



NCAA THIRD ROUND POSTGAME QUOTES – EAST REGION

No. 2 VIRGINIA (30-4) VS. No. 7 MICHIGAN STATE (25-11)

VIRGINIA QUOTES

TONY BENNETT

Head Coach Tony Bennett

Opening Statement

You know, it was a very physical game. The way we started, there was a little bit of a pattern or a trend for us, where our starts hurt us. And when (Travis) Trice had 13 points in the first 15 minutes, we dug ourselves a hole. That first five minutes, it wasn't a matter of heart or effort. I thought our guys played hard. It was just that when we needed a key shot or a bucket, it wasn't there. We took 17 more shots than they did. We had trouble finishing and trouble making shots. Michigan State is playing good ball right now. They are pretty tough. They had some guys who made some great plays. It stings right now, of course, with the finality of the season after you had a heck of a year with these guys and what they've done. It just leaves that feeling that you wish you could have taken it further. But it doesn't take away, once the dust settles what this team accomplished. We give thanks for that but certainly learn from what took place.

On defense's effort if offense was more productive

I think so. Michigan State, I thought early we were bailing them out with our offense. We have to shift them. They are just like us. The ball has to shift. I thought we had a lot of opportunities. Offensive rebounds, 18 of them, we got some in there. We just had trouble finishing. I thought in the second we moved them better, got some looks. Your defense can only hang in there so long. It was enough, but not at the start, and not to mention, Trice hit some tough ones in there, too. Some real tough ones that got them going. We didn't have a lot of turnovers but a couple of them were crucial. The ones we call live ball turnovers, when they run down and get points off of them. That hurt because we didn't shift defense right away and attack.

On Branden Dawson

I think his eyes light up when he sees Virginia because he was terrific against us last year and he was good again. He's what, 6-6, 6-7, but he's so athletic and so strong. Our guys had trouble finishing. He was a man, made some tough shots, blocked shots, got on the glass. You can see why he is as good as he is. He plays well in big games.

On Darion Atkins' fourth foul

It looked like a clean block and you are clawing and scraping and trying to get back in it. You need everything to go well for you and go right. That hurt. It seemed like there was a little bit of momentum shift there but that really hurt us. Maybe when I watch the tape I'll realize I overreacted to it but I thought it was a good block, and we needed everything at that time.



Junior Justin Anderson

On Branden Dawson's impact on the game.

We knew the challenge that he presented to any basketball team. His ability to rebound, to pound on the inside. He is a very complete player down there. I think early we didn't match his energy but we did a great job of getting back to who we were. We did a solid job on him. He's a tough player.

On thoughts of a breakthrough

I didn't have a doubt in my mind, during the course of the game, that we were going to win that game. This team's resiliency and the ability to fight, I knew that collectively we had our heads in and we knew what we had to do to fight back. It hurts. You pull that close in the second half and they hit a big shot or get a big bucket, whatever the case may be. It really hurts because we know how hard we have to fight when we dig ourselves into a hole like that.

Redshirt junior Malcolm Brodgon

On defense balance when there's no offense consistency

I think it's about getting off to a good start. Our defense does lead to our offense. When you have defensive breakdowns, it's hard to get stops. You are going to struggle.

On Trice's hot start

I thought he was too comfortable at the beginning. We were just not pushing him out of comfort zone. Players at this level, if you let them get comfortable, they are going to knock down shots.

On Michigan State holding Virginia to 29 percent shooting

I think they play a similar pack defense. I think they jam the lane, and when we came off our down screens, which is a staple in our offense, it just disrupted us more than we should have let it.

On 3-point shooting struggles

I thought offensively we were out of rhythm. It's hard to have rhythm when you don't see them go through the net. Michigan State played good defense.



Sophomore London Parrantes

On losing to Michigan State back-to-back seasons

A loss is a loss, no matter who you lose to. They made some big plays. I feel like we started both halves slow and it put us in holes. We have been doing that all year and it finally caught up to us. Their offensive rebounds really hurt.

On going 10 minutes without scoring as a team

Both halves we missed some chippies, open shots that we have to get. We thought eventually they would fall and they didn't. We tried to find ways to get them to and they didn't.

On losing in the second round

Obviously, we did a lot of really good things this year but we had a lot more to do and we didn't get there. Our offense just had some careless turnovers and they got out in transition. They took advantage of our mistakes.

On Michigan State's defense

We couldn't knock down a shot from outside so they knew they didn't have to defend it. They stayed in front of us. I feel like we still got in the paint in the second half and made some plays but obviously not enough.

Senior Darion Atkins

On poor offensive performance

I feel like we could have done a better job at the line. I guess you could say we were tight. We couldn't hit any shots and it builds up. The more you miss, the more added pressure you have on your next possessions to get points. It causes frustration and panic.

