference from home on our body clocks, that we got back to our hotel and the first time we got to utter the words Purdue were about 1:00 a.m.

We had some walk-throughs today, and I thought they came out and followed the game plan as good as any group I've ever coached. This is probably the most difficult game I've ever lost with a team, and I've been coaching a really, really long time.

Again, I thought we played well enough to win the game, even with foul trouble. You talk about a player like Wesley Yates, who played 50 minutes last night, and then he comes out and does what he does tonight.

Baseline out of bounds, three seconds on the shot clock, we've got to defend without fouling there, I guess. And Wes has to hold his ground if there's body contact when he comes off a play that we diagrammed for him. Wes will be back, I hope, and I'll try to help him with that.

**Q. Those last two possessions in particular, what did you see from --**

ERIC MUSSELMAN: I saw what everybody saw, you know what I mean? I appreciate it, Ryan, but it's all on -- my daughter's at home. She watched it on TV. She's a freshman in high school. My mom's obviously living in San Diego watching it. All you've got to do is go on Twitter.

Look, we played well enough to win. That's all I can say. I'm going to keep reiterating give Purdue credit. We're new, we've got to earn respect.

**Q. In terms of Desmond's floater that he took, what did you think of that decision? What was the play call coming into that?**

ERIC MUSSELMAN: We wanted him to have the ball. He's so good at his float game. That's the only shot he really missed down the stretch. I'll live with that all day long. We wanted to open the floor for him, and sometimes to make or miss can be the difference, you know, or other things can be the difference too. You can miss a shot like that and still win the game.

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