On career at Virginia

I wouldn't trade my career for anything. I am blessed to be in this position and we had a great run. I had a great last year. I wish we would have got it done today. I love these guys so much. We're a band of brothers. I love Coach Bennett. Everybody. It's like a family.



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MICHIGAN STATE QUOTES

Head Coach Tom Izzo

Opening Statement

I can't tell you how excited and proud I am for these guys, especially these seniors and juniors. They have been through a lot. I'm not sure of all the great teams we've had if I've ever had one in a day that changed what we do with the game plan and execute as well as they did. I'm just proud of them and excited and looking forward to moving on.

On the change in approach

We just kind of changed what we do and we did it in a day and half. We did some things against Wisconsin where we changed how we play. Some guys are just concept guys that do the same thing and I respect that because we're just not as talented as we have been and so we're always cheating and trying to find a way to get an edge. Give my staff a lot of credit. They stayed up and did it.

On making the changes

I watched some film on Virginia early, but I also know what we did on them last year and that probably helped us a little bit because we did similar things last year. We kind of talked about it on Tuesday if we play them these are some things we can look at and we put it down.



Senior Travis Trice

On this not being the season's last game

That was our mindset coming in. We knew they're a great team and we had to jump out of them early.

On hot streak to start the game

I actually caught the ball around half court and once I got it all I heard was BJ (Branden Dawson) yelling my name. He goes down and finished it and got an and-one and I think was one of the major plays of the game because that changed the momentum. It really got him going, too. After that, we were just rolling wherever.

On being "snake bitten" with injuries in his career

I've had probably all the weird injuries. I've not had any surgeries, but I've probably had every injury in the book that would make you shake your head. But I just think everything happens for a reason and I literally just thank God for bringing me through it. It's made me a better person, just all the things I've been through.

On hot start scoring 13 of team's first 15 points

My teammates did a great job helping me to get open looks. I think BJ threw me the break out and I got the dunk and then I got a layup and then Denzel (Valentine) threw a great pass for the 3, so I have to give my teammates credit for that because they did a good job finding me early on.

Senior Branden Dawson

On this not being his last game

Coming into the locker room after the first half we kept telling each other that we definitely wanted to practice tomorrow. Coming into this game myself and Travis (Trice) and Denzel (Valentine) we just kept telling ourselves that we didn't want this to be our last game, so we kept playing hard and playing with passion.

On waiting his turn

There was a lot of things that played into it. I had a lot of injuries. I had a lot of injuries and lost out on two summers. As long as we win, that's all I care about.

On being a seven seed and less pressure with a lower seed

We definitely had an up-and-down season and we had some losses that, in my mind, we shouldn't have had. But, coming into this tournament we just told each other let's stick to coach's game plan. We all play together; we all bring a passion, and if we trust in one another, the sky's the limit for us.



Junior Denzel Valentine

On the play of Travis Trice

He's always had the capability. We basically have a three-year starter in Keith Appling who was playing in front of him, so Travis is already ready. It's his senior year and it's his time to shine. He always stayed humble his three years and always calm and just kept working and now he's shown me he can do it.

On what Branden gave today

We're usually jumping around in our huddle and I'm usually the one who always takes it over and encourages guys. BJ just took it over for some reason and, I just said 'he ready to play.' So, when did that I knew he was ready to play. BJ just came out like a monster and did what he's supposed to do. I knew if I couldn't be in the game I just had to stay in his ear and encourage him and he pulled through.

On doing something different on short notice

At this point in the season we're playing teams that we're not familiar with, so we have to do things that are uncharacteristic and just have to do it. We have to trust the coaches that they're right and obviously they were right because our defense concepts worked today. Our coaches do a great job preparing us for this.

Freshman Marvin Clark Jr.

On senior's performance

Kudos to Trav(is) Trice and BJ (Branden Dawson), they did what seniors are supposed to do. They made great plays, man, I can't even explain it.

On role with team and getting to Sweet 16

It's coming in and doing whatever I can; whether it's scoring or a huge rebound. Just coming in and doing what I can to help the team. We have such an unselfish team. We play together. Nobody hates each other. Behind the scenes, we are all kosher when we're all together. I think comradery we had in the offseason, it shows we're supposed to be here.

On holding onto lead

We had two huge leads on Georgia and we gave them away. I said we really have to focus on maintaining those leads. We went right back to the board room and watched some film; today, we showed that we can focus for a full 40 minutes and we didn't let them get back in the game. It shows that we're a good team and we really play with that chip on our shoulder. It's us against the world



Junior Bryn Forbes

On making Sweet 16

It's big. Coach Izzo gets it done in March and that's all you can ask from him.

On Izzo's advice before game

We had to defend. We knew the offense would work its way out, but if we didn't defend, we'd be in a worse dog fight than we were.

On game plan

We kind of packed it in and gave their bigs some space so they could catch it out farther and stick to the guards a little bit more. It helped out a lot because their bigs aren't too good of shooters so we could back off there